

Two Small Farms Newsletter

Issue Number 328 August 3, 2005

In your box this week: New (freshly dug) Potatoes, Wax Peppers, Tomatoes, Cilantro, Leeks, cucumbers Strawberries OR Artichokes; Wednesday Delivery: Summer Squash. Thursday Delivery: Broccoli

Preliminary Vegetable Notes:

If you get an armenian cucumber, remember it's really a 'snake melon' and large ones are crunchy yummy cucumber throughout, not bitter or pithy. Try it! no need to peel them.

Making tomato sauce?? Mariquita is selling 15# flats of flavorful early girl tomatoes: \$18/15# (they often weight a bit more than that.:-) call or email Zelda: 831-786-0685 csa@twosmallfarms.com to order your flat(s) today.

A photo essay on putting up tomatoes

Tomato Upick Days at Mariquita Farm

Dinner at the Thomas Farm Sunday August 14th to benefit the Open Space Alliance.

What I d do with this week s box by Andy G.

If you go to the university and get a degree in philosophy, as I did, and if you really do your homework, and read all the heavy books by Plato and Spinoza and Kant, etc., you re still not going to know any more about the nature of ultimate reality than the butcher, the baker, or the candlestick maker. But (and this is a big, big BUT) if you pay close attention to your instructors you CAN learn to act AS IF you know everything. I studied hard at school, but even I m humbled by some questions, especially questions about cooking. Being a vegetable farmer has given me excellent opportunities to meet really good cooks. With cooking, unlike philosophy, the proof is in the pudding, not in the word play. So, bearing in mind that I m a know-it-all, not a cook, let me tell you how I ll

use the contents of this week s harvest box.

For starters, I ll put everything but the tomatoes in the refrigerator. Never put tomatoes in the fridge. To do so would violate the first law of cooking as articulated by my heroine, Alice Waters, who directs us to get the best ingredients and then try hard not to ruin them. Chilling tomatoes bursts the cell walls in the meat and makes them mushy. And tomatoes have plenty of acid in them, so they re not going to spoil promptly at room temperature, anyway.

Then I ll invite my friend Martin over for dinner with the covert plan in mind to get him to cook. It s not that I m lazy, I just don t want to violate the first law of good management, which is to let the most skilled person do the job without letting one s own swollen ego get in the way. But if it turns out that Martin is unavailable, and since Julia is visiting her mom with our kids, and it really is just me cooking for myself, I ll put some water on to boil potatoes and go back to the refrigerator.

With Julia gone the refrigerator has gotten scary so I ll probably find a slimy onion in the crisper from weeks past. But hey, an onion is just a bulb from the dirt, and I ve had all my shots, so I ll peel off the gross stuff and chop up the parts that don t appear to be rotten and put them to one side. When the water starts boiling I ll throw all the potatoes in the pot.

As the potatoes cook I ll chop up some tomatoes and some cucumbers and throw them together with a pinch of salt. And then I ll bite into one of the peppers for an impromptu, entirely subjective measure of the Scovilles . The heat we feel from a hot pepper is actually a chemical bum caused by capsaicin, a naturally occurring chemical. Plant scientists measure the concentrations of capsaicin in Scoville units . Hmm. Sort of spicy. These would cause Dr. Scoville to reach for a beer. So I ll mince one Hungarian wax pepper up, seeds and all, and lob it into the tomato/cuke bowl. With Julia gone I ll be free to use all the pepper seeds. Capsaicin is concentrated in the seeds, so if I wanted a milder salsa I d get rid of them first.

When the potatoes are three quarters cooked through I'll remove them from the heat and drain them. They'll continue to cook in their skins, and anyway, they need to cool before I can chop them. While the potatoes are cooling I wash the strawberries (the whole basket, because why not? No one's around so I don't have to share) and slice them. Martin told me a fun way dress up strawberries by splashing them with red wine. No bottles of wine are open so I root through my cellar of eight bottles of wine and pick what I imagine must be a vintage that goes well with tacos and open it. I like wine and Julia likes good wine, so I want to be careful to save any above mediocre bottles to share with her, because she's my true love. With no palate to guide me I can only open the wine with the stupidest label. POP! I'll pour myself a glass and slop some on the berries.

Once the potatoes are cool enough to chop I'll take one and wack it up, putting the rest back in the fridge for later meals. I'll fry the minced onions till they're clear and toss in the chopped potato. While the potatoes are turning golden I'll throw some tortillas on the comal and tear some cilantro off the bunch. When the potatoes are half golden I'll chop up a squash and toss it in the pan, too. I like squash while it's still firm. Salt and pepper never killed anyone so I'll judiciously apply some to my vegetables as they cook. Hmm, not bad, better save some for my tacos.

