

Berries on Bryan Station CSA Farm

Newsletter
September 30th and
October 1st, 2009



“What a Great Season it has Been!”

Inside this issue:

<i>This week's produce</i>	1
<i>Coming Attractions</i>	1
<i>This week's recipes by Deb Outland</i>	2
<i>This week's recipes by Deb Outland (cont'd)</i>	3
<i>This week's recipes by Deb Outland (cont'd)</i>	4
<i>Around the Farm</i>	6
<i>Pampered Chef / Book Signing</i>	6

Upcoming Next Week:

- Sweet Potatoes
- Okra
- Peppers
- Greens
- Eggplant
- Dried Beans

Welcome to your twentieth basket pickup!

This is nearly it folks!! We have decided that next week will be the last basket pickup for everyone! Please plan to come on your normal pickup day and time.

Bekki Woloch has arranged for the Catholic Action Center to “glean” the remaining harvest prior to the first hard frost and to prepare meals from it for homeless people.

This week we anticipate that we will have for you:

Potatoes

You will be receiving loads of these Red Pontiac and White Kennebec potatoes!

Butternut and Acorn Squash

You will have some of these in your basket.

Heirloom Peppers

We will have more of these gorgeous heirloom peppers with names like chocolate, orchid, jingle bell, banana, Jimmy Nardello, and sweet yellow habenero for you.



Eggplant

More of these beauties will be in your basket!

Greens

Your bag will contain a mixture of Bok Choi, Tat Sui, Swiss chard, collard greens, Chinese cabbage, mustard, and kale. The greens continue to grow nicely in the summer heat in both the greenhouse and the field.

Green Onions

You will be receiving bunches of dried onions from the greenhouse as

well as green onions from the field.

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, oregano, rosemary** and **lemon balm**.

CHOICE TABLE

We plan to have **okra, fennel, and foot long Borneo beans from Sumatra, Indonesia** as well as a variety of extra items that we will find during our actual harvesting done the day of your pickup. There will also be extremely **hot orange habenero** and **red savant** peppers-beware!!

Cut Flowers

You will be receiving a bouquet of zinnias, sunflowers and gloriosa daisies this week.

Continued on Page 4

Deb Outland's little cooking corner ...

It is officially fall! Its time to start thinking about tucking things away for the Thanksgiving and Christmas meals we all look forward to. And it is time for enjoying all the good things that are special to this time of year. Erik is digging sweet potatoes this week, so I've included my own favorite Sweet Potato Muffin recipe, and I'll also talk a bit about making soup.



Christina Campbell's Tavern Sweet Potato Muffins

We first had these little gems at Christina Campbell's Tavern in Colonial Williamsburg. I bought a cookbook solely for this one recipe. I think you'll agree that it was worth the price!

1 medium sweet potato or 2/3 cup leftover mashed sweet potato
¼ cup butter
½ cup granulated sugar
1 egg, beaten
¼ teaspoon grated lemon peel
1 cup all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon cinnamon (or more to taste)
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
½ cup milk
¼ cup chopped walnuts or pecans
¼ cup chopped golden raisins (optional)

Bake the raw sweet potato at 375 degrees for 45 minutes, or until tender. Cool, peel, and reserve 2/3 cup of the mashed sweet potato for this recipe.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Prepare either one regular 12-muffin pan, or 3 mini (1 ½" by ¾") 12-muffin pans. Cream butter and sugar either by hand or by mixer. Stir in the sweet potato and lemon zest. Stir to combine thoroughly, and then add egg. Beat till smooth.

Mix together the flour, baking powder, soda, salt and spices. Add half of flour mixture to batter, then milk, and finally remaining flour. Stir just till combined after each addition. Fold in nuts and raisins. Spoon batter equally into muffin tins. Bake for 20 minutes for mini muffins, and a bit longer for regular size muffins. Serve warm, or at room temperature.

Tip: Spraying paper muffin cups with nonstick spray helps the muffin come out of the paper without a thick coating sticking on the paper.

Thinking about Thanksgiving

Before the first frost is a good time to think about the things you might like to have from the garden for Thanksgiving and even Christmas. Here are some ideas you might want to consider.

