



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 399 ~ July 29, 2013 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Summer 2013

Harvest list is online

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**Many more recipes on
our website**

Josh's pasture-raised lamb shares

Ready for pickup!

Quality hens for sale

Marcia has a number of pullets (young chickens) for sale, all are organically raised and Standard bred (not hatchery) stock. Most are in the 3 to 4 month old range now.

Breeds available now: New Hampshire (a German line), Black Copper Marans, Blue Copper Marans.

Later in the summer and into the fall: Barred Rock, Rhode Island Red, Spangled Russian Orloff.

Prices are range from \$30 to \$40 (vary with the age and breed).

All are quality birds, raised organically and free of diseases or external parasite issues.

Contact Marcia at:
boahiss at gmail dot com
or at 520.744.4211



SUMMER AT THE FARM: HOT FIELDS AND FIELD HEAT

CSA members who have been with us for some time know that summers are usually a bit challenging at the farm. The high daytime temperatures in the fields require the crew to do the harvesting between 4:00 and 10:00 A.M. Even then, often it is already 95° in south Phoenix by 6:00 A.M. So, when you eat your CSA produce, have a kind thought for Farmer Frank and the farm workers at Crooked Sky Farms.

Produce has a hard time staying cool and fresh as well. Many of you have no doubt noticed that sometimes the summer produce isn't always in tip-top condition. This is because of "field heat" and the problems caused by it. Field heat is a term used in agriculture to describe the heat contained in a crop immediately after harvest. It is a combination of the heat absorbed by the plant tissues from the environment prior to harvest and the heat resulting from the relatively rapid respiration occurring in the still-warm plant tissues. Excessive and prolonged field heat can cause faster deterioration, dehydration and tissue breakdown.

In cooler conditions, field heat is not a problem, as produce cools naturally after harvesting, and if placed in a cooler it cools even faster. However, during summer, the field heat problem can occasionally be significant. Even if the produce is immediately placed in a walk-in cooler set to 45°, it can take up to 48 hours for produce that is at 100° or above to reach a temperature of 45°. During the initial cooling period, the temperature of the cooler itself can go up as high 75° because of all the hot produce placed in it. It's not unlike placing a one-gallon jug of hot water in your refrigerator and waiting for it to cool--it takes a considerable amount of time, time during which the temperature of the refrigerator goes up too. Fortunately, it doesn't always take that long to cool as it depends on how much and what type of produce goes in the cooler--watermelons take a long time to cool while lighter, less dense produce cools faster.

Also, the produce doesn't always have 48 hours in the cooler to get to the optimal 45° temperature. Often it has only 24 hours between the time it is harvested and the time it gets loaded on the truck to be shipped to the CSA. Sometimes Crooked Sky Farms harvests the fields 2-3 days ahead of time to allow the produce to cool completely before being shipped to us. But depending on the type of produce, this isn't always the best either, as it may be better for the produce to be more fresh. And cooler space is limited--sometimes there just isn't enough room in there for the additional inventory.

Farmer Frank hopes to one day be able to afford a vacuum cooler, such as those used by commercial farmers. Vacuum coolers can cool produce much faster, but they cost \$85,000 or more. Maybe next year, says Farmer Frank.

The good news is that now that the tomato season is over, the walk-in cooler can be set to 45°. It had been set to 55° for the past couple months because that's the coldest temperature at which tomatoes can be stored without losing flavor.

We hope this makes sense. And we want to thank all of you for supporting the farm during the rough months. The difficulty of farming in our high summer heat is just one of the risks we share with the farmer as part of a being in a CSA.

Green Chile Pork

Lisa Anderson, Tucson CSA (adapted from “Lower Valley Carnitas” recipe in The Border Cookbook)

4 teaspoons ground cumin
4 teaspoons oregano
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
3–5 lbs. pork Boston butt (shoulder butt), cut into 2-inch cubes
Olive oil to sear pork and sauté onions
4 cloves garlic, minced or crushed
1 onion, chopped in large pieces
4–6 fresh green chiles, roasted or steamed, then peeled and seeded
1–2 bay leaves
1 cup chicken broth or other liquid
Optional Serving Suggestions: Tortillas, Fresh Chopped Cilantro, Chopped Radishes, Lime Wedges

Stir together the cumin, oregano, salt, and pepper. In a large bowl, stir the spice mixture into the meat chunks. You may need to do this in two batches, and it’s fine to let the meat sit for a bit at this point while you prepare the onion, garlic, and chiles. In a large pot or Dutch oven, warm the oil over medium-high heat, add the pork and sear it quickly. Again, this may need to be done in two batches. Remove meat from pan, set aside, and use pan to sauté the onions and garlic until starting to be translucent. Return the meat to the pan with a small amount (a cup or less?) of chicken broth, along with the chiles and bay leaves. Cover and cook for two to four hours in a 325° oven or on the stovetop, stirring every 30 to 40 minutes or so. Near the end of cooking, remove lid, if needed, to boil off any excess liquid. Shred the meat by pulling apart with two forks. Serve with tortillas, fresh chopped cilantro, chopped radishes, and lime wedges.

JL’s Okra Southern Style

JodyLee Estrada Duek, Tucson CSA

If the mucilaginous quality of okra turns you off this might be a good recipe to try. In this dish, bread soaks up the okra ‘slime’, much like rice does in gumbo.

6-10 okra, 4-7”
1-2 stalks celery
1-2 medium tomatoes
1-2 slices bread
1 small onion
1 hot pepper, chopped (optional)

Slice okra in 1/3” rings. Chop the onions, celery, and tomatoes into small pieces, but not minced fine, and save the juices. Sauté the onions and celery in a little oil until they begin to soften. Add the tomatoes and any juices that have accumulated and stir until the mix has some liquidity to it (add a bit of water or soup stock if necessary). Add the okra and let it stew for 8 to 10 minutes, until all the vegetables are thoroughly cooked. Tear the bread into bite-sized pieces and add it to the pot to soak up the juices. Some folks like to add a bit of vinegar or lemon juice before serving.

Squash and Grain Fritters

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

2 cups grated summer squash
About 1 to 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
Basil, finely chopped (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. Mix again, adding more flour if mixture seems very loose. Stir in basil, if using. Heat a large skillet over medium heat and add about one 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 four minutes. Flip gently and cover again, cooking another four minutes until browned on second side. Remove fritters to a paper towel to drain and repeat with remaining batter.

Southwestern Potato Okra Hash

Mary Leuchtenberger, Tucson CSA

2 medium potatoes
1 (or more) chiles
1/2 share okra
2 tomatillos
Shredded cheese

In a heavy skillet heat a thin layer of oil or lard. Chop potatoes and chiles and add to pan when oil is hot, stirring periodically. When potatoes begin to brown, thinly slice okra and add to pan, and cook for a few minutes longer, stirring as needed. Chop tomatillos and mix into hash. Remove pan from heat, top with shredded cheese and cover for a few minutes to allow cheese to melt.

Sliced Cucumbers with Manchego-*new*

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Plain salted cucumbers are a great, quick snack, but if you substitute a salty, hard cheese for the salt it tastes even better. You can use any hard, aged cheese, like parmesan, romano or manchego.

2 cucumbers, sliced
1 teaspoon white wine vinegar
Several tablespoons grated hard cheese

Toss cucumbers with vinegar. Lay out in a single layer on a platter and sprinkle all over with cheese.