When the tortillas are starting to curl up on the comal like the sole of old shoes I'll snatch them off and plop some potato/squash stuff on top, then add a tuft of cilantro. The salsa goes on top. I'll be hungry from all the waiting so I'll enjoy my tacos, and when they're done I'll have my strawberries.

Chances are strong I'll eat almost exactly the same thing for breakfast, except that, now lacking the sorry onion, I'll fry up several peppers with the potatoes to jazz up my tacos, and I'll toss in an egg, too, to make it more breakfasty. I find that high dosages of capsaicin mix well in the early am with the caffeine juice I swig down.

The leeks will have to wait until Julia returns because I like the soups she makes, but I've told you how I'll use this week's box. Don't take me too seriously. Remember, I'm no cook, I just play one at the farmers market when no real cooks are watching.

What to do with this week's box - CSA member Dori Moss

Our household consists of just my husband and myself, so when I get my box each week, I try to plan menus that use at least 2 items per meal, which usually comes out to 3-4 meals from the box per week. Most recipes make 4 to 6 servings; what we don't finish for dinner, we usually take into work for lunch the next day. This week, I'll use the potatoes and leeks for **Potato-Leek Soup**, which I'll serve with a side salad, good crusty bread, and an assortment of cheeses to make the meal feel more full. Another night, I'll use half the summer squash, half of cilantro, and all of the peppers to make **Black Bean and Vegetable Tacos/Burritos**; the other half of the cilantro and half of the tomatoes will go into **Pico de Gallo or Salsa**, and I'll make a side of **Mexican Rice** to complete the meal. If any of the Black Bean and Vegetable filling is left over, I'll use it another night as filling for **Omelettes with Black Bean and Vegetable Filling**, which I usually serve with big side salad. The rest of the vegetables (artichokes, half the squash, half the tomatoes) will each be used for small sides to go with a meal featuring pan-grilled fish, or grilled chicken, or if I'm feeling lazy a roast chicken picked up from the store. Since I still have garlic and thyme left from last week, I'll make **Artichokes Braised with Garlic and Thyme**; the squash will be pan-grilled or barbecue-grilled for **Summer Squash with Walnut Sauce**, and the tomatoes will be finished up in **Tomato and Fresh Mozzarella Salad**. My recipes are below in the recipe section. - Dori

Recipes from Dori and Zelda

Dori's Recipes:

Recipes:

Potato-Leek Soup

Slice white and light-green parts of leeks into paper-thin rings, and swish them in a bowl of cold water, allowing any dirt to sink to the bottom. Scoop them out with a slotted spoon, and allow to dry briefly on paper towels. Meanwhile, peel potatoes and cut into 1/2-inch dice. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a 3-quart saucepan, add the leeks, and sauté gently until soft; do not allow to brown. Add potatoes and enough water to cover by an inch. Season to taste with salt, black pepper, and a 1/4-cup or more of finely chopped parsley. Bring to a boil, and simmer gently for 30 minutes, or until potatoes are very soft. Add more water as needed if simmer is too high. Remove from heat, and roughly puree the soup by running a potato masher through it; it should have a coarse texture with small pieces of intact potato remaining. Stir in 3 tablespoons of heavy cream and serve with more parsley sprinkled on top.

Black Bean and Vegetable Filling; use to fill tacos, burritos, or omelettes
Adapted from *Vegetarian Suppers* by Deborah Madison

1 tablespoon oil
Half a farm portion of summer squash, cut into 1/4-dice, about 2-3 cups
Peppers
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 bay leaf
1/2 bunch cilantro, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 teaspoon ground cumin
chipotle chile, powdered or in adobo sauce, to taste
1 can black beans with their juice
1 lime

Cut peppers in half, remove seeds, and place under broiler until skin blisters. Place in paper or plastic bag to steam for 10 minutes, then remove blackened skins and roughly chop.

Heat oil in saucepan over high heat.

Add the squash in batches if necessary to avoid crowding the pan, and cook quickly until the edges are golden brown, 2-3 min per batch. Remove with a slotted spatula to a plate. Reduce heat to medium, and add peppers, onion, bay leaf and cilantro and cook for about 5 minutes or until onion is soft. Add garlic, cumin and chipotle and stir for 1 minute. Add beans and bring to a boil. Season with salt and more chipotle as desired. Add in the cooked squash and season to taste with lime juice.

