



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 390 ~ May 27, 2013 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Spring '13

Harvest list is online

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**Many more recipes on
our website**

Beef shares

We have a few more grass-fed beef shares available. Order at the front desk. They will be available for pickup on the 1st or 2nd week of June.

Recycling at the CSA

Here's a list of items you can bring to the CSA which we can re-use:

Cardboard Egg cartons (no styrofoam or clear plastic).

Paper and plastic grocery bags: standard size only, and clean please.

Green plastic baskets: the ones tomatoes, small onions and tomatillos come in.

Please give them to our volunteers.

Thanks!



“GLENDALE GOLD LITTLE SWEETIE” ONIONS



There is something special about those little guys: they are Crooked Sky Farms' very own onion variety. It is an heirloom variety of sweet onions native to the Phoenix Basin. The seeds of those onions used to be distributed by a well-known seed company. In 2008, that seed company decided to discontinue the variety. When a seed company discontinues a seed it holds the rights to

it is quite a significant event in the world of heirloom seeds because that variety may become extinct.

When Farmer Frank from Crooked Sky Farms heard of this, he approached the seed company and purchased the rights to trademark and distribute that onion's seeds. He subsequently renamed it Glendale Gold Little Sweetie Onion, and has since been growing those onions on his farm. They are amazingly good!

Heirloom varieties are unfortunately becoming increasingly rare as seed distributors move to newer hybrids. Large seed companies prefer hybrids because growers can't reliably reproduce the plants by collecting the seeds. Instead, these seeds must be purchased from the seed company.

Protecting heirlooms from extinction preserves the genetic diversity of our crops. Scientists point out that genetic diversity may be especially important as climate change occurs – some varieties may show greater ability to adapt and thus prevent widespread crop failures.

Thanks to grass-roots seed-saving organizations, non-profit seed-saving organizations such as Native Seeds/SEARCH, heirloom seed companies, and individuals such as Farmer Frank, the genetic material of some heirloom varieties is being preserved.

Little sweeties can be used like any regular yellow onions, but because they are small, they can be used like boiler onions.

PEELING BOILER ONIONS

We're repeating this segment because we're supposed to get this week the boiler onions we didn't get last week (fingers crossed!)

Boiler onions are small onions (1 to 2 inches in diameter). Because of their smaller size, they are tedious to peel and chop like a regular onion. They are called boiler onions because they are typically boiled (blanched) to make peeling easier. To blanch them, just cut the stem off (if it is still there), then drop them in boiling water for just two minutes). Drain and drop in a bowl of iced water and let cool for 5 minutes. Drain again. They will slip right out of their skins.

Although you can use them like any other onions, boiler onions are really best roasted or braised whole (once peeled of course). They are wonderful in stews, such as Beef Bourguignon, or in creamed sauce with veal or chicken.

Pickled Onions and Beets

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

A perfect place for your little onions-pickled a deep pink with beets and spices.

1 bunch beet roots
4-5 little sweetie onions, trimmed and peeled
2 cups vinegar
1 cup water
1/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon total of 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 – Black Pepper

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 to low. Simmer to let spices develop flavor and steep. Add onions after 10 minutes and continue simmering for an additional 2-3 minutes. Remove from heat and add beets. Let cool, then pack into jars. 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.

Squash and Grain Fritters

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

2 cups grated summer squash
About 1-1 1/2 cups cold cooked grains, preferably quinoa or white rice
1/2 small sweet onion, sliced thinly
1 egg
1 tablespoon flour
Salt and pepper to taste
Any fresh herbs available, if desired

Drain squash in a colander for 30 minutes. After draining squeeze excess moisture from squash, then mix with grains and onion. Beat egg and pour over vegetables, mix together, then sprinkle with flour and salt and pepper and herbs, if using. Mix again, adding more flour if mixture seems very loose. Heat a large skillet over medium heat and add about 1 tablespoon of oil. Drop large spoonfuls of squash mixture onto the skillet and use spoon to spread or flatten mixture. Cover fritter and cook until golden brown underneath, about 4 minutes. Flip gently and cover again, cooking another 4 minutes until browned on second side. Remove fritters to a paper towel to drain and repeat with remaining batter.

Summer Squash and Pea Tacos with Tomato-Avocado Relish

Kumi Rao, Tucson CSA

3 summer squash
1 jalapeno
1 onion
1 cup frozen sweet peas
1-2 tomatoes
3 tablespoons sunflower seeds
Arugula or greens of your choice or finely minced cilantro
Olive oil
Salt and pepper
Lemon/lime
Handful of dates or dried cranberries (optional)
10-12 flour/corn tortillas

Cut the summer squash into bite-sized pieces. Finely dice onions and jalapenos. Fry the onions with a good pinch of salt in 1 tablespoon of olive oil. When onions are browned (about 4-5 minutes) add minced jalapeno. Cook 1 minute and then add summer squash and peas (fry on medium high heat for 3 minutes or to desired doneness). Assemble relish: finely mince a small onion, add 2 finely minced avocados, salt and pepper to taste and finish with a drizzle of tsp. of olive oil and diced dates/cranberries (optional). Assemble the tacos: spoon the vegetable mixture onto the tacos, sprinkle with about 1 teaspoon of sunflower seeds per taco and then top with 1-2 tablespoons of relish. Top with a small handful of greens or sprinkle with cilantro.

Agua Fresca de Pepino (Cucumber-Lime Drink)

Amy Schwemm, Tucson CSA

Our gigantic Armenian cucumbers are ideal for this most refreshing summer drink. Easy to make and to drink! It will use up your CSA cucumbers faster than you can get them.

1 large Armenian cucumber, unpeeled (equivalent to 3 English cucumbers)
1/2 to 1 cup lime juice
1-2 cups water
1/4 cup sugar, agave syrup, simple syrup, or other sweetener

Juice the whole cucumber (with skin and seeds), or blend and strain it. Add lime juice, water, and sugar. Serve chilled. For added zest, sprinkle with chopped mint or Stevia leaf. Makes approximately 2 quarts. Substitution: instead of lime juice and sugar, you can use 2 tablespoons of frozen concentrated lime juice per pint of cucumber juice.