

PrairieLand Community Supported Agriculture
Week 14 – Aug 1, 2007

Help?

I will be gone on vacation on August 8 and need a volunteer to take any leftover vegetables from the Champaign site to the Times Center in Champaign. Please email info@prairielandcsa.org or call 355-6279 if you can help.

From the Farm

The Moores are bracing for heat indices in the 100s in the coming days, busily keeping the animals and the newly transplanted fall crops watered.

As you know, the CSA share is designed to hit an average weekly value over the course of the season. Currently we are running a bit ahead. However, Diann and Jim want to keep the shares larger now as a hedge against late summer dry periods, early frost, and those pesky deer. This may eliminate a later pickup or two in October. We will keep you posted if any pickups will be eliminated.

FYI

As a CSA shareholder you probably already know that you are helping to curb global warming. If you ever wondered just how out of control our food system is getting with regard to energy use, check out this video produced for The Nation:
http://www.thenation.com/doc/20070709/watch_your_foodometer

Additionally, some conventionally produced fruits and vegetables receive more pesticides than others. If you've ever wondered about ways to minimize your exposure when buying produce outside of your CSA share, see the Environmental Working Group's ranking of produce with regard to pesticide levels at <http://www.foodnews.org/> EWG also has a printable 12 worst/12 best list that you can take to the market with you.

Want to can some of your produce but not sure how? The Ball Blue Book (available where canning supplies are sold - Meijer always has copies) is an excellent basic canning book. You can make pickled vegetables, tomato recipes, jams, and jellies without a pressure cooker. If there is interest, I will organize a canning class to PCSA shareholders. Email info@prairielandcsa.org or call 355-6279 if you are interested.

Moving? Sabbatical?

If you will be moving, heading on sabbatical, or otherwise won't be needing your share and want to sell it, please let us know and we will offer it to those on our waiting list. Please email info@prairielandcsa.org or call 355-6279.

In Your Share Today:

Cucumbers, green bell peppers, sweet banana pepper, spicy chiles, eggplant, zucchini, yellow squash, green beans, Yukon gold potatoes, onions, and tomatoes.

Recipes and Storage Tips:

One of the best strategies for dealing with your share in hot weather is to either eat a lot of salads, or try to cook all of your veggies at once to minimize heating up the house.

Here is a good recipe for using up a bunch of vegetables at once from Too Many Tomatoes, Squash, Beans, And Other Good Things

1 large onion, sliced
1 eggplant, peeled and cubed
1 c uncooked rice
1 green pepper, diced
3 summer squash sliced
3 tomatoes, peeled and sliced
Salt and pepper
1 1/2 c beef or vegetable stock
3 T olive oil

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Layer vegetables and rice in order in a large oiled casserole dish. Salt and pepper each vegetable layer, add any herbs like basil, Italian parsley, etc. Mix stock and oil and pour over top. Bake for 30 minutes covered and then 15 minutes uncovered until liquid is absorbed.

While your oven is warm, you can throw in this recipe, which uses a whole pound of greenbeans and is good served hot or at room temperature...

Parthenon Green Beans

3/4 to 1 pound green beans, trimmed
2 T olive oil
1 clove garlic, minced
1/2 c minced sweet onion
3 T canned tomatoes, tomato sauce or 1 large fresh tomato finely chopped
1/2 c water
2 T chopped fresh basil or 2 t dried
1 1/2 - 2 t dried oregano
1 T chopped fresh mint or 1 t dried (optional)
salt and pepper

1, 12" x 12" sheet of parchment paper, moistened and crumbled, may also be able to substitute a dry flour-sack towel if cooking with a non-electric oven.

Heat oven to 300 degrees F. Place all ingredients in a heavy saucepan or Dutch oven with a tight-fitting lid. Bring to a boil uncovered on stovetop. Boil 1 minute. Cover pan with parchment paper or towel and place on lid. (Fold corners over top of lid if using towel.) Place in oven. Bake 1 to 1 1/2 hours.

Chiles

The heat in chiles comes from their seeds and the membranes running down the side of the interior. Removing these, will take your chiles from spicy to mild.

Cucumbers

This recipe from the Victory Garden is a great way to beat the heat

Pesto Pasta Salad with Cucumbers

1 pound cucumbers peeled and seeded, diced into 1/4 to 1/2-inch pieces

Salt

1 lb linguini

2 T olive oil

1/2 c pesto sauce

2 T chopped fresh parsley

Sprinkle cucumbers with salt and allow to sit. Cook linguine, drain, rinse with cool water, drain again. Toss pasta with olive oil. Drain cucumbers (rinse if they are too salty) and press out moisture. Toss pasta once again with pesto and cucumbers. Sprinkle with parsley before serving.

Refrigerator Dill Pickles - No canning needed, just a big jar with a glass lid.*

1 pound of cucumbers

1 large clove garlic, peeled or more to taste

3 sprigs of fresh dill (if buying prepackaged from a store, use up to a whole package)

1/4 t of dill seeds (use these if the dill isn't flowering)

1 t of whole pickling spices

Pinch of red chile flakes (optional)

1/4 c of kosher salt

1/2 c of white vinegar, do not use white wine or rice vinegar

2 1/2 qt water

Scrub cukes. Cut in half lengthwise, use a spoon to remove seeds. Cut in half horizontally, then cut into spears/wedges. Place pickles, dill, dill seeds, and spices (not salt) in a large jar. Heat salt, vinegar, and water to boiling. Boil 2 minutes. Pour over cucumbers, filling jar to at least 1 inch above cukes. Cover jar opening with a flour sack towel or a paper towel and allow to sit overnight. In the morning, close jar and refrigerate. Allow flavor to develop for a couple of days before eating. If pickles aren't tart enough for your taste, add up to 1/4 c more vinegar.

*See <http://www.chefscatalog.com/product/21463-frigoverre-glass-storage.aspx> for an image reference. You can find these types of containers locally at Art Mart in Urbana and Cost Plus World Market in Champaign.

If you've got a recipe, we'd love to have it. Email info@prairielandcsa.org or call 355-6279 and I'll type while you read it. I've only met two people I couldn't keep up with in the last 15 years, both petroleum traders based in New York. Questions, comments? Pass those along, too.