



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 74 ~ February 12, 2007 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Winter '06-'07
Week 10 of 12



The Tucson CSA celebrates its 3rd birthday this week!

This Week's Harvest

Navel Oranges
Purple Garlic
Carrots
Black Spanish Radishes
Beets
Hon Tsai Tai
Tokyo Bekana
Cilantro

Recipes

Black Spanish Radish - Tips
Tokyo Bekana - Tips
Hon Tsai Tai - Tips
Tokyo Bekana and Hon Tsai Tai Stir Fry
Moroccan Slaw

The Santa Cruz River Farmers' Market opens again after its winter break. All local. Mostly organic.



When: Thursdays, 3-6 pm
Where: Riverside Drive (south of Speedway on west bank of the Santa Cruz River)

Editor:
Philippe Waterinckx

LAST REMINDER — EARLY BIRD SPRING SHARES SUBSCRIBE BY FEBRUARY 16

You can of course subscribe to the Spring session at any time, but doing so before February 16th gets you the best rate: \$221 (\$17 per week, instead of \$18 per week).

MEMBERS' COLUMN by Lorraine Glazar (TCSA member and remote pickup host)

I found the Tucson CSA one day last spring, when I made a conscious decision to reduce the square footage of my organic vegetable garden. I conducted an Internet search on the national CSA website, and found out about the movement in Tucson, and the wonderful organization that Philippe founded.

It was the unusual melons and heirloom tomatoes that got me. Then the robust green chiles and bell peppers, bigger and better than those I could grow in my own garden, began to convince me that this was a fabulous supplement to what I could grow. Each vegetable was as full of life as those grown in my garden, and they lasted as long as my own fresh-harvested produce. Wow! It was like eating from a much bigger garden in my neighborhood—only my neighborhood was bigger. Yes, it was bigger than my garden, but not as big as the huge agribusiness that is food distribution today (and don't fool yourselves, Whole Foods has a symbol on the stock exchange!)

The ultimate deciding factor was the opinion of the person who shares my household, my son, now 15. He said "we would never get a melon like this at the supermarket". Just today, he confirmed that he appreciates the quality of what we get, and doesn't mind that once each month he has to run the remote pickup without me. For him, it is worth it.

The concepts around community sustainable agriculture resonate with me. I like knowing who grows my food. Along with all gardeners and farmers, I consider myself to be a steward of the land. I obsess about the weather and store my green tomatoes, almost all of which turn red. Farmer Frank and I have a lot in common.

*Write about your own experience with the Tucson CSA. We'd all love to hear from you!
Email a 100 to 250-word essay to [tucsoncsa at tucsoncsa.org](mailto:tucsoncsa@tucsoncsa.org)*

ISKASH*TAA HARVEST DAY: Saturday, February 22nd

As you know, we donate a lot of our unclaimed produce to Iskash*taa Refugee Harvesting Network. Iskash*taa and the Community Food Bank are looking for people (i.e. CSA members) to help harvest 50+ fruit trees for the refugee communities in Tucson. This is a huge harvest opportunity (easy and fun for all ages) and we could use 20 or more people to help.

Meet at the harvesting site: 6411 N. Treasure Hunt Dr. (just west of Oracle and Orange Grove, on the north side of Orange Grove).

Time: 10am- 4pm (or portion thereof).

The Community Food Bank contact who will be at the site is Jeff Yoder. Telephone for that day is 402-613-0686.

Bring water, lunch, sunscreen or coat as necessary. Long sleeves are recommended. Bring plastic grocery bags to help redistribute the harvest to refugee homes.

If you can't harvest but can help with redistributing the hundreds of pounds of fruit to hundreds of refugees in town, contact Barbara Eiswerth at 440-0100.

The Black Spanish Radish (*Raphanus sativus*) was the mainstay radish of American farmers throughout the nineteenth century, according to William Woys Weaver (*Heirloom Vegetable Gardening*). It was originally grown for winter storage. In the spring, after sweeter roots such as carrots, turnips, and celeriac had been eaten, the black Spanish radish would be ready and waiting. The harsh mustardy flavor would be gone and the taste would be clean, crisp, and mild.