- Set aside enough of your wonderful potatoes for mashed potatoes for the big day. Wash the potatoes and dry thoroughly before storing them as we discussed last week.
- You may also want to put back some Sweet Potatoes the same way.
- Bake and freeze squash puree to use for “Pumpkin” pie recipes you intend to serve. If you freeze it in 2 cup portions, that’s just right for many pumpkin recipes.
- Dry some of Erik’s wonderful sage or even better chop it up and pour a little water or chicken broth over it in a small container. Freeze it, and add it (thawed) to your stuffing. Fresh (or frozen) sage has a more complex and delightful flavor and aroma than dried. Remember that the ratio for fresh to dried herbs is about 3 to 1. Just a week ago, I made some Sage Pecan Pesto--it is marvelous! I may just use some of it in my own holiday foods. If you want the recipe, I can send it to you.
- Keep a few of your prettiest squashes for part of your décor. They should be OK in the house, especially in a coolish spot. Be sure to wipe or wash any dirt off—it will help them keep. If they are still not soft, once you’re done with them for decorations, don’t forget to cook them!
- One last thing about Thanksgiving: If you’ve never had Pumpkin Cheesecake, you just haven’t lived! Alas, I don’t have room for the recipe here this week. I’ve seen several on the internet, but beware, even though they taste great, almost every one of them gets a really ugly crack in the middle. The very best recipe I’ve found is from Cook’s Illustrated. The flavor can’t be beat, and no crack! If you’re looking for an over the top Thanksgiving dessert, this is it! If you don’t have access to CI, drop me a note, and I’ll send you the recipe (djo@insightbb.com).

Soup’s On!

This time of year, soup is a wonderful comfort food. Here are some tips on making good soups without spending all day in the kitchen. The following should improve most soups, but if you are working with delicate foods like seafood, or asparagus, you may wish to be careful not to overcook them.

- Browning the ingredients is the biggest secret to good soup. Step one is to brown the meat. Use just a little bit of oil (olive or whatever you prefer). Use a relatively high temperature, and leave the meat untouched for a few minutes before turning it to brown on every side. Don’t crowd the meat, or it will just steam, which won’t improve the flavor of the end product. Your aim is to create a browned but not burned crust on the meat which will dissolve into the broth and enhance its meaty character. You may need to brown the meat in small batches so that all of it gets browned nicely. If any juices collect in the set-aside meat, be sure to include them in the soup!
- Next it’s time to brown onions, celery, mushrooms or carrots. If you’ve browned meat already, and there is a little fat in the pan, just put them in. Otherwise, use a little oil again. Cook the vegetables until they are browned moderately. If the soup calls for garlic, add it once the other vegetables are done, and cook until it is fragrant. Some recipes call for this step, and some

don't. If your recipe is a "dump and stir", it will definitely benefit from this procedure. Adding just a tiny pinch of salt to the vegetables will speed up their browning.

- Broth is almost always a key component in soup. Of course, the very best is homemade, but in reality, that is not always practical. If you need a substitute, try one of the following—reduced sodium canned broth, soup base (a paste form of bouillon), or as a last resort, regular bouillon. If you use the soup base, bouillon or regular-sodium canned broth, be careful with the salt you add to the soup, since they tend to be quite salty. You have already improved the flavor of your soup enough with the browning that you probably won't notice the less-than-perfect broth.
- If beef broth is called for, try using half beef and half chicken broth. Often canned beef broth has a metallic taste if concentrated.
- If you are using chicken in soup, thighs hold up better to prolonged cooking than breast meat. The round bones in thighs are also better at flavoring the broth than the flat bones in breasts. Thigh meat can also stand to be browned more vigorously than breast meat without getting tough, dry and stringy.
- If possible, do the browning and sautéing in the soup pot you are going to use. This allows any browned bits from the pre-cooking to be dissolved into the broth. If you are not able to do this, be sure to deglaze the pan you use for the browning, and add the dissolved browning essence to the soup.

Here's a good fall soup to keep you warm and cozy.

Tomato White Bean and Italian Sausage Soup

This soup, which is a drastic variant of a soup recipe I found online, turned out great. It would be equally good with home-cooked dried beans from the farm. By the way, this soup uses several of the principles I talked about above.

- 1 package sweet or hot Italian Sausage (I used turkey sausage)
 - 1 large onion, chopped
 - 2 cloves garlic, minced
 - 2 cups peeled, chopped potatoes
 - 6 cups chopped fresh tomatoes (or canned whole tomatoes with juice)
 - 2 cups chicken broth
 - 1 Tbsp dark brown sugar
 - 1 28 oz can white beans, drained
 - Salt and pepper to taste
1. Cook sausage in the soup pot until browned on all sides (I remove the casing and cook it like ground beef, but concentrate on getting it well-browned instead of just no longer pink). Set aside in a bowl.
 2. Add the chopped onion to the pot, cook in the rendered fat, if any, (or add a bit of olive oil if the pan is dry) on medium heat until browned. Add the minced garlic and cook a minute more. Add the chopped peeled potatoes and cook a few minutes more.
 3. Add the tomatoes and chicken broth. Cook until potatoes are cooked through, about 20 minutes (or longer).

