



August 18, 2004

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Fair Share Farm CSA Newsletter

This Week's Share:

Full Share:

'Silver Queen' sweet corn
Green beans or okra
Tomatoes
Carrots
Sweet peppers
Melon
Cucumbers
Garlic
Coriander seed

Partial Share:

Sweet peppers
Cucumbers
Melon
Carrots or beets
Garlic
Coriander seed

Next week: look for more sweet peppers, onions and potatoes.

Calendar

August 25th — CSA Distribution, Crossroads Market

August 28th— CSA Distribution, Fair Share Farm

The crossroads

We have entered the time of year when one season gives way to the next. While summer's heat (what little of it there is) still dominates, shorter days are slowly pulling us toward fall. The summer crops are slowing down, succumbing to the death that befalls every annual plant. Fall crops are flourishing, sending up new shoots with each day's passing.

What this means for your share is twofold. On the one hand, these in-between times offer up a greater diversity of vegetables than during summer's peak. Soon we'll have broccoli, lettuce, and cauliflower but we'll still have some peppers, eggplant, and okra. This mix of summer and fall will give us a chance to try new combinations in our recipes, a nice segue into fall cooking (my favorite time for eating!). By October we'll be in full fall swing with squashes, cabbage, leeks, and kale: perfect ingredients for some hearty soups, stews, and roasts.

On the other hand, this transition time is not without its trials. Right now we are seeing the summer crops slowing down

without having the fall crops yet to replace them. We think that the shares may be little on the light side the next few weeks (7 and 4 items, instead of 9 and 6). Just remember autumn's bounty is just around the corner. We've planted lots of broccoli for all of you who have asked for it (after reading the surveys, broccoli is scoring high for veggies you want more of). A bit of fine tuning next year should ease the transition, including planting a succession of some crops so they start bearing as the earlier crops are dwindling .

During the lull before autumn we are taking the opportunity to give you some coriander seed (see Tom's side for more info.) We save several kinds of dried products for just these occasions. In addition to coriander seed, we've also collected chamomile flowers and mint for tea, ornamental gourds dried from last year, and we'll be collecting dried chili peppers to give you next Spring. We hope you enjoy these little offerings that need no refrigeration and should last for many months in your kitchen.

Until fall arrives, enjoy the tastes of summer. This will be the last week for sweet corn and probably melons.

Thank you

Just a quick note of heartfelt thanks to all of you who have been so supportive of what Tom and I are attempting. Even with the usual imperfect weather, pests, etc., we are really happy with how the season has gone so far. Even more than our harvest of vegetables, it is the positive responses from you that make us feel like we are succeeding. We hope that you all continue to enjoy the CSA experience and look forward to growing as a farm and as a community with you all for many years to come.

Surveys

Yes, we still want those surveys. Thank you to those of you who have already returned yours. To those who haven't, we've made it easier for you. You can now fill one out at pick-up. Just look for the "blank surveys" folder on the CSA table. Thank you!

Recipes

Fried Okra

Most anything fried is good, so you can believe this is a good way to try and enjoy okra.

Cut off the ends and slice the rest into rounds. Put sliced okra in a bowl, sprinkle with salt (liberally), and cover with very cold water. Refrigerate an hour or so, then drain and rinse. In a small paper sack, mix 1/2 cup cornmeal with salt and pepper, to taste. Put the okra inside the bag, close the top, and shake until the okra is totally coated with the cornmeal. In an iron skillet, heat 1/2 inch of oil, bacon grease, lard, or a mixture thereof. Fry until golden brown. (from Hub-UK culinary website.)

Fried Peppers, Onions and Eggplant with Coriander

A nice side dish or pasta sauce that allows you to use a lot of share items, and try out the coriander seed at the same time.

- ◆ 2 medium peppers, cleaned and chopped into 2 inch strops
- ◆ 2 small or 1 large onion, chopped
- ◆ 2 medium eggplant
- ◆ 3 cloves garlic, chopped fine
- ◆ 1-1/2 tbsp toasted and ground coriander seed
- ◆ 1 cup liquid (white wine or water)

To toast coriander seed, place in skillet or small pan on high heat and cook until you can smell them (1-2 min.) Grind in electric grinder, blender, food processor or with a mortar and pestle.

Your Share Items

Okra

Okra is an African vegetable (Ethiopian origin), and prefers hot weather. While our plants haven't yielded much yet, they look great. We are growing two varieties this year, Clemson Spineless (green) and Burgundy (red). If you're not familiar with it, it's the pointy pod you may find in your share.

One nice thing about okra is watching it grow. It is a nice plant, in that it germinates easily, grows straight up (4 feet or more) without staking or trellising and has nice flowers that resemble its relatives hibiscus and hollyhock. The pods, when cut, exude a mucilaginous juice that is used to thicken stews (gumbo). It is said to have a flavor somewhat like a cross between asparagus and eggplant. It's sliminess (no good way around it), increases as you cook it. People enjoy it most fried (see recipe) or in gumbo.

Coriander Seed

At Fair Share Farm we try to keep as many fresh culinary herbs and spices

Sauté onions with olive oil 5 minutes. Add pepper and ground coriander and cook 5 minutes more.

Add the eggplant, half the garlic, and half the liquid. Cook on high heat 2 minutes, then turn heat down to medium and simmer 10 minutes.

Remove cover, add the remaining garlic and liquid. Cook uncovered for 5 minutes, or until dish is desired tenderness. Eat as is, on toast, in a pita, or however you like.

on hand as possible. Earlier in the year we gave you the herb cilantro. Now we are giving you the herb form of cilantro, its seed, aka coriander. Used in many culinary traditions, including Indian, African and Mexican, it has a sweet, nutty, perfumed aroma when toasted and ground.

An old spice, it has been used for the past 5,000 years. Good in baked goods, sauces, or chocolate, we urge you to at least toast it and grind it (see recipe) to experience it. Use it now, or in the fall with winter squash.

Peppers

It's always nice when as one vegetable is going out of season, another is coming into it's prime. That's the case with the peppers as they start to ripen. We are happy that the sweet peppers are sweet, the hot peppers are hot, and they all have great color, size and texture.

Sweet Peppers

To tell the sweet peppers apart, first you look at the shape. With our selection the sweet peppers come in 3 shapes: blocky/bell, rounded and long. The first two have nice thick walls and are good for roasting, while the long ones are best fried. Both, of course, are good fresh.

Red Knight

A bell pepper that goes from green to red. We pick these at both stages of ripeness.

Gourmet

An orange bell pepper, with a mild sweetness.

Blushing Beauty

This pepper is both blushing and mellow. It starts out "ivory" and blushes to red. Heavy in hand, it has none of the bitterness of a green pepper, but also is not sweet.

Tequila

Purple bell pepper that started producing early. It is really a green pepper in disguise.

Topepo Rosso

Small, round, red, thick-walled Italian pepper. It is very sweet.

Red and Yellow Marconi

Similar in their horn shape, they both are thin walled, and thus really nice for frying or stuffing. They are both have good taste, with the red one being sweeter and juicier.

Hot Peppers

With hot peppers, let us know what you want. We know that not everyone likes them, but some of you love them. You have already gotten some **Jalapenos** in your share. We also have, **New Mexico Sunsets**, a sweet, very juicy, long, orange frying pepper, and **Pepperoncini** pickling peppers. Peppers good for drying are our small **Thai peppers** and **Rochester, New York unknowns**.

Preserving your peppers

The simplest way to preserve your peppers is to roast them using the directions given in last week's newsletter, and then freezing them. They freeze well in a plastic (reusable) freezer bag. You can quickly defrost them in hot tap water, or by cooking.

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