Black radishes can be almost as pungent as horseradish, and are firm and rather dry. In many parts of Russia or in Russian (particularly Jewish) households throughout the world, black radishes are enjoyed as an appetizer, but rarely eaten straight. They are either coarsely shredded or sliced thin, salted to mellow the bite, then rinsed, drained, and mixed with sour cream or chicken fat. This unlikely and delicious duo is usually offered with pumpernickel or chewy sour rye bread.

Black radishes taste like firm, rather strong turnips when cooked, but their cooking time is less predictable, ranging from 10 to 25 minutes, depending on how long the radish has been stored or how dense its flesh. Sliced, diced, or shredded, they add a piquancy to soups, stews, braises, or stir-fries. Or chop fine to add to meatball or meatloaf mixtures.

If you are going to serve the radishes raw, they are excellent simply grated into a salad. If too spicy for you, they may need a preliminary salting to tame the bite and harshness. Using about 1 teaspoon salt per 1-1/4 cups chopped, shredded, sliced, or julienned radish, toss the two together to mix well. Cover the surface of the vegetable (not the bowl) closely with plastic, then overlap and seal the edges of the container (the smell is fierce). Set a weight on top of the radish and let stand for an hour or longer. Rinse, drain, and dry.

Sweet, crunchy Tokyo Bekana (*Brassica rapa*) is the most satisfying of stir-fry vegetables: easy (requires no peeling), crunchy, nutritious, quick-cooking—and you get two different vegetables (leaf and stem) for the effort of one. Tokyo Bekana is very low in calories—about 15 per 1/2 cup. It supplies plenty of vitamin C and vitamin A and a fair quantity of calcium.

Also called *Pei Tsai*, Tokyo Bekana is a Japanese version of Small Chinese Cabbage, but the texture of its leaves is actually more leafy like the green *bok choy* than crisp like cabbage. It does *taste* like cabbage, however, and lacks the strong earthiness of other greens such as chard, spinach, or beets. The crunchy stalks are smooth and flat and bear a vague resemblance to celery minus grooves or strings, and they have a mild, juicy sweetness that suggests romaine lettuce.



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Although you can eat Tokyo Bekana raw, cooking enhances it considerably, and it is excellent for stir-fry and soup. It takes just a few minutes to cook to a lovely crisp-tender texture. For stir-fries, there is nothing better: its stems turn almost creamy after cooking. Substitute Tokyo Bekana in any recipe that calls for the more commonly available *bok choy*.

Hon Tsai Tai (also *Brassica rapa*) is Chinese member of the brassica family, with long, pencil-thin, red-purple, budded flower stems. It has a pleasing mustard taste for use raw in salads or lightly cooked in stir-fries or soups.

Tokyo Bekana and Hon Tsai Tai Stir-Fry



Bright, colorful, healthful, flavorful, crunchy, quick-cooking: what more can you ask? This basic formula lends itself to additions of just about any vegetable that can be stir-fried: onion, carrot, peas, or squash. Use either a wok or a large skillet.

- 1/2 bunch Tokyo Bekana, leaves and stems separated
- 1/2 bunch Hon Tsai Tai
- 1 tablespoon oil, or to taste
- 1 teaspoon sugar or honey
- 2 cloves garlic, minced or crushed
- soy sauce

Slice greens at an angle into 1-inch pieces. Have other ingredients ready. Heat wok or skillet; pour oil around the edge, then tip to distribute. Add greens and toss over moderately high heat until somewhat softened, but still crispy inside, about 3 minutes. Add sugar, garlic, a dash of soy sauce. Toss and serve.

Moroccan Slaw

Sara Jones, TCSA chef

- Mix:
- beets, peeled and grated
 - carrots, scrubbed and grated
 - kohlrabi, peeled and grated (if you still have some from last week)
 - orange, peeled and cut crosswise in thin slices

- Dress with:
- 1 pinch ground cumin
 - 1 pinch ground coriander
 - yoghurt
 - cashews, chopped
 - fresh cilantro, chopped
 - salt and pepper

You can substitute oil and apple cider vinegar for the yoghurt. Refrigerate before serving.