

Berries on Bryan Station CSA Farm

Newsletter
August 12th and 13th,
2009



“Tomatoes Galore”

Inside this issue:

This week's produce 1

Coming Attractions 1

All about tomatoes 2

*This week's recipes by
Deb Outland:* 3

*This week's recipes by
Deb Outland (cont'd)* 3

Around the Farm 4

*All about Tomatoes
(cont'd)* 4

Upcoming Next Week:

- Potatoes
- Okra
- More Varieties
of Peppers
- Lots of Tomatoes
- Runner Beans
- Bok Choi

Welcome to your thirteenth basket pickup!

Deb Outland and Annette Fischer continue to give you very attractive and fun to read newsletters with lots of yummy recipes for you to try. We hope that you are enjoying your baskets and visiting the farm. This week we have for you:

Tomatoes!!!!



This will be another big tomato week. You will be able to choose another entire tray of tomatoes.

Bok Choi

You will get even more of this tasty green for stir

frying. The bunch will be inside your bag of greens.

Green Onions

You will be receiving green onions that were companion planted in our main summer veggie field. They served a dual purpose to deter bugs from our main plantings.

Beautiful Berries

We plan to have blackberries and/or normal red raspberries in today's basket.

Green Beans

We plan to have a bag in everyone's basket today, just like last week.

Herbs

We will have larger bags of **basil** for you to make pesto with. We will also have **parsley, chives, borage, English thyme, swiss mint, sage, dill, oregano, rosemary, cilantro** and **lemon balm**.

Greens

Your bag will contain a mixture of Swiss chard, collard greens, Chinese cabbage, mustard, and kale.

CHOICE TABLE

We plan to have Tat Sui, green bell peppers, jingle bell peppers, banana peppers, cucumbers, patty pan squash, fennel, green beans, sweet peas and foot long Borneo beans from Sumatra, Indonesia. Our okra was popular last week and we'll have more this week. We like it sauteed in olive oil until it is golden brown.



Deb Outland's little cooking corner ...

This week I'm concentrating on tomatoes. I'm looking for more recipes for tomato dishes, so do send them in! Here is a salsa recipe, and an idea for using up leftover salsa. I hope you enjoy the ideas and tomato-handling tips.



Yum!

Tomatoes, Tomatoes, Tomatoes

The Aztecs and Incas were the first to cultivate tomatoes around 700AD. They were first introduced to Europe around 1556. The world has been hooked ever since! Not only do they taste great, they are low in calories. They have only about 35 calories in a medium (5 ounce) tomato! They pack a real nutrition wallop for those calories as well. They are a rich source of vitamin C, and Vitamin A, as well as important cancer-fighting lycopene. They also are rich in the molecules which ac-

tivate the taste of umami. Umami is the fifth scientifically recognized taste, along with sweet, salty, bitter, and sour. Umami is important because it is the taste of "meaty" or "savory". So using tomatoes can improve the savory, meaty quality of a dish without adding meat or cheese. That's why foods like Ratatouille or Marinara sauce for spaghetti are so satisfying. The following are some ideas for using all those wonderful tomatoes that are around right now.

Make spaghetti sauce out of fresh tomatoes and freeze the part you don't need to serve the first day. Regular sized jars of canned sauce contain 26 fluid ounces, or about 3 ½ cups of sauce. If you're cooking for two, that's more sauce than you need, so you can custom-freeze your sauce in the exact quantities you need for your own family. Quart-sized Zip-

Lock style bags work perfectly for this—you can even squeeze in a little more than a quart if you have a big family. And they store very compactly in the freezer, as well.

Make up fresh salsa and keep it in the fridge. Use it on eggs, with chips, like catsup, even as a quick "pre-seasoned cooking ingredient. See the quick and easy family recipe below, Mexican Mac and Cheese for an example. It can be substituted for canned tomatoes in anything with a Mexican or Tex-Mex twist.

Make slow-roasted tomatoes (from recipe in last week's newsletter) and freeze for later use.

Make a "vegetable soup base" of fresh garden vegetables like tomatoes, corn, green beans, onions, lima beans and whatever else suits your fancy. Cook it on the stove for a few minutes, and then freeze in quart bags for easy quick soups this win-

ter. All you do is add broth, cooked meat or other protein, and potatoes. Homemade soup is ready in well under an hour!

Make canned salsa (see recipe in this issue), tomato preserves or homemade tomato catsup. These are so much better than you can imagine, if you've never had them before. And the canning involved is very simple because the tomatoes are acidic enough that you don't need to pressure can them!

Make a big pot of tomato soup or ratatouille to keep on hand or freeze. The Tomato-fennel soup published here a few weeks ago is good for this, as is Ratatouille (last week) or plain tomato soup.

And when you make your tomato feast, here are a few items I've found make working with tomatoes easier and faster.

"One Day You Can Tell Your Grandkids That You Participated in a CSA and They Will Think You Are Cool!"

Eric Walles

(Continued on page 4)

Mexican Mac 'n Cheese

I found the original recipe for this in a Kraft recipe magazine a few years ago. It is so easy, and tasty, that it became a family favorite! Using leftover fresh homemade salsa makes it even better than the original. Even with a salad on the side, this is truly a 20 minute meal!

