



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Fall 2012

Harvest list is online

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Many more recipes in our online recipe archive

More on Purslane (Verdolagas)!

Although purslane is rarely seen on our own tables today, this pretty herb has a long and interesting history. English medieval cooks and gardeners loved purslane. The ancient Greeks made a bread flour from purslane seeds and pickled its fleshy stems; Greek country cooks now serve purslane as a salad herb, either alone or with other khorta (wild greens). On Mexican tables, the hot, peppery bite of cooked purslane is enjoyed with eggs and pork, while Chinese cooks value its sharp flavor and slightly slippery quality with noodles.

Closer to home, the FDA lists purslane as a pervasive weed (the 7th worst, worldwide) but to those of us who love its earthy, slightly acidic flavor and crisp, succulent stems and leaves, the word 'weed' hardly seems fair. Purslane is simple to grow and there are several varieties available to the gardener – the two best culinary ones are both summer herbs: portulaca oleracea (green purslane) and portulaca sativa (golden purslane).



ELOTES or MEXICAN-STYLE CORN: CORN FLAVOR AT ITS BEST!



We are all accustomed, in this country, to the wonderful tradition of sweet corn on the cob. But cross the border to the south and you will encounter a slightly different corn tradition: the Elotes, or Mexican-style grilled corn on the cob. It is the kind that you buy from street vendors in Mexico: grilled corn on the cob, typically served with a chili, cheese and lime mayonnaise.

Did you know that Farmer Frank also grows the type of corn used to make elotes? This corn, elote blanco, may be less sweet than our beloved American sweet corn, but what it lacks in sweetness, it amply compensates by packing an intense and wonderful corn flavor.

So, try eating this week's corn the Mexican way. Or, if you prefer, you can just slice the kernels off the cob and used it in savory dishes. If you cook and serve it as you would sweet corn on the cob, you may well be disappointed.

BE READY TO PARTICIPATE IN TUCSON FOOD DAY 2012!!!

Food Day is a spin-off of Earth Day that is meant to raise awareness about healthy, affordable and sustainable foods. It is celebrated on October 24th, but here in Tucson it will be stretched over an entire week, from October 21st to 27th, featuring different food events and opportunities every single day.

Tucson Food Week will begin with the 2nd Annual Santa Cruz Harvest Dinner. Events will continue throughout the week including a Food Swap, the Tucson Village Farm U-Pick, a GMO-Free Project of Tucson film showing of Genetic Roulette, the Santa Cruz River Farmers Market Fall Festival and the Pio Decimo Seed Swap that brings the Pio Decimo Community Garden together with the Pima County Seed Libraries. Sprinkled throughout are various gardening classes and events.

If that isn't enough fun, you can also go on a food adventure with the **Tucson Food Day Scavenger Hunt**. The Scavenger Hunt is a great activity to highlight the Food Day priorities, encouraging people to explore some of the economic, social, environmental and health issues surrounding food in the Tucson community. Participants must answer at least 5 questions to be entered into the raffle for prizes (including some prizes donated by the Tucson CSA) and every 5 questions that someone answers will earn them another entry into the raffle. There will be drawings every day of Food Week and it will culminate in a final drawing on Saturday, October 27th for some of the bigger prizes. The Hunt will be an interesting learning activity for everyone who participates. For some the Scavenger Hunt will be an introduction into thinking more critically about food and their community. For others it will be a chance to share their knowledge and passion and still learn a few things.

Finally, join the 10-Day Lilly's Table Food Day Challenge to learn more about how to incorporate the Food Day priorities in your own daily life. Participants will also be entered into a raffle to win an entire year subscription to Lilly's Table seasonal meal planning service. Whether you are looking for a bit of adventure, wanting to know more about our food system, or ready to take steps to better empower your relationship with food, check out the Tucson Food Week at www.tucsonfoodday.com

Elote Blanco with Verdolagas, Lime Juice and Chiles

Philippe Waterinckx, Tucson CSA

Elote Blanco is not the sweet, tender corn most people are used to. It is a full flavored and chewy corn that needs to be cooked longer than sweet corn. Use it in place of hominy in Posole or other stews, or try this delicious recipe that includes verdolagas as well.

