



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Spring 2019

Harvest lists are online.

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Find many more recipes on our website.

Thank You!

We had a wonderful time celebrating **Tucson CSA's 15th Anniversary** with you last week!

Thank you for taking time to enjoy the music and food, and for participating in our gratitude chain and raffle - both of which generated many lovely and insightful comments.

We are still going through your raffle responses, but have noticed a demand for fruit shares – and we're working on it! With that said, please know that we welcome your feedback every week of the year. Email us, pull us aside during your pickup, or leave note. We want to hear your thoughts.

Extra Beef Shares Available

We have two extra beef shares available for sale. Each is made up of a few different cuts of 100% grass-fed beef from Chiricahua Pasture Raised Meats. Please see the front desk volunteer to purchase one.

The Thing About Aphids

Written by Sara Jones

For the past few weeks, volunteers and members have been spotting a ton of ladybugs and their prehistoric looking alligator-like larvae on our produce. The cute little bugs are a sign of a healthy farm, as the young ladybug larvae are voracious aphid predators and are a natural solution for pest management. They can't always keep up with a rapidly multiplying aphid population, though, and it is inevitable that every spring we will see some aphids on our veggies. This year they actually appeared much later than normal, maybe as a result of our strange weather the past few months. Some years the battle against these bugs starts as early as February!

The aphids feed almost exclusively on brassica crops and, as they munch, release the sulfur compounds contained in the vegetables – so they are unsightly as well as a bit stinky. Not so pleasant! But there are ways to remove the tiny creatures from the curly leaves of greens and folds of cabbage. First, when you get home check your greens and remove any leaves that have a major infestation. Wash the remaining greens before you store them in the fridge. Leaving any aphids on them might allow the sulfur smell to build up. A ten-minute bath in a large bowl or sink full of water should remove mild cases of aphids. After a few minutes in the water you will see them float to the top. You can add a few tablespoons of vinegar to the water and do some gentle (but vigorous) swishing of the greens in the water to remove more severe infestations. While aphids can be annoying, they are a sign that our farmers are growing veggies the right way: without any pesticides!

Noble Nopales

While the bright magenta juice of prickly pear fruit is easy to appreciate in a fancy margarita, the cactus pads of the same plant can be a different story! The flavor, with a delicious citrusy tang, is actually great - but the glochids (miniature spines) and slimy texture can be big hurdles if you don't have any experience with these vegetables. Trimming and preparing the pads isn't as intimidating as it appears at first glance, but does take a little extra care. Use tongs or a newspaper or paper bag to hold the pads. You can easily singe the glochids off over the flame of a gas stove or grill. Using metal tongs, hold the pads directly in the flame and watch tiny sparks fly as the spines burn off. You can also trim the glochids off by laying the pads flat on a cutting board and using a vegetable peeler or paring knife to scrape downward towards the base of the pad. Trim the entire outer edge of each pad to remove the spines growing along the rim. Grilling the pads whole cuts down on the exposure to air and moisture and keeps the pads relatively slime free. Otherwise, most recipes will have you blanch the diced pads in boiling water for about six minutes. Drain and rinse the pads well and proceed with your recipe. Try nopales cooked in a red enchilada sauce or sautéed with eggs. Or, see **Prickly Pear Pads (Nopales)** in the **Recipes** section of our website for more delicious recipes.

Nopalito Fries – New!

Lorraine Glazar, Tucson CSA

This tempura recipes from one of our long term members can accommodate any number of veggies and is a great way to prepare your nopales.

2 medium nopale pads

Tempura Batter:

1 egg, beaten

1 cup ice cold water

1 cup all purpose flour

½ teaspoon baking powder.

Trim and peel your cactus pads and boil in salted water for two minutes. Drain, rinse, pat dry and cut into long, french fry size sticks. Set aside. Beat the egg until thoroughly combined, add the water and mix. Sift the flour, then sift it with the baking powder, then add to the egg/water mixture all at once. Stir, but don't make it smooth; it should have some lumps. The texture to aim for is pancake batter; it should coat the vegetables but the excess should drip off readily. Heat ½ inch of canola or peanut oil in a skillet over medium high heat until it just begins to smoke. Dip veggies into the batter, let excess drip off, then put into hot oil. Repeat with remaining slices, taking care not to crowd the pan. When browned on the first side, turn over. The goal is to have the vegetable crisp-cooked before the batter burns. Drain them well on a rack set over a paper towel, season with salt and pepper and serve with a spicy dipping sauce.

Grilled Nopalitos and Green Onion Tacos

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Grilled cactus tends to be less 'gummy' than boiled or steamed cactus. If you are squeamish about the slime factor, then this is the way to go. Plus, the slight burn on the green onions and cactus makes the dish more complex and delicious.

1 bunch green onions

2-4 cactus pads, trimmed

1 tablespoon oil

1 tablespoon balsamic or red wine vinegar

1 teaspoon ground oregano

1 teaspoon chile flakes

Salt and pepper to taste

6 corn tortillas

Goat cheese or other mild white cheese

Mix together oil, vinegar, chile, oregano and salt and pepper. Rub mixture over onions and cactus and let marinate while grill heats. When grill is hot place pads and green onions over an area with medium high heat. After about four minutes remove onions and flip cactus pads. Cook pads until beginning to brown and slightly charred around edges. Remove from grill and slice into long strips. Serve wrapped in tortilla with green onions and cheese.

Beet, Nopalito and Citrus Salad

Philippe, Tucson CSA

1 large or 2 small beets

1 nopalito pad (despined)

2 grapefruit or oranges, peeled and diced. juice of 1 grapefruit of orange

1 small onion, chopped

1/4 cup cilantro or parsley, chopped

1/4 teaspoon ground cumin

1/4 teaspoon ground coriander

1 dash vinegar

Salt and pepper to taste

Steam or boil the beets until tender (approx. 30 mins.). Peel and dice. Steam or boil the nopalito pad for 10-15 minutes. Dice.

Mix with other ingredients. Cool and serve as side dish or with tortilla chips.

Pickled Beets

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

1 bunch beet roots

2 cups vinegar

1 cup water

½ cup sugar

1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon total of all selected spices, to taste. (Spice flavor develops more over time)

Spice suggestions (use whole spices, not ground):

Coriander – Allspice – Cardamom – Cloves – Mustard Seeds – Cinnamon Sticks

Prepare beets by roasting or boiling. Peel beets and cut or dice in preferred serving sizes. Bring water, vinegar and sugar to boil until the sugar is dissolved. Add spices and reduce heat. Simmer to let spices develop flavor and steep. (Approx. 15 minutes.)

Place beets in glass jar and cover with vinegar mixture. Store in refrigerator. Will keep for two to three months. Pickled beets can also be canned and stored in the pantry if canning is in your skill repertoire. Any vinegar mixture left over when the beets are gone can be used as a base for marinades or dressings.

“Sweetheart” Greens

Rita Silverberg, Tucson CSA member

A sweet and tart dish for stronger tasting greens.

1 bunch greens such as kale, beets, rutabaga, turnip, mustard, collard, etc. (of course, you can use ANY greens)

1 small onion, chopped (about ¼ cup)

Juice of one orange – with pulp

1-2 tablespoons sugar, agave nectar, honey, or brown rice syrup

Steam the greens to desired taste, but not too long.

Drain and chop greens, adding onion (uncooked), orange juice & pulp, and sweetener.