1 box (normal size)
Kraft Deluxe Macaroni and Cheese (the kind with pre-made cheese

sauce), or other brand of similar Mac and Cheese
1 ½ cups salsa
1 lb ground turkey (preferred) or ground beef
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon coriander (or some fresh cilantro)
2 teaspoons chili powder
Garlic powder
Salt and Pepper to taste
Optional: 1 cup of fat-free or regular sour cream is a nice addition

In a large saucepan, cook macaroni according to package directions. Meanwhile, crumble turkey into a skillet, sprinkle liberally with garlic powder, and saute it until no pink remains. Stir in salsa and spices. Stir to combine, and simmer until pasta is done. Drain pasta; combine with meat salsa mixture, sour cream (if using), and packet of cheese sauce. Stir to combine and serve.



Fresh Salsa

This recipe for fresh tomato salsa is from my mainstay—Cook's Illustrated. Like all their recipes, it is very dependable. Adding or substituting more exotic ingredients is lots of fun, so let your imagination run wild! Since there is salt and tomato together here, the tomatoes will exude their juice as the salsa sets in the refrigerator. It will get juicier as a leftover, but don't let it go to waste! It's just not up to "company standard" anymore... Great in the Mac and cheese dish in this issue.

3 cups chopped tomatoes, about 1 ½ pounds)

1 jalapeño Chile, minced fine (see note at end of recipe)
½ cup minced sweet onion
1 clove garlic, minced or pressed
¼ cup fresh cilantro leaves, chopped
½ teaspoon salt
Pinch of black pepper
2-6 teaspoons lime juice
Granulated sugar to taste (up to about 1 teaspoon)

Place the tomatoes in a colander to drain over a bowl. Allow to sit for about 30 minutes. Lay hot pepper, cilantro, onion and garlic atop the tomatoes. When about ready to serve, shake colander to remove as much juice as possible. Discard and

wipe out bowl. Empty contents of colander into empty bowl, and add 2 teaspoons lime juice, salt and black pepper. Check seasonings, and add additional lime juice, sugar, and hot pepper seeds to taste.

Note: Cook's Illustrated recommends that you chop the seeds of the jalapeño separately, and add to the salsa if you want it hotter. I've also read somewhere that hot peppers with "stretch marks" on the skin are likely to be hotter than those with smooth skins. I don't think that this rule is 100% accurate, but it is a good guide if you prefer one or the other.



Berries on Bryan Station CSA Farm

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Around the Farm

- One of our members, Andrei Shliakhau has beautiful cards for all occasions on display near the pickup table. They are \$3.75 each or ten for \$30. Andrei and his wife Robin are expecting a new addition to their family this week!
- Our eggs are laying regularly and we will have a few dozen brown ones for sale at \$3 per dozen. One evening they were locked in our barn overnight by mistake and they laid eighteen eggs in one nest in our straw pile. It is hilarious to hear each hen announce to the world their pride in laying an egg.
- We have our own jams and preserves for sale this week. Varieties include red, champagne and blackberry jams. We also have grape jelly. The golden tomato preserves and warm pepper preserves are excellent as a dipping sauce for any meat or tofu. They are \$3 each or two for \$5.
- Thank you in advance for returning the clamshell containers!
- The miniature horses are back in our neighbor's field for your entertainment while their fence is repaired.

Go forth and Be Healthy! We'll see you this week!

Tomatoes, Tomatoes, Tomatoes (cont'd)

If you need to peel several tomatoes, it's easy if you dip them in boiling water for a few seconds before you peel them. Bring the water to a boil, and drop the tomatoes in one at a time. Let them stay in the water for 15 to 60 seconds, depending on the size of the fruit. The skin should easily pull off once you core the tomato and grab the edge of the peel with your knife. If not, leave the next one in just a tiny bit longer. Plunge the blanched tomato into cold water before you peel it to protect your fingers. Although some recipes call for seeded tomatoes,

it's been determined that the flavor molecules that give tomatoes that satisfying umami taste are concentrated in the juices and little jell sacks around the seeds. Unless the seeding is done to reduce the moisture in the recipe or get rid of the actual seeds, leave them in for faster prep and a heartier taste!

When slicing tomatoes, if you don't mind the peel, but have trouble slicing through it, try this. Core the tomato, and cut a thin

strip around the tomato from "north pole" to "South pole". Start the slices at this peeled point, and the knife will slide through much more easily! You don't waste tomato, and get the fiber from the peel while saving time!

When I get several tomatoes at once (like we do from the farm), I separate them into three categories. The first category has those that are perfectly ripe and ready to eat. The second is the pile that is definitely going to need to sit around a few days, and the

last contains the ones that have blemishes or bad spots, and need to be used quickly. I use from this group first. This saves time when you're looking for tomatoes to prepare later, and ensures that you'll have wonderful ripe tomatoes all week long.

"If you wouldn't put it on your cereal in the morning, why spray it on your crops? ."

-Michael Fitzgerald