I like to use this filling in corn tortillas, but it also works well for burritos, or as a filling for omelettes.

Artichokes Braised with Garlic and Thyme, from *Epicurious.com*

6 medium artichokes (1/2 lb each)
18 fresh flat-leaf parsley sprigs
1/4 cup olive oil
8 fresh thyme sprigs
1 head of garlic, cloves separated and left unpeeled
1 cup water
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

Special equipment: a 6- to 8-qt heavy pot wide enough to hold artichokes in a single layer (about 11 inches in diameter)

Working with 1 artichoke at a time, cut off top inch of artichoke and gently pull open center. Scoop out sharp leaves and fuzzy choke from center with a melon-ball cutter or a spoon. Trim bottom 1/4 inch of stem (if present), keeping stem attached, and peel stem. Put artichoke in a large bowl of cold water. Repeat with remaining artichokes.

Remove artichokes from water and push 3 parsley sprigs into center of each. Heat 1/4 cup olive oil in pot over moderate heat until hot but not smoking, then add artichokes, thyme sprigs, garlic, 1/4 cup water, pepper, and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Cover pot and braise artichokes, turning occasionally, until artichokes are browned in spots and bases are tender when pierced with a knife, about 35 minutes.

Transfer artichokes, thyme, and garlic to a platter. Add remaining 3/4 cup water to pot and deglaze by boiling over high heat, stirring and scraping up brown bits, 1 minute. Pour pan juices (they will be dark) into a small bowl and stir in extra-virgin olive oil and remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt. Squeeze pulp from 2 of garlic cloves into juices and mash into sauce with a fork.

Divide artichokes and remaining garlic cloves among 6 plates and drizzle with sauce. Garlic cloves can be peeled and spread on crusty bread.

Walnut Sauce, from *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone* by Deborah Madison

3/4 cup walnuts
1 small clove garlic
Salted and freshly ground black pepper
2 to 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil or walnut oil

Grind walnuts, garlic and 1/4 teaspoon salt in food processor until smooth, then gradually add the oil. Thin to desired consistency with about 1/4 cup boiling water. Taste for salt and season with pepper.

Slice zucchini-style squash into 1/4-inch slices, other types into 1/4-inch rings. Brush squash with olive oil and brown in a cast-iron skillet over very high heat. Alternatively, grill squash on a charcoal grill, or grill under broiler. Edges should be charred and soft, with just a hint of firm texture in the middle of the slice. Drizzle squash with Walnut Sauce.

Mexican Rice

1/2 onion, chopped
1 tablespoon vegetable or olive oil
1 small to medium carrot, diced small
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 cup long-grain white rice
1 small can (8 oz) tomato sauce
2 teaspoons ancho or New Mexico chili powder
1 teaspoon cumin
generous pinch oregano
1 3/4 cups chicken or vegetable broth

salt and pepper to taste

Saute onion and carrot in oil until onion is soft. Add garlic, and cook another minute. Stir in rice, and cook until golden. Add tomato sauce, spices and broth and bring to boil. Cover tightly, reduce to slow simmer and cook 20 minutes. At the end of 20 minutes, stir, and cook another 5 minutes with cover off if there is liquid remaining.

Tomato and Fresh Mozzarella Salad

Slice fresh mozzarella into thin (1/16 inch) slice. Slice tomatoes into 1/8-inch slices. Alternate slices of tomatoes and mozzarella in rows on a plate. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar and a good fruity olive oil. Sprinkle with freshly chopped basil and fresh pepper. Serve with a good crusty bread that has been sliced, brushed with olive oil, and placed under the broiler until light gold.

MASTER RECIPE FOR STEAMED WHOLE ARTICHOKE

adapted from *Cooks Illustrated* Serves 4

A steaming apparatus, such as a collapsible basket or bamboo rack, is helpful but not necessary for whole artichokes. Simply make use of the artichoke's tips and trimmings as a rack. Artichokes can be served warm with melted butter or at room temperature with a vinaigrette.

12 baby artichokes, rinsed and trimmed

Salt

1. Place steaming apparatus (optional) in large nonreactive pot with tight-fitting lid; bring 1 inch of water to boil.

2. Place artichokes, stem end up, in steaming apparatus or in water. Sprinkle with 1/2 teaspoon salt; cover and steam over medium-high heat until tender, about 25 minutes for the babies; outer leaves should pull away easily and the stem end should be thoroughly tender.

3. Gently remove artichokes with tongs. Serve immediately or cool, stem end up, to room temperature. (Can be covered and refrigerated overnight; bring to room temperature before serving.)

