

Prairieland Community Supported Agriculture
Week 9 - July 9, 2008

From the Farm:

You may have noticed that the shares are almost double in size from the early weeks of the program. "We are in the bell curve," says Diann. Because of the uncertainty of heavy rains, drought, and early frost, the Moores like to distribute more than the weekly average when they have it available. This way we don't end up behind on value at the end of the season, explains Diann. Unfortunately for them, it means some very long nights as they are now putting up hay after picking and washing produce.

In Your Share Today:

Summer vegetables are taking hold in the shares. Tomatoes, eggplant, and cucumbers, join zucchini, summer squash, broccoli, lettuce, cabbage, and onions this week. The onions are beginning to size now, reaching small status instead of green. Enjoy the spring broccoli as it will be some of the last. Six weeks of plantings ended up coming in three. With any luck, you have some in your freezer to enjoy this winter.

In the News NOT

Prairieland CSA did not get mentioned after all in the Tribune this weekend.

Share the Wealth

If you would like to help distribute produce from the Champaign site to the Eastern Illinois Foodbank and other charitable food distribution organizations in our community, call 355-6279 or email info@prairielandcsa.org. If you know of a pantry or organization that is in need of produce, please let us know.

Totebag Are Here!

Please take your totebag if you ordered and paid for it. We have ordered some extras, email info@prairielandcsa.org if you want one and missed the original deadline.

Recipes, Serving and Storage Suggestions

If you missed last week's newsletter and recipes, you can access it online at <http://www.prairielandcsa.org/newsletters.html>. As always, if you are stumped for how to prep, store, or cook any of your produce, or if the suggestions are more general than you feel comfortable with, don't hesitate to call 355-6279.

Lettuce

You know the drill by now. Enjoy it now as the temperatures are climbing and it won't be around for many more weeks.

Broccoli

See the previous week's newsletters for broccoli recipes, and be sure to check out the recipes in Recipes from America's Small Farms. Here are the freezing directions again, in case you need them. To freeze broccoli, heat a large pot of boiling water. Cut broccoli into pieces no bigger than 1 inch in any direction. Fill a bowl with ice water. Plunge

broccoli into boiling water. Boil for two to four minutes. Remove from water and plunge into ice water. If you don't have ice, use several changes of cool water. After five minutes, drain in a colander. Pack cooled broccoli into freezer bags, removing any excess air.

Beets

Again, check out last week's newsletter for suggestions, including, roasted beets with pasta and rosemary, steamed greens, and the risotto on page 200 of Recipes from America's Small Farms.

Food blogger Yulinka of Yulinka Cooks thinks beets get a bad rap here in the states. Her suggestion for beets?

Creamy beet salad

"Boil beets like potatoes. Bring some water to a boil, put one small or medium trimmed beet in the pan and simmer until the beet is tender and is easily pierced with a knife--45 minutes to an hour. Let it cool. (I cooked my beet the night before and it was nicely chilled when I was ready to work with it the next day.)

Grate the beet into a salad bowl. Add the following, finely chopped: 1 small, peeled cucumber; 1-2 scallions; 1 hardboiled egg; 1-2 good dill pickles; and a handful of fresh dill. Some finely diced red onion wouldn't be amiss if you aren't using the scallions.

For the dressing, I used a combo of a little olive oil, lemon juice, plain yogurt, sour cream, mayo, salt and pepper. You can use just mayo and yogurt or mayo and lemon juice or sour cream and yogurt, etc. Just make sure you have something creamy rich and nicely tart. I think 2 or 3 tablespoons of dressing is enough; eyeball it."

Cabbage

Want to make your cabbage disappear? Try this potluck staple:

Crunchy Ramen Cabbage Salad

1 head cabbage or 1/2 large head, shredded

1 bunch green onions or 1/2 large bunch thinly sliced

1/3 - 3/4 c slivered almonds

1/4 - 1/2 c sesame seeds

1 pkg ramen noodles broken into bite-size pieces (oriental or chicken flavor)

Toast almonds and sesame seeds for 15 minutes at 350°F. Cool. Combine with above ingredients. Chill. Just before serving, combine dressing ingredients in a separate lidded container:

1/2 c light oil

1/4 c sugar

1/4 c white or red wine vinegar

1/2 t salt

1 pkg of flavoring from ramen noodles

Mix. Pour over salad ingredients. Toss. Serve.

Summer Squash/Zucchini

Don't be afraid to try some of the newer squash varieties at pickup. Rumor has it they are sweet when steamed or sautéed.

Shareholder Hilary Valentine recommends Spaghetti with Zucchini and Lemon from the Moosewood Restaurant Cooks at Home for using zucchini:

1 pound spaghetti or linguine
1 T olive oil
4 garlic cloves, minced
6 - 8 small zucchini, sliced (about 4 cups)
dash of salt & ground black pepper
juice of 1 lemon
6 large fresh basil leaves, cut into thin strips
1 - 2 cups grated Pecorino cheese

Cook pasta according to package directions; while that's going on, heat the olive in a large, heavy skillet. Add the garlic & zucchini; stir and cook on medium-high until zucchini begins to brown. Sprinkle with salt & pepper. Add the lemon juice & basil. Stir and remove from heat. You'll want to have the zucchini finish just before the pasta is done. Drain pasta and place in a large serving bowl. Toss with 1 cup of the cheese. Top with the zucchini and serve immediately with remaining cheese at the table. Serves 4.

Eggplant

Grilled eggplant sandwiches are some of the best things going. Add some pesto mayo and watch this underappreciated vegetable disappear. Or, make one of the eggplant dips on page 156 of Recipes from America's Small Farms.

Eggplant, Cabbage, and More

Sliced eggplant, onions, sliced squash, and sliced cabbage are great combined in a South Vietnamese-style curry. Vietnamese curries are milder than their Indian counterparts.

Up to 1.5 pounds of mixed summer veggies
1 small onion minced
4 small stalks of lemon grass, or 6 leaves of lemon balm sliced very fine*
2 cloves garlic finely chopped
2-inch piece of cayenne pepper (seeded and minced) or dried to taste
2 T mild curry powder
1 t sea salt
8 oz coconut milk

Cube potatoes and boil in salted water if using, or microwave until just tender and chop into 1-inch chunks. Saute onion, with lemongrass/balm, garlic, and chilies until softened. Add curry powder and stir for 2 minutes. Remove and reserve. Saute vegetables. When vegetables are tender crisp, add potatoes, coconut milk, and curry mixture. Thin with water or stock if necessary. Serve with rice or rice noodles. *You can use basil instead, the flavor will be different, but still good.

Tomatoes

They are here. Toss them in your salads, pasta, or put them on sandwiches or pizza.

Penne al Pomodoro

Boil 8 oz penne pasta or spaghetti in salted water, and drain. Meanwhile, dice 2 tomatoes and thinly slice about a dozen basil leaves and/or equivalent amount of Italian parsley, and mince 1 clove garlic. Heat 1 to 2 T of olive oil in a large skillet. Saute garlic. When you can smell the garlic but it hasn't colored, add tomatoes and basil. Cook just until tomatoes soften. Toss pasta into sauce. Add fresh mozzarella or parmesan if desired.

Cucumbers

Quick Pickles – No Canning Necessary

2 medium cucumbers, thinly sliced

2 small onions, thinly sliced

3 tablespoons rice wine vinegar

3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

1 teaspoon kosher salt

1/2 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper

Prep the cucumbers and onions. Toss them in a large bowl with the vinegars, salt and pepper. Refrigerate at least 20 minutes, but preferably overnight.