4. Stir in sugar. Add half of the beans. Use an immersion blender to blend about half of the soup mixture (or blend half of the soup in a standing blender and return to the pot).

5. Add meat and the rest of the beans. Add salt and pepper to taste. Heat through and serve.

Green Tomatoes

Erik tells me that he will have a few green tomatoes available on the choice table this week. Not many people think about cooking green tomatoes, and they are missing a treat! Green tomatoes are quite tasty, and can be prepared in several ways. One of my Grandmother's most prized recipes was for Green Tomato Ketchup. It was hot as blazes, and so good with dried beans that without it, the beans are just a shadow of what they can be! That recipe is too much for this newsletter, or for me!

Of course, the most common dish people talk about is Fried Green Tomatoes. They are very Southern and very good. It's simple to make them. Just slice, salt and pepper the tomatoes, roll in corn meal, and fry in the skillet on both sides till browned. My husband's aunt also fries them by chopping them into small cubes, tossing them with salt pepper and cornmeal, and frying them like hash browns. This isn't quite as crispy, but still very good, and lots easier and faster to prepare for several people. You can almost starve to death cooking the slices for more than a three!

The most recent recipe I've seen is for an omelet filling made with green tomatoes sautéed with an onion in a little butter. Since the flavor of the tomatoes is gently tart, this might be a bit like having an omelet with mild salsa. To make a 3-egg omelet would require about a cup or a bit more of chopped green tomatoes and a small onion. Just brown the onion and tomatoes in butter, and simmer till the onion is done and the tomatoes are tender. Fold into the middle of the cooked omelet.

Happy Cooking!

Since this is the last formal basket pickup, this will also be the last "fancy" newsletter as well. I may post some recipes in the last two newsletters, particularly if there is something you would like to see in them. Just drop me or Erik a note if there is something you want me to find out for you, or find a recipe for. I do love a challenge!

I want to thank all of you who have submitted recipes, told me that you enjoy the recipes we post, and suggested topics for the newsletter. In fact, I want to thank all of you for putting up with my ramblings for the past several weeks—I've had great fun! It has been a privilege to meet so many of you, learn new food facts, and discover new recipe and cooking techniques. Thank you Erik, Gayle, Brett & Grant for creating this opportunity to have a CSA, and thank you all for sharing in this great adventure in a different way of living with and treating our Mother Earth!

Namaste.

Deb Outland

Berries on Bryan Station CSA Farm

Erik Walles & Family (Gayle, Brett & Grant)

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Pampered Chef Purchases

Your orders were shipped this Tuesday and may arrive here on time for your Thursday pickup! We are looking forward to trying the slicer-grater and chopper that we ordered. We also bought the glass bowl with lid which will come in real handy. Since Gayle keeps shears away from Erik since he loses them, Erik bought her a nifty shears that will be used around the farm for everything except cooking!

You can still place orders with Robin either directly online from her website at www.pamperedchef.biz/robinshliakhau or by sending a note to her e-mail at robinshliakhau@gmail.com. These items will make great Christmas presents also!

**"Cooking
Makes Us
Human."**

~Unknown

Around the Farm

- We will have a few dozen of our own eggs at \$3 per dozen.
- Annette Fischer would like to have help next season putting the newsletter together. She will hopefully train Erik on using Microsoft Publisher during the "off" season. She has been a wonderful, hard working volunteer for this season, so please send her a big "thank you" to her e-mail at: annettefischer@yahoo.com.
- Please also thank Deb Outland personally for her excellent volunteer work organizing recipes for you in each newsletter! Her e-mail is: djo@insightbb.com.
- All volunteers this season will soon be invited to a special sunset viewing dinner. Erik and Gayle will be preparing the meal with our veggies.

A Big Thank You to Our Members

Thank you for choosing us as your CSA this season! We enjoyed meeting you each week! We hope that you sign up again in March for next season. If you are unable to do so, please tell a friend about us!

Every season is getting better and better! If you have any comments that will help us, please e-mail them to erik@berriesonbryanstation.com or drop them in the suggestion box which is near the sign-in sheet.

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

Book Signing

Leslie Guttman's "Equine ER" Book Signing will be from 4 to 6 p.m. Both Pickup Days

Our local celebrity author Leslie Guttman will be here in person to sign your copy of her thrilling and exciting new book! For our members and their friends she is giving us a special offer of \$15.00 total for her book. This flat rate includes tax! In bookstores her book is \$18.95 plus tax, so this is a nice savings for us! Keep in mind that her book can make a nice Christmas gift for someone you know!