Trimming Artichokes

Squeeze juice from 2 lemon halves into large bowl of cold water; add squeezed lemon halves. Cut off top half of each artichoke and discard. Cut off stem of artichoke. Starting at base, bend tough outer leaves back and snap off where they break naturally, leaving tender inner leaves. Using small sharp knife, trim outside of base until no dark green areas remain. Rub trimmed area with lemon half.

If recipe calls for baby artichokes, place in lemon water until ready to use.

If recipe calls for medium or large artichokes left whole, scoop out fibrous choke and small purple-tipped leaves, using spoon. Rub exposed areas with lemon half. Place whole artichokes in lemon water until ready to use or up to 2 hours.

If recipe calls for medium or large artichokes halved, cut each whole artichoke in half. Rub cut sides with lemon half. Using spoon, scoop out fibrous choke and small purple-tipped leaves. Rub exposed areas with lemon half. Place artichoke halves in lemon water until ready to use or up to 2 hours.

Bon Appétit, April 1998

Cilantro Pesto, from *Pestos* by Dorothy Rankin

Use as a pasta sauce or combine with butter to serve with green beans, summer squash or corn. Use it to make dips, salad dressings and sauces for seafood.

1 large bunch cilantro leaves (I cut off the bottom inch or 2 of the bunch, wash thoroughly, then roughly chop it up before putting it in the bowl.)
1 large garlic clove

1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
3 tablespoons pine nuts (walnuts are a good substitute when pine nut prices are too high)
1 teaspoon grated lime or lemon peel
5 tablespoons olive oil
salt and pepper

Combine the first 5 ingredients in a food processor. Process to mix. With the machine running, slowly add the olive oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper and process to the desired consistency. Let stand for at least 5 minutes before serving.

PAT'S BABY LEEKS

I lightly braise them in a skillet in a little water. Then, while they are hot, I put them on a platter, dress them in a good vinaigrette and crumble some sheep feta on top with cracked pepper. This is one of my 11 year-old's favorite foods. I learned the recipe in France, where leeks are the poor man's asparagus.

FRESH HERB, POTATO AND LEEK SOUP, Bon Appétit, November 1992

A creamy "comfort" soup that has plenty of richness without a lot of cream.

3 pounds potatoes, cut into 1-inch pieces
5 cups canned low-salt chicken broth
3 cups water
3 large leeks (white and pale green parts only), chopped
1/2 cup whipping cream
1/4 cup minced fresh chives or green onion tops
2 tablespoons minced fresh basil or 2 teaspoons dried, crumbled
1 tablespoon minced fresh dill or 1 teaspoon dried dillweed
Hot pepper sauce (such as Tabasco)
Chopped fresh chives or green onion tops

Bring first 8 ingredients to boil in heavy large pot or Dutch oven over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until potatoes are very tender and soup thickens slightly, about 1 hour.

Transfer 2 cups of soup to blender and puree. Return puree to pot. Season with salt, pepper and hot pepper sauce. (Can be prepared 1 day ahead and refrigerated. Reheat before continuing.) Ladle soup into bowls. Garnish with chopped chives and serve. Makes about 12 cups.

Pepper recipes:

<http://www.mariquita.com/recipes/peppers.html>

NUTRITION NOTES (from The Wellness Encyclopedia of Food and Nutrition, Sheldon Margen, M.D.): Perhaps the most surprising feature of peppers is their nutritiousness: They are excellent sources of many essential nutrients, especially vitamin C - by weight, green bell peppers have twice as much as citrus fruits (red bells have three times as much.) Hot peppers contain even more vitamin C, 357 percent more than an orange. Moreover, red peppers are quite a good source of beta carotene. Red peppers are higher in beta carotene than green peppers: A sweet red pepper provides nearly 11 times as much beta carotene as a sweet green one; hot red peppers contain nearly 14 times as much as their green counterparts. Furthermore, sweet red peppers have one and a half times as much Vitamin C as sweet green peppers; the vitamin C content of red and green hot peppers is the same.

Ten Minute Stir Fried Chicken with Nuts

adapted from *The Minimalist Cooks at Home* by Mark Bittman

1 Tablespoon peanut or vegetable oil
2 cups pepper strips, onion slices, or a combination of the two
1 pound boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1/2 inch chunks
1 cup halved walnuts, whole cashews, or other nuts
3 Tablespoons hoisin sauce

1) Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet and heat on high for one minute. Add the veggies in a single layer and cook, undisturbed, until they begin to char a little on the bottom, about one minute.

Stir and cook one minute more.

