



TWO SMALL FARMS

Community Supported Agriculture

September 1-3, 2010

A Note about Padron Peppers, by Andy Griffin

When I visited the Spanish town of Padrón years ago it was during my honeymoon, and I paid more attention to my wife than I did to the local hot pepper, the Pimiento de Padrón. So when I began to grow the Padron peppers I had to learn the correct way to harvest them by trial and error.

The heat in a pepper is caused by a chemical called capsaicin. As a hot pepper matures the pod concentrates pain inducing capsaicin in its tissues, especially in its seeds. This was originally a defense mechanism on the part of the pepper plant to discourage predators. Capsaicin has failed so completely to discourage humans from eating peppers that we now cultivate peppers all over the world, and the plant's survival is assured.

Spaniards don't have a taste for violently spicy hot foods and they prefer Padron peppers to be picked while they're still tiny, with only a tickle of heat. Out of ignorance I let the first Padron peppers I grew mature into big red fireballs.

Padron peppers are traditionally tossed in a pan with oil and fried only so long as to blister the skins. Then the peppers are sprinkled with salt and served at the bar with glasses of cool, golden sherry. When everything works out, about the first nine Padron peppers a bar patron eats are sweet and savory, and the tenth one is spicy enough to prompt a call for another cooling drink.

I enjoy mincing Padron peppers up, frying them with onion long enough to soften them, and then adding some egg for a tasty breakfast scramble. Cooking them whole, then de-stemming them and adding them to a frittata also works nicely. We don't have enough Padron plants to give everyone lots of peppers every week, and Padron are small and costly to pick, but we should be able to give every CSA subscriber a basket or two by the end of the season. This summer has been unusually cool, which hasn't been good news for our pepper crop, but the town of Padron, Spain, is on the Atlantic, and their favorite pepper has felt completely at home this summer so the harvest looks good going forward.

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*From Mariquita Farm: carrots, eggplant, tomatoes, mystery.
From High Ground Organics: strawberries, lettuce, beets,
spinach, collard greens. From Thomas Farm: flowers.*

Last Renewal Period Approaching!

The third quarter ends on September 17th. (Your subscription expiration date is listed to the right of your name on the sign in sheets.) If you are on our quarterly renewal schedule, please send in your payment now, before the deadline of September 17th. We need to receive your check by September 17th in order to extend your subscription in our system and ensure you are on the schedule to get your fall veggies. The 2010 CSA season ends November 17-19.

9 weeks of veggies, \$198

9 weeks of veggies and flowers, \$270

Please make your check payable to Two Small Farms and mail it to: P.O. Box 2065, Watsonville, CA 95077.

This Week

Lettuce ^{HG}

Tomatoes ^{MF}

Strawberries ^{HG}

Red Or Gold Beets ^{HG}

**Chantenay Carrots OR
Eggplant** ^{MF}

**Spinach OR Collard
Greens** ^{HG}

Mystery ^{MF}

Flowers: Mixed Bouquet ^{TF}

Recipes and Notes

(see www.mariquita.com/recipes for more recipes)

Put everything into your fridge as soon as you return home, except the tomatoes -- they should be stored on a cool spot on your kitchen counter. Top your beets and use the greens as you would any cooking green, best within the first couple of days. Top your carrots as they keep better without their greens. The strawberries are picked ripe so they should be eaten within a day or two, or frozen.

You could get either padron peppers or summer squash with jalapeno peppers in with your mystery item this week. If you don't get padron peppers in your share this week, you will in the next week or two. The padron peppers will come in a clamshell container and are mostly not spicy. Maybe one in 15 or 20 might have some spicy heat. The jalapeno peppers are

spicy and if you get them, they'll be packaged with the summer squash.

What I would do with my CSA share this week by CSA host, David F.: The beets have been roasted or boiled in the past, but how about a cool soup? Boil them (straight in, no washing/peeling), cool in water, slip the skins off, roughly chop. Get some onions cooking in the same pot you boiled the beets (less clean up!) and after they're golden throw in the chopped beets and more salt than you think is healthy. After a minute throw in some veggie stock, cook for a bit, then wizz it up with your machine of choice. Then cool over ice, or in freezer, wherever. Serve cool with a bit of feta or yogurt on top.

Eggplant is getting turned into baba ghanoush the next time the grill is on. Pierce the skin with a fork so it doesn't explode (yes, this has happened to me - it's messy!) then put it off the direct heat and let the skin char. It's done when the whole thing is soft. Let it cool, then peel off the skin and scoop out the seeds. The "meat" that remains should be mixed with garlic, lemon, and olive oil for sure, but experiment with ground cumin and mint and parsley too. Great as a dip but also as an accompaniment for whatever you just grilled.

The spinach and the strawberries will be combined with some fresh goat cheese and toasted nuts (walnuts?) in a salad.

