

Prairieland CSA Week 7

News From the Farm

The Moore's luck changed drastically two nights ago when their farm received 4 inches of rain. Nearby, Milford received 5 to 7 inches which will be finding its way to the Moore's watershed via the Iroquois River.

What does this mean for the farm and the CSA? Right now major portions of the fields and pastures are under water. The water needs to subside ASAP if the tomatoes, eggplant, and squash are to make it. Even without the latest rains, the tomatoes and eggplants have been struggling with the overcast conditions the past few weeks and are behind. Onions also are in trouble as they can't endure wet conditions and have the potential to rot in the ground. Meanwhile, there are thousands and thousands of plants waiting to be transplanted. They must be planted within the next week if they are expected to mature in time or even survive. Three plantings of lettuce already have had to be discarded because they were too mature to be transplanted and survive.

If the winds stay steady from SSW/ W today, the rain should stay north of the farm. Rains are not forecast for the week ahead, but there can always be popups when the temperatures are high. The full extent of the water damage won't be known until Thursday night or Friday morning. So keep your fingers crossed, pray, send positive thoughts--do whatever you do. And if you've ever cursed the sand on your lettuce and radishes, now is the time to be thankful for it, because it will help the farm's fields will dry out quickly and be less hospitable for soil pathogens that plague flooded soils.

In the meantime, the Moores are going to be heavying up the shares. They are picking vegetables like broccoli and cauliflower that will not survive the flooding and trying to ensure you receive your full value as there will likely be some lags in the weeks ahead due to the transplanting delays and some crops potentially failing due to the flooding. Some crops like cabbage, they are picking now and storing to fill in gaps in the coming weeks, as well.

Today's Haul

broccoli
cauliflower
summer squash and zucchini
field lettuce
cabbage
green onions

Recipes and Storage Suggestions

Broccoli

You have plenty of broccoli to try any of the recipes from last week's newsletter:

<http://www.prairielandcsa.org/pdf/newsletters/2010/june16.pdf>

You can also try the broccoli salads on page 77 of Recipes from America's Small Farms, Broccoli Soup on page 71, Broccoli Flan on page 75.

Freeze some of your broccoli for soups and casseroles this winter. There are directions on page 69 or use these from University of Illinois Extension. 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.

Broccoli Soup for Freezing

Forgive the source, but this recipe from Gordon Ramsay is great for freezing since it has no dairy, and will not separate when reheated. It uses half a head per serving so it is a great way to move through broccoli quickly.

2 heads broccoli

Reserved cooking liquid from broccoli

Salt and pepper to taste

Olive oil and/or goat cheese optional, for garnish

Cut the florets off the heads of broccoli. Cut the stems into similarly sized pieces. Add all of the broccoli--florets and stems--into a pot of rapidly-boiling, salted water (2 tablespoons salt in 5 quarts of water). Cover. Cook 3.5 to 4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, put the cooked broccoli pieces into a blender. Fill blender about halfway with cooking liquid. Blend carefully since it's hot. Add more cooking liquid as necessary to achieve the desired consistency. Check seasonings, add salt and pepper as necessary.

If serving and not freezing, you can add cheese (goat cheese or cheddar cheese) to the bottom of the bowl before pouring the soup in. Serve, drizzled with olive oil if desired.

Cauliflower

You can freeze cauliflower, but like broccoli, it typically works better in soups or casseroles when thawed. Follow the directions for broccoli above.

Try Cauliflower Cheese pie on page 74. If you want to up the ante, slice cauliflower vertically into steaks and grill or bake: <http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Cauliflower-Steaks-with-Cauliflower-Puree-241351>

Roasted garlic is great with cauliflower. Steam cauliflower, drain well, and puree it with roasted garlic for a side that won't drop kick your pancreas. Here are some easy instructions for roasting garlic: http://simplyrecipes.com/recipes/roasted_garlic/

Roasted Cauliflower Soup

Roast cauliflower florets from 1 head cauliflower for 30 minutes at 425. Saute 2 cloves garlic and a green onion. Make a thin white sauce with 1 T butter and 1 T flour and 1 c milk. Combine with cauliflower puree and two cups water or broth. Season with salt and pepper. Add smoked chipotle or masala spices and serve w/ tortilla chips or small chickpea papadums (available at World Harvest), respectively. You can microwave papadums over the bottom of a rice bowl in the microwave instead of frying them.

There are lots of great Indian cauliflower dishes and adaptations:

<http://www.oprah.com/food/Poppy-Seed-Crusted-Cauliflower>

http://www.smilepolitely.com/food/spicy_beans_and_greens_year_round/

This one can be used with greens, but you also can add cauliflower in for the last couple hours in the crock pot, or the last 15 minutes if you are cooking stove top.

Traditionally, Indian cooks pair cauliflower with potatoes and masala spices:

<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/saras-secrets/aloo-gobipunjabi-style-cauliflower-and-potatoes-with-ginger-recipe/index.html>

There's also the Indian-Chinese Gobi Manchurian:

<http://www.videojug.com/webvideo/how-to-make-gobi-cauliflower-manchurian-dry>

Cabbage

This will keep for a few weeks if you don't get around to it this week. Though you may want to try the slaws on page 73 to beat the heat.

Zucchini, Summer Squash

Eat raw in slices with vegetable dips.

Slice it thinly lengthwise with a mandolin or vegetable peeler. Saute briefly in olive oil and top with tomato sauce.

Sauteed zucchini and onion/green onion with a little bacon or pancetta sprinkled with grated parmesan and chopped basil is great by itself or over pasta.

Try zucchini pancakes from PCSA co-founder Lisa Morgan at Champaign Taste:

<http://champaign-taste.blogspot.com/2007/07/tis-season-zucchini-pancakes.html>

Or the gluten free ones here:

<http://www.justhungry.com/zucchini-and-chickpea-pancakes>

These are especially good w/ chutney.

Questions? Concerns? Please do not hesitate to let us know at 355-6279 or at info@prairielandcsa.org