



Westfield CSA Newsletter

Farm News

Hello Folks,

Another week has passed without rain and it's beginning to make life a bit challenging down here on the farm. As I mentioned previously we are in the midst of a heavy direct seeding and transplanting cycle and both are greatly facilitated by a bit of moisture in the soil. We have been moving the sprinklers around to water in the thousands of brassica (broccoli, cabbage, etc-pay attention!) transplants we put in last week and they have rooted and are beginning to grow. But the soil is so dry that I am unable to plant seed, because the mechanical seeders that I use won't set the seed properly in dust. I am forced to irrigate the beds I have prepared before planting and then again a day or two later if it hasn't rained. The winter squash field looks great; we have managed to beat the grasses and they are beginning to set lots of fruit, but the size of the squash will be much larger if we get some rain soon. There are also many varieties of potatoes

still growing in the field that could use a little water to fatten them up. Tomatoes are ripening up prodigiously, so expect lots of tomatoes for the next few weeks. Melons have begun ripening in great numbers as well, but unfortunately I am having a terrible problem with the crows. About 2 weeks back they began poking holes in the watermelons, even before they were ripe, and have now destroyed hundreds of fruit of different varieties. We will begin to deliver melons over the next 2 weeks in a rotation amongst the groups as availability allows. There will be a choice among cantaloupes, watermelons, gala melons, honeydews, and a Korean melon called Sun Jewel. These last have an elongated shape like an overgrown cucumber and are yellow with white stripes. They are quite sweet and have a crisp flesh somewhat like a pear. The dark green watermelons are Sugar Babies with red flesh and the striped ones are yellow. We are still heavy on beans so look for a generous helping again this week.

Ground cherries have begun falling in large numbers and will make their debut in the share this week. For the uninitiated Ground cherries are in the tomato family, and are closely related to the tomatillo, with a similar paper husk around the fruit, but they are quite sweet and have a unique flavor. They fall off the plant when they are ripe and we gather them off the ground, hence the name. They are also known as Cape gooseberries or Husk tomatoes. Slip them from their paper shell and eat them out of hand or in salads; they make great snacks for kids. The share for this week will be: Potatoes, red onions, string beans, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, choice of a root vegetable (carrots, beets, or radishes), melons (maybe) and choice of cherry tomatoes or ground cherries. These last 2 items come in a plastic clamshell which I would like to reuse, so if you wish you can return them to the pickup site for recycling.

Thanks and Enjoy!

Farmer John

Ground Cherries

Ground Cherries, or Gooseberries, as they are also known, are one of the fun, unique items that you learn about when you join a CSA.

They look a bit like tiny tomatillos, but they stay wrapped in their paper husks

at maturity. They are apricot gold when ready to eat. If your ground cherries aren't quite there yet, simply keep them at room temperature and in a few days, their color will darken.

They stay fresh for up to 3

months if placed in a mesh bag in a cool place! In our house, they are usually gone in the first days, eaten right out of the container.

They are delicious simply husked and eaten raw. Or, you could melt a bar of your

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CSA Update

Shift assignments for next week:

First Shift 2:30pm-5:00pm

Lisa Thornton

Karen Fried

Toby Feldman

Second Shift 5:00pm-7:30pm

Ellie Avitan

Karen Fried

Alison Fraser

Question of the Week

How do you bag and store your vegetables? Any "green" tips? Email Andrea (alpolonsky@aol.com) or Katie (katieb430@verizon.net)



Ground Cherries

favorite chocolate. Twist back the husk of a ground cherry, and using it as a handle, dip the fruit into melted chocolate and then allow it to harden on a piece of wax or parchment baking paper.

Orzo Salad

Orzo salad is a great summer dish that can be adapted to whatever fresh vegetables you have in the fridge. Feel free to experiment with any raw vegetables. For a real treat, take a trip to The Greek Store on the Boulevard in Kenilworth. Try any of their fresh feta cheese, olive oil and olives.

Ingredients:

1 box orzo
1 cup crumbled feta cheese (or more!)
3/4 cup pitted Kalamata olives, chopped
1 tomato, seeded and chopped
1 cucumber, seeded and chopped

1 bell pepper (any color), chopped
1 red onion, chopped (or any color will do—if you are sensitive to raw onion, make sure to use less!)
3 TB lemon juice
1 TB vinegar (white wine or rice wine would do well)
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
1 1/2 tsp fresh oregano
2 TB plus 1/2 cup olive oil
Salt and pepper
Cook orzo according to directions. Drain and place in large bowl. Toss with 2 TB olive oil.

Add tomato, cucumber, bell pepper, onion, feta and olives to orzo and toss to combine.

In a small bowl combine lemon juice, vinegar, parsley and oregano. Slowly add the 1/2 cup olive oil until you reach your desired consistency. 1/4 cup will be enough to coat the dish but for a richer flavor, try 1/3 to 1/2 cup. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Pour dressing over orzo mixture and toss well. Chill in fridge or serve at room temperature.

Ratatouille

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 cups chopped onions
2 1-pound eggplants, unpeeled, cut into 1-inch cubes
4 garlic cloves, minced
2 zucchini, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 yellow bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces

2 3/4 pounds ripe tomatoes, seeded, coarsely chopped (about 6 cups)
3 fresh thyme sprigs
1 fresh rosemary sprig
1 bay leaf
1/4 cup minced fresh basil

Method:

Heat oil in heavy large pot over medium heat. Add onions and sauté until tender, about 10 minutes. Add eggplants and gar-

lic; sauté 5 minutes. Add zucchini and bell peppers; sauté 5 minutes. Mix in tomatoes, thyme, rosemary and bay leaf. Reduce heat to medium-low. Cover and cook until vegetables are tender and flavors have blended, stirring occasionally, about 40 minutes. Discard bay leaf; stir in basil. Season ratatouille generously with salt and pepper. Transfer to bowl. (Can be prepared 8 hours ahead. Cover and refrigerate.) Serve cold, warm or hot

Question of the Week: Favorite Pick-Your-Own Location

Here are some of the results from last week's question **What's your favorite Pick-Your-Own location?**

#1. Alstede Farms in Chester, NJ not only has a variety of pick your own produce, but a petting farm, corn mazes in the fall, and hay rides to pumpkin picking. Be sure to bring some carrots for the animals!

#2. The Berry Farm in Colts Neck, NJ has raspberries and blackberries to pick. They've expanded this year to include a few vegetables and flowers. They are

located right behind Delicious Orchards on Route 34. Be sure to visit that store after you pick and get some of their famous apple cider.

#3. Hillview Farms in Gillette, NJ has peaches, apples and pumpkins for picking. They also have a wonderful farm shop where they sell their own corn which CSA member Maureen says is absolutely fantastic.

#4. Donaldson Farm, Hackettstown, NJ. On the web: www.donaldsonfarms.com. They have a variety of pick your own

options with pumpkin picking, tractor rides and corn mazes in the fall. Check out the website for the latest activities. They also have a large farm stand with lots of fresh baked goods, jams, jellies, honeys and (of course) produce.

Next Week's Question: *How do you bag and store your vegetables? Any "green" tips?*

Email Katie (katieb430@verizon.net) or Andrea (alpolonsky@aol.com)

www.westfieldareacsa.com