



Westfield CSA Newsletter

Farm News

Hello Folks,

It finally feels like summer in NJ, with the heat and humidity we've come to know and endure. We are enjoying what seems like an unprecedented five-day period without rain, but it is predicted to end by Wednesday as we head into another week of showers and thunderstorms.

Normally at this time of year I am impeded from seeding crops for the fall by dry conditions. This season, however, it has been a challenge to find windows of opportunity for planting when the soil is not too wet. I have been behind schedule on my planting since early June, and as I rush to plant each crop before it's too late, another crop has to wait until after it's optimal planting time. Let's hope it's a warm fall with no frost until late October!

In any given year some crops do poorly due to weather conditions or other variables. I'm sure most of you have heard about the problems with tomatoes this season due to late blight. While my farm has not yet been affected by this

disease, we nevertheless have a plethora of other diseases affecting the tomato crop. Even the tomatoes in the high tunnel greenhouses have been affected. We are harvesting quite a few tomatoes at present, owing to the sheer number of plants we put in. But most of this fruit is coming from plants that are almost dead and will not produce a sustained harvest. We are doing what we can to save those varieties which may have a chance of continued production, but the bottom line is it won't be a very good year for tomatoes.

Currently we are picking quite a few heirloom tomatoes, especially a variety called Cherokee Purple. These have a very dark colored fruit with green shoulders which I, and many others, consider to be the most delicious of the heirlooms. Keep in mind that they will not lose their green shoulders and you must judge their ripeness by softness. Heirlooms are notoriously perishable so enjoy them soon after you receive them.

The share for this week will be:

**White Potatoes,
Green Leaf Lettuce,
Multi-Colored Carrots,
Celery, White Onions,
Peppers, Eggplant, Tomatoes,
Choice of Dandelion Greens
or Swiss Chard, String Beans,
Choice of Red Cabbage or
Savoy Cabbage
and Choice of an Herb.**

SPECIAL NOTE FROM JOHN REGARDING THE FRUIT SHARE

The fruit share for this week will be peaches. It will count as a half share, the other half of which I will have to make up later in the season. The reason for this is that I had ordered red plums as the 2nd half and they arrived with 25% rotten fruit. Since the grower was unwilling to make an adjustment on the price I had to reject them completely. Next week will be the week off for fruit shares, we will resume again in September.

Enjoy! Farmer John

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CSA Shift Assignments

Shift assignments for **this** week—August 20:

First Shift 2:30pm-5:00pm

*Ingrid Eng
Fran Michetti
Gayle Hunt*

**Second Shift
5:00pm-7:30pm**

*Kieran Brown
Michelle Ehrich*

Shift assignments for **next** week—August 27:

First Shift 2:30pm-5:00pm

*Jen Gearheart
Carole Snyder
Lisa Thornton*

**Second Shift
5:00pm-7:30pm**

*Kieran Brown
Sandra Paez Kaminski
Kate Herz*

Cherokee Purple Heirloom Tomatoes

Heirloom tomatoes have a romantic history of being bred for



taste rather than productivity, but it's arguable whether or not heirlooms truly are the remnants

of pre-industrialized American agriculture. Many seeds are of unknown origin, and some of those thought to be passed down through the generations are in fact quite young and available commercially. Known for its rich flavor and unique coloring, the Cherokee Purple variety is rumored to have come directly

from the Indians with whom it shares its name. The medium-sized 10-12 ounce fruits have a rose/purple skin with a brick red interior and an intense tomato taste that's just the right level of sweetness.

FRUIT SHARE

The fruit share this week will be peaches.

This week is a **half-week** with fruit deliveries resuming in September. See John's note above.

Orzo Salad with Heirloom Tomatoes and Herbs

Ingredients:

8 ounces orzo (rice-shaped pasta; about 1 1/4 cups)
2 tablespoons Sherry wine vinegar
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 1/4 pounds assorted heirloom tomatoes, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
3/4 cup chopped green onions
1/2 cup sliced pitted oil-cured olives

1/4 cup thinly sliced fresh basil
1/4 cup chopped fresh mint
2 tablespoons chopped fresh Italian parsley

Directions:

Cook orzo in large pot of boiling salted water until tender but still firm to bite, stirring occasionally. Drain. Rinse under cold water; drain well. Transfer to medium bowl; cool.

Whisk vinegar and lemon juice in small bowl; gradually whisk in oil. Pour dressing over orzo. Mix in remaining ingredients. Season to taste with salt and pepper. (Can be made 2 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature. Stir before serving.)

From *epicurious.com*

Heirloom Tomato Mojito

Ingredients:

1/2 lime cut in quarters
1/4 medium-sized green tomato, cut in quarters
1/4 medium-sized heirloom tomato, cut in quarters
12 basil leaves
Pinch of Kosher salt
3 grinds of black pepper

1.5 ounces Gran Centenario Plata Tequila
Tonic water, to taste
Aged balsamic vinegar, to taste
1 sprig basil

Method:

Muddle the lime, tomatoes, basil, salt and pepper in a 16 ounce pint glass until juicy and aromatic. Fill nearly to the top with ice.

Add the tequila. Top with tonic water and a splash of aged balsamic vinegar. Garnish with the sprig of basil.

From *starchefs.com*

Sweet-and-Sour Celery

Ingredients:

3/4 cup water
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
3 tablespoons olive oil
3 tablespoons mild honey
4 pounds celery (2 to 3 bunches; any dark green outer ribs peeled), cut into 2-inch pieces, reserving about 1 cup inner celery leaves
1/4 cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

Directions:

1. Cut a round of parchment paper to fit just inside a wide heavy 6-to 8-quarts pot, then set round aside.
2. Simmer water, lemon juice, oil, honey, 3/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper in pot, stirring, until honey has dissolved. Stir in celery (but not leaves) and cover with parchment round. Simmer until tender

and liquid is reduced to about 1/4 cup, 35 to 40 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, coarsely chop reserved leaves.

4. Serve celery sprinkled with celery leaves and parsley.

From *epicurious.com*

Question of the Week

Question:

Got a favorite outdoor spot to share?

Answers:

As local restaurants go, a favorite is the **Bamboo Grille** at the Basking Ridge Country Club. Though the club is private, the eatery is open to the public. Overlooking the golf course, the setting is lovely and works well for diners with kids. Located

at 185 Madisonville Road in Basking Ridge. See www.bamboo-grille.com.

Another option is the **Stage House Restaurant** in Scotch Plains. Opt for the outdoor seating between the restaurant and the tavern. Unlike the outdoor tables on Park Avenue, this tucked-away area is more sophisticated while still working for families with kids.

Located at 366 Park Avenue in Scotch Plains. www.stagehouserestaurant.com

For next week:

Have any tips for white potatoes or zucchini?

Share your favorites with the other CSA members — Email Andrea or Sonja at westfieldcsa@gmail.com. We'll post the responses in next week's newsletter.