2 ears of corn, kernels sliced off
1 (or more) tablespoon butter
1 chile (Serrano or Anaheim), seeded and chopped
1 cup coarsely chopped verdolagas
1/4 cup chipotle goat cheese, or crumbled queso fresco
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
Hot chile powder to taste (no need for it is you use chipotle goat cheese)
Salt

Combine corn, butter, chiles and 1/2 cup water in a sauce pan. Simmer until tender, about 15 minutes. Stir in cheese, chile powder, lime juice, verdolagas, and salt to taste.

Pumpkin Puree

If you search for pumpkin recipes you will find that most call for canned pumpkin. It is easy to make your own pumpkin puree to freeze and use in recipes. Any winter squash can be prepared this same way and used in place of pumpkin in your recipes.

To begin, cut your pumpkin or winter squash in half and scoop out seeds and fibers. Oil the interior and set the cut sides down on a baking sheet. If the halves are too large for the sheet, cut them into quarters, or smaller, to make them fit. Make sure to coat flesh with oil. Bake at 350 degrees for 1-1 1/2 hours, or until tender. Once cool, scrape flesh off of skin and mash by hand or in a food processor. Set in a colander lined with cheesecloth or coffee filters and cover with a large plate or plastic wrap. Place the colander in a bowl and place in refrigerator overnight to drain. Measure out one cup per small freezer bag and freeze for convenient use later in recipes. Keeps well in freezer for several months.

Pumpkin Gratin

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

You can successfully substitute part or all pumpkin puree for cooked potatoes in many recipes. A half and half mixture is great for mashed potatoes. Add a bit of nutmeg or sage to bring out the pumpkin flavor. Use whatever proportion of potatoes and pumpkin that you prefer for this recipe.

4 cups of mashed potato/pumpkin puree mixture
1 egg
1 cup grated, hard cheese (optional)
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
3/4 cup bread crumbs
1/2 cup chopped nuts
Salt and pepper to taste
2 tablespoons melted butter or oil

Combine pumpkin mixture, egg, cheese and nutmeg together. Spread into a greased, square baking dish. Pour butter or oil over bread crumbs and mix well. Add nuts and salt and pepper, then sprinkle over the top of the pumpkin mixture. Cook in a 350 degree oven for about 30 minutes until bread crumbs are browned and gratin is heated through. (If crumbs are not browning, put the gratin under the broiler for just a few minutes until toasted)

Pickled Verdolagas (Purslane)

The stems of purslane are succulent and edible and make a nice pickle, similar to pickles green beans or asparagus spears.

1 quart purslane stems and leaves
1 quart apple cider vinegar (or old pickle, jalapeno juice, etc.)
3 garlic cloves
10 peppercorns

Clean the purslane stems and leaves by rinsing them with fresh water. Cut to desired length and place in clean jars with lids. Add the spices and pour the vinegar over the purslane. Keep in the refrigerator for two weeks before using. Serve as a side dish with omelets and sandwiches.

Verdolagas (Purslane) and Walnut Pilaf

Lorraine Glazar, Tucson CSA

1 small to medium onion, chopped
2 teaspoons oil
1 cup rice
2 cups water, stock or broth
1 share verdolagas, washed and chopped
1/2 cup toasted walnuts
Salt and pepper to taste

Sauté the chopped onion in the oil until golden. Toss the rice in the pan until it is coated with oil. Add the liquid of choice and bring to a boil. Cover the pan and cook until all liquid is absorbed, 20 minutes to an hour (brown rice will take longer and may require a little more liquid). When rice is tender, toss in verdolagas and walnuts, season to taste, and serve it forth!

Mexican-style Corn On The Cob

2 ears fresh corn, chucked
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 teaspoon chile powder
1/2 tablespoon lime juice
1 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

Mix mayonnaise, chile powder and lime juice in small bowl. Cover. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Grill corn over medium-high heat 10 minutes or until corn is tender and lightly charred, turning occasionally. Spread corn with mayonnaise mixture. Sprinkle with cheese. Serve immediately.