



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 183 ~ April 20, 2009 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Spring '09 Week 8 of 13

Harvest list is online

The Back Page

Moroccan Slaw
Beet Roesti with Rosemary
Grilled Nopalitos and Green Onion Tacos
Three Bean Salad with Nopalitos
Gingerly Carrot-Raisin Salad

More recipes online

CSA captain returns HOME!

Tucson CSA founder Philippe Waterinckx is back from a 5-1/2 month stay caring for elderly parents in Belgium. That means he missed weeks and weeks of Crooked Sky harvest! Philippe says he particularly missed the fresh CSA greens. The first meal he had after returning home was a breakfast made of beet greens and eggs from two of his hens, Henrietta and Lucille. "Tasted like heaven," he said.

Many thanks to Sara, Paul, and all the CSA volunteers for keeping the CSA ship on course during Philippe's absence!

Welcome back Philippe!



Newsletter Editor

Kimi Eisele

MAKE AN "EARTH DAY PLEDGE" TO BE AN EVEN BETTER "FOODIE"

Most of us already practice what we preach when it comes to eating locally and supporting sustainable farming techniques that help, rather than harm local economies, ecologies, and human beings everywhere. But maybe this Earth Day (April 22) you can take stock of your actions and beliefs and see if there's *a little more* you can do. Here are some ideas:

- 1) **Read the fine print.** Take the time to carefully read the labels of store-bought items. Make conscious choices not only about your vegetables, but about processed foods as well. Where does the cocoa in that chocolate bar come from? Is that popcorn yellow or white corn (a large percentage of yellow corn in this country is genetically modified). Be a conscientious food consumer on all fronts. Visit www.transfairusa.org for more info fair trade and www.thecampaign.org or www.saynotogmos.org for good GMO info.
- 2) **Educate yourself about U.S. agricultural policies and use your voice as your political muscle.** Eating locally is putting your politics into action. But it doesn't stop there. Large industry and government need to hear about what we want and what we don't. Writing, calling, or emailing local, state, and federal lawmakers to voice our support or dissent for bills affecting what we eat and where it's grown can take less than a minute. Inform yourself and don't be shy. For up-to-date info on policy, visit the Organic Consumers Association www.organicconsumers.org or the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy www.iatp.org.
- 3) **Harvest native foods.** The Sonoran Desert is rich with food sources – cholla buds, saguaro fruit, prickly pear fruit, palo verde, ironwood seeds, nopales, mesquite. Incorporating native foods into your diet makes you pay more attention to the seasons. It can even get you excited about summer! For info about what and when to harvest, visit: www.desertharvesters.org and www.nativeseeds.org.
- 4) **Dine out more conscientiously.** Many of us get lax when we go out to dinner even though we know that the food prepared in commercial kitchens isn't always local, organic or necessarily safe. Make it a game to seek out restaurants that *do* serve fresh and local foods or start a supper club with your fellow CSA-ers!
- 5) **Spread the word and the action.** Gently and kindly encourage your friends and family members to discover the joys and rewards of supporting local agriculture, local markets, and safe and delicious food.

CACTUS FOR DINNER?

That's right...it's nopalito season! Nopalitos are the fresh pads from the *Opuntia ficus-indica*, or cultivated prickly pear cactus, which can be de-spined and eaten. Studies show this low-carb food can help decrease blood glucose levels, which makes it a recommended food for diabetics.

To prepare: Carefully pluck the fresh, pliable pads from the plant (or cut them off with a knife). Scrape off the glochids, still soft and rubbery at this young stage, with a large kitchen knife. (Usually, those we get from the farm are already scraped.) Cut up the nopalitos into small cubes, then sauté or boil them. Over-cooking can make them slimy, so experiment with timing. Perhaps the best way to prepare them is to throw them right on the grill until soft and browned (or slightly charred on the outside)! Yum!



Moroccan Slaw

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Consider using any combination of mixed grated root vegetables, but preferably, beets, carrots and turnips or kohlrabi.

Mix:

1 cup beets, peeled and grated
1 cup carrots, scrubbed and grated
1 orange or grapefruit, peeled and cut crosswise in thin slices

Dress with:

1 pinch ground cumin
1 pinch ground coriander
1/4 cup yogurt
Cashews, chopped
Fresh cilantro, chopped
Salt and pepper

You can replace the yogurt with oil and apple cider vinegar.
Refrigerate before serving.

Beet Roesti with Rosemary

An almost unbelievably sweet and wonderful side dish. The sugar in the beets caramelizes, and the flavors of the rosemary, beets, and butter meld beautifully.

1 to 1-1/2 pounds beets
1 teaspoon coarsely chopped fresh rosemary
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup flour
2 tablespoons butter

Trim the beets and peel them as you would potatoes; grate them in a food processor or by hand. Begin preheating a medium to large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Toss the grated beets in a bowl with the rosemary and salt, then add about half the flour; toss well, add the rest of the flour, then toss again. Place the butter in the skillet and heat until it begins to turn nut-brown. Scrape the beet mixture into the skillet, shape it into a nice circle, and press it down with a spatula. Turn the heat to medium-high and cook, shaking the pan occasionally, until the bottom of the beet cake is nicely crisp, 6 to 8 minutes. Slide the cake out onto a plate, top with another plate, invert the two plates, and slide the cake back into the pan. Continue to cook, adjusting the heat if necessary, until the second side is browned. Cut into wedges and serve immediately.

Grilled Nopalitos and Green Onion Tacos

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Grilled cactus tends to have much less 'slime' 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
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 three 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.

Three Bean Salad with Nopalitos

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This salad is a take on the traditional canned three bean salad. The different colors and sizes add interest, or you can use just one type of bean for convenience.

2 nopal pads, grilled or broiled and cut into bite-sized pieces
1 cup cooked white beans
1 cup cooked kidney beans
1 cup cooked black beans
1/2 bunch green onion, chopped
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon oil
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
2 teaspoons lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste
Combine all ingredients and stir well to mix. Let salad sit for at least one hour before serving.

Gingery Carrot-Raisin Salad

Rita Silverberg, Tucson CSA

For raw food lovers, here's a new variation on an old theme. There's enough here for a party; amounts can be reduced, of course.

4-5 cups grated carrots
1 cup raisins
1/4 cup grated fresh, peeled ginger root
1 cup orange juice (with pulp)
1/4 cup rice syrup, agave nectar or honey
1 cup chopped walnuts

Combine all ingredients and mix together. Chill and serve. It keeps well for several days in the fridge. A food processor makes this dish a snap – especially if you're doing the party size.