2) Add the chicken and stir once or twice. Cook one minute until the bottom begins to char. Cook and stir another minute or two, then check a chicken piece to make sure it's done. Lower heat to medium.

3) Stir in the nuts and the hoisin sauce. Cook about 15 seconds then add 2 T water. Cook, stirring, until it's bubbly and glazes all the chicken and veggies. Serve with rice.

POTATOES WITH PEPPERS AND CHORIZO

2 lb medium boiling potatoes, peeled
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 fresh jalapeño chiles (optional)
1 large onion, halved lengthwise, then cut lengthwise into 1/4-inch-wide strips
1 lb green bell or Italian frying peppers, cut lengthwise into 1/4-inch-wide strips
1/2 cup finely chopped Spanish chorizo (cured spiced pork sausage; 2 oz; casings discarded if desired)
3/4 cup dry white wine

Make a crosswise cut halfway through 1 potato, then break it apart. Turn potato cut sides down, then cut and break halves in same manner. Repeat halving and breaking until pieces are about 1 1/2 inches. Repeat with remaining potatoes.

Heat oil in a 12-inch heavy nonstick skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then sauté potatoes with salt, turning occasionally, until browned and just cooked through, 15 to 20 minutes. Transfer potatoes with a slotted spoon to a bowl, reserving oil in skillet.

Cut a 1 1/2-inch lengthwise slit in each chile, then add to skillet along with onion, peppers, and chorizo and reduce heat to moderate. Cook, uncovered, stirring frequently, until vegetables are softened, 5 to 6 minutes. Add wine and boil until reduced to about 1/4 cup, 3 to 4 minutes. Discard chiles, then add pepper mixture to potatoes along with salt and pepper to taste and toss well. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Cooks' note:

Onion and peppers can be cut into strips and chorizo can be chopped 1 day ahead and chilled separately in sealed plastic bags.

Makes 12 servings (as part of tapas buffet).
Gourmet

**Sautéed Peppers and Squash (serves 1),
Vegetarian Times Complete Cookbook**

1 to 2 teaspoons virgin olive oil
4 scallions, sliced thinly
1/2 bell pepper, seeded and sliced into strips
1/2 lb. zucchini, sliced on the diagonal
2 teaspoons capers, drained (optional)
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Heat the oil in a medium skillet over medium heat, and cook the scallions and bell pepper strips, stirring, for 3 minutes. Add the squash and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the remaining ingredients and heat through. Serve warm or at room temperature

**CHOCOLATE ZUCCHINI CAKE, Bon
Appétit, November 1995**

2 1/4 cups sifted all purpose flour
1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 3/4 cups sugar
1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
1/2 cup vegetable oil
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 cup buttermilk
2 cups grated unpeeled zucchini (about 2 1/2 medium)
1 6-ounce package (about 1 cup) semisweet chocolate chips
3/4 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 325°F. Butter and flour 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking pan. Sift flour, cocoa powder, baking soda and salt into medium bowl. Beat sugar, butter and oil in large bowl until well blended. Add eggs 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla extract. Mix in dry ingredients alternately with buttermilk in 3

additions each. Mix in grated zucchini. Pour batter into prepared pan. Sprinkle chocolate chips and nuts over.

Bake cake until tester inserted into center comes out clean, about 50 minutes. Cool cake completely in pan.

**SOLE WITH LEEKS AND TOMATOES,
Bon Appétit, Too Busy To Cook? May 2001**

Serve with rice, mashed potatoes, or noodles.

6 tablespoons olive oil
1 3/4 cups sliced leeks (white and pale green parts only; from 2 medium)
2 large garlic cloves, chopped
2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme (or fresh herb of your choice)
1 bay leaf
1 cup canned vegetable broth
1/2 cup dry white wine
1 15-ounce can diced tomatoes in juice

4 5- to 6-ounce sole fillets
All purpose flour

Heat 3 tablespoons oil in heavy large skillet over medium heat. Add leeks, garlic, thyme, and bay leaf. Sauté until leeks are tender, about 5 minutes. Add vegetable broth and wine; boil 5 minutes. Add tomatoes with juices. Boil until sauce thickens, about 5 minutes. Season sauce to taste with salt and pepper.

Meanwhile, sprinkle fish with salt and pepper. Fold each fillet in half; secure with toothpick. Dust outside of fish with flour. Heat remaining 3 tablespoons oil in another large skillet over medium-high heat. Add fish and sauté until golden and just opaque in center, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer fish to plates; remove toothpicks. Top fish with sauce. Makes 4 servings.

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