



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 730 ~ April 27, 2020 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Spring 2019

Harvest lists are online.

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Find many more recipes on our website.

COVID-19 Updates

Please see the "Covid-19 Update" on the side bar of our website and read your weekly pickup email for the latest details on how we're adapting. We ask that you:

- Stay home if you or someone in your household is sick.
- Keep a distance of 6 feet between you and others.
- Try to only send one person to pick up your CSA share.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Wear a mask if you can.

CS-Aid

Thanks to the generosity of our members and our farmers, we're offering free and half-price produce subscriptions to those who need them.

To request a free or half-price share, please email us at tucsoncsa@tucsoncsa.org.

We're happy to continue serving everyone in our community during this time!

A Word About I'toi Onions

Written by Farmer Frank



In 1699, Spaniards introduced a small onion to the present-day Tohono O'odham people. It was subsequently named after I'toi, the Tohono O'odham deity who resides on sacred Baboquivari Peak, in the Baboquivari Mountains south of Ajo.

While the I'toi onion (pronounced ee-ee-toy) is not a true native of the southwest, it has existed, endured, and thrived here - in less than ideal conditions - for more than 300 years. If I could only speak of two vegetables in the whole world, they would be tepary beans (another story for another day) and the I'toi onion.

I was given my first I'toi onions in 1993 by a staff member of the county extension service who had received them from Native Seeds/SEARCH in Tucson. Having tucked the onions away in a drawer, that staff member was naturally worried about their condition. Being the hopeful farmer I am, I did what farmers do: I planted. Five precious (all shriveled and meek) bulbs was all it took.

Those humble beginnings ignited a flame of I'toi onions into hundreds of thousands. I'toi onions multiply rapidly: a single bulb can turn into over a hundred in one single season. They also practically tend to themselves: they require very little water and can suffer great neglect.

Their flavor is reminiscent of something between a green onion and a shallot. Upon harvest, they display a beautiful bronze skin along their stem. Don't be too hasty to eat them all: plant your last bulb back in the ground. Repeat this process for an endless supply, year after year. Don't worry if, after a while, they start looking like they died. They likely have not.

Re-growth begins again in July, with the monsoons, and they prosper for the next 10 to 11 months. They require about a third less water than most onions: they seldom get water more than twice a month here on the farm. My recommendation are: plant 12 inches apart about 2 inches deep. When they are young (green onions) they should be dug up with a spade or garden fork and not pulled like regular onions. Fibrous roots seep into the ground about six inches, so pulling them often results in only pulling off the tops and leaving the bulbs in the soil.

RECIPES

Refreshing Cold Beet Soup, Polish-Style (Veg, GF)

Lorraine Glazar, Tucson CSA

It is going to be hot this week! This cold beet soup is refreshing, easy to digest and feels restorative on a very hot day. You can use buttermilk, kefir or a dairy free substitute to make the soup. I like to swirl in a bit of sour cream on the top of each bowl before serving to make it extra luscious.

1 bunch beets, scrubbed and greens removed
½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoons lemon juice
½ cup cucumber or 2-3 radishes, finely diced
2 green onions, white and tender green part, thinly sliced
1-2 cups reduced fat buttermilk
2-3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh dill
Hard cooked egg (optional)

Steam beets until tender. Run under water and rub off skin, then chop finely. Drizzle with the lemon juice and a couple tablespoons of water and set beets aside to cool. Combine the cucumber or radish with the green onions, cooled beets and the buttermilk. Add a bit more water or buttermilk to get soup to the desired consistency. Then, of course, season to taste with salt and pepper! Add dill and refrigerate, covered, until well chilled. Garnish with more dill, slices of hard cooked egg and a swirl of sour cream.

Braised Cabbage Wedges (Vegan, GF)

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Cabbage is cooked down into a tender, earthy side dish in this recipe.

1 head cabbage, cut into 2-3" thick wedges, enough to fill the bottom of a heavy skillet or Dutch oven
¼ large onion, sliced
1 tablespoon tomato paste, thinned with about 1/3 cup broth or water
2 tablespoons oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Heat a large skillet or Dutch over high heat and add oil. Once the oil is hot and shimmering and onion and cabbage wedges, cut sides down. Crowd in as many pieces as you can and save the rest for another recipe. Drizzle with the thinned out tomato paste and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cover and reduce heat to medium. Cook for about 20 minutes then flip the cabbage wedges. Add a bit more water or broth if necessary to prevent burning and cook an additional 15 minutes or so until very tender. Taste for salt and add more if necessary. Serve with a drizzle of balsamic vinegar.

Turnip Chili (Vegan, GF)

Julie & Luke Johnson, Tucson CSA

This is a recipe from Plowshare Produce, a CSA in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania. This the best recipe for using up a whole share of turnips in a main dish that we've found so far!

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 tablespoons minced ginger
1 tablespoon minced garlic
4 black cardamom pods (or a heaping ½ teaspoon of ground cardamom)
¼ cup tomato paste
2 teaspoons ground fennel seeds
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon chili powder
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
3 cups cooked red kidney beans
1 share of turnips (we had 2 large and 1 small) peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
1 ½ teaspoons salt
6 tablespoons finely chopped fresh cilantro or parsley

Sauté onion, ginger, garlic and cardamom pods or ground cardamom until everything is soft and beginning to brown. Stir in tomato paste and spices. Pour in 1 cup water to deglaze the pan and simmer until most of the water is gone. Pour in 1 more cup water and simmer until an oily sheen forms on the surface, about 5-8 minutes. Add 2 more cups water, kidney beans, turnips, salt and 4 tablespoons of the cilantro or parsley. Heat to a boil, reduce and simmer uncovered until the turnips are tender and the sauce is thick, about 20 minutes. Sprinkle with the remaining herbs and serve with cheddar cheese and cornbread.

Arugula Pesto (Veg, GF)

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Spicy arugula is perfect for pesto. If you are lucky enough to find nasturtium greens and flowers in your share this is a great way to use them as well. Save the lovely flowers to garnish!

1 bunch Arugula, cleaned and dried
2 cloves garlic
½ cup toasted walnuts
¼ cup olive oil
2 tablespoons or more grated Parmesan cheese (optional)
Salt and pepper to taste

Pulse garlic and walnuts in food processor or blender until coarsely ground. Add the arugula and/or nasturtium leaves and olive oil, and continue to pulse to desired consistency. Add the cheese last, and then season with salt and pepper to taste.