The carrots will become another dip. Boil/steam for a long time (they need to be soft), cool, and throw in a food processor with feta (50% of the weight of the carrots), garlic, a couple calamata olives, salt, ground cumin, ground coriander, a little cayenne, olive oil, lemon, and very importantly some red wine vinegar. Puree till smooth. Adjust seasoning to your taste - but the tartness of the redwine vinegar should be clear.

Beet Burgers, from Asparagus to Zucchini, Madison Area CSA Coalition

2 cups grated beets	2 cups grated carrots
½ cup grated onion	1 cup cooked rice
1 cup toasted sunflower seeds	1/2 cup toasted sesame seeds
2 eggs, beaten	2 tbsp. soy sauce
1 cup grated cheddar cheese	3 tbsp. flour
¼ cup oil	minced fresh or dried garlic,
cayenne	fresh or dried parsley to taste

Toast sunflower and sesame seeds in dry skillet or hot oven several minutes, tossing often. Mix ingredients, form into patties, and bake at 350 degrees. Unless patties are very large, it should not be necessary to turn them. Makes 6–8 burgers.

Chickpea Stew

1 onion, chopped	3-4 tomatoes (or one 15oz can whole), chopped
1 bunch spinach	2-3 garlic cloves
1 tsp. cumin	pinch saffron
1 tsp. paprika	pinch cloves
2 cans chickpeas	1/3 cup raisins

Heat a few tablespoons of olive oil in a saucepan and add the onion and tomatoes. Simmer slowly until very soft, about 15 minutes. Blanch the spinach leaves and drain. Allow to cool and then squeeze out as much water with your hands as possible, then chop the spinach. Make a paste with the garlic cloves by chopping them finely with some salt and then mashing them with the side of your knife into the cutting board until a paste forms. Mix that with the cumin, saffron, paprika, cloves and a touch of the water from the chickpea cans until you have a wet paste. Add that to the onions for a few minutes. Add the chickpeas with their water, then the spinach and the raisins and bring to a low simmer. Cook another 10 minutes or so, check for seasoning and serve warm

Grilled Beets, from CSA Member, Nicole A.:

Cut the tops and bottoms off the beets. Slice the beets thin and round— not too thick or they will take a long time to cook. Add salt and pepper and a small amount of olive oil so they do not stick to the grill. Grill to taste depending on how crunchy you want them. They are like chips.

Upcoming Events

Cooking Class with Chef Jonathan Miller, Saturday, September 25th: 10 AM to 2 PM: how to make the most of your farm share, highlighting the flavors of late summer/early fall, including peppers, greens, carrots, beets, etc. Email Shelley (csa@twosmallfarms.com) to sign up and send a check made payable to Two Small Farms to secure your spot! Cost: \$55/person (Net proceeds will be donated to the Freedom School Garden.)

Fall Harvest Festival and Pumpkin Patch, Saturday October 9th from 10 AM to 4 PM at High Ground Organics. pumpkins, made-to-order holiday wreaths, strawberry picking, petting zoo, pony rides, hay rides, farm arts and crafts for kids, live music, and yummy organic food prepared under the direction of chef Andrew Cohen.

Ratatouille, from Chef Jonathan Miller

1½ lb tomatoes	4 small garlic cloves, sliced
small handful parsley, chopped	dozen basil leaves, julienned
olive oil	1 lb eggplant, diced
1 onion, halved and sliced	2 small bell peppers (I like red), diced
1 lb summer squash, diced	

Peel your tomatoes (score the bottom with an "x" and drop in boiling water for the count of 10; slip off the skins), then chop them coarsely. Heat a few tablespoons of olive oil in a large saucepan and add the chopped tomatoes, the garlic, parsley, and the basil and simmer, partially covered, for about 25 minutes, or until the tomatoes are broken down and everything is nicely thickened. Leave on the stove. While the tomatoes are cooking, toss the eggplant with some salt (not too much, maybe a teaspoon or so) and allow it to drain in a strainer over the sink for about 20 minutes.

In a separate skillet, sauté the onions in a bit of olive oil with a small hit of salt until they are very soft, about 15 minutes, then transfer them to the finished tomato sauce (or to a bowl if the sauce isn't done yet). Cook the peppers in the same skillet until they are soft, about 10 minutes, then transfer them to the same place you have the onions. Do the same thing with the summer squash, which should take even less time to soften. Finish by drying the eggplant with a towel and sautéing it in some oil until it is soft, about 10 minutes. Now add all the veggies to the tomato sauce if you haven't already and continue cooking until very tender, probably another 40-50 minutes. Check for seasoning, adding some pepper, and serve with some more parsley on top.

Tomato and Beet Salad

4 beets	4-8 tomatoes, depending on size
olive oil	6 oz feta cheese
small handful mint leaves, julienned	

Roast your beets to your liking, then peel them and cut into bite sized chunks. Cut the tomatoes into roughly the same size as your beets and add them to the same bowl as your beets. Toss with plenty of olive oil and salt to your taste, then finish by crumbling some feta over the top and sprinkling the mint over that. Serve at room temperature.