



July 20, 2005

Volume 2, Issue 10w

Fair Share Farm CSA Newsletter

This Week's Share:

Full Share:

Tomatoes
Cherry tomatoes
Cucumbers or Summer squash
Carrots
Green beans or eggplant
Cabbage
Onions
Chives, parsley or basil

Partial Share:

Tomatoes
Okra or salsa fixin's
Onions
Summer squash or cucumbers
Carrots
Chives, parsley or basil

Next week: Tomatoes, eggplant, squash, cucumbers, beans.

Calendar

July 27th — Distribution, Wednesdays

July 30th — Distribution, Saturday

Greetings!

We are in a full on rush this week as we prepare for the **tour** on Sunday. We are told that sixty folks have RSVPed so we are planning for a party! We hope to see many of you there. If you want more info. check out the News & Events page on the website or give us a call.

Tasks to prepare for the tour are the same as our normal tasks for this time of season: weeding, tomato trellising, mowing, irrigation, etc. But the pace has picked up a bit as we hope to have a pretty, not just a functional, space by Sunday.

This past weekend we went on a tour of urban farms in KC organized by the KC Center for Urban Agriculture. It was an inspiring experience visiting five farms that were very different, yet they had similarities as well. One similarity was the struggle to keep up with the **weeds**. Now, the definition of a weed is a plant growing where you don't want it to grow. Many "weeds" are native plants that have medicinal and aesthetic value. We have planted our front yard with such "weeds" and enjoy very much their beauty. But, a plant growing next to our crops sucking up the water and nutrients that our crops

need is definitely a weed. We hope to get most of the weeds in check before the tour, but as Tom reminds me we must leave some so that the visitors will see what weeds grow in our fields. Therefore, any weed left by then will be there "for scientific purposes" . . .

In line with our scientific undertakings is our latest experiment with the cucurbits. **Cucurbitae** is the family of veggies (fruit really, but lets not get picky) that include cucumbers, squash (summer & winter), melons, pumpkins, and gourds. Quite a nice family really. We like them all and like to have a good supply of them.

Unfortunately they are among the hardest to grow organically. Two pests, the cucumber beetle and the squash bug, wreak havoc on the cucurbits. Squash bugs do plenty of damage, but its really the cucumber beetles that are fatal because they spread a wilt disease as they feed on the plants. We have many strategies for dealing with these guys, but none are fail proof. This year we have tried a new one, an experiment really. Since the cucurbits enjoy the shade of other plants and cucumber beetles spot plants by their outline against bare soil, we planted our melons, squash, and cukes in a nice patch of established clover. Clover, like other legumes, has a symbiotic relationship

with soil fungi that attach to the roots and fix nitrogen from the atmosphere which is then available to the soil as the clover dies back in the summer heat. Well, as nice as this all sounds our experiment is only going so well. The jury is still out, but the plants are not as big and healthy as we would like them. We've got more summer squash and cucumbers planted in other areas, but its too early to tell if we'll have any melons and winter squash. We are especially nervous about those melons. We had some nice melons last year, but many of the plants died from wilt before the melons were ripe. We hope our experiment doesn't backfire leaving us melon-less . . .

Hey, but how about those **tomatoes!** (sly change of subject, eh?) Yes, we are very, very happy about how the tomatoes are looking. The plants are lush with growth and full of fruit. We are now putting tomatoes on the bulk list in addition to handing out a nice amount each week. The hybrids are in full swing (good for making salsa and juice) and the romas (good for sauce) have just started coming in. The heirlooms in all their beautiful colors and delicious flavors are not far behind. If you want bulk tomatoes let us know. We have started a list and will fill orders as we can.

Recipes

We've received a lot of recipes lately, and will feature your suggestions this week.

Gazpacho

Gazpacho is a cold soup, that is essentially chopped summer vegetables (tomatoes cucumbers, onion, pepper garlic, summer squash, etc) in a "broth" of red wine vinegar, lemon/lime juice, olive oil, and/or tomato juice. It is often made with dill and a heavy addition of ground black pepper. We were planning on including a gazpacho recipe this week, and as luck has it, 2 gazpacho recipes were submitted by members. We tried them on Tuesday night and liked them both. While the ingredients are almost identical, the first one was made by hand chopping, the second was chopped with a food processor, giving different textures to the soup. The first is also "soupier" because of the tomato juice (add some to the second recipe if it is too thick for you). Chives and parsley are good herbs to use if you don't have dill.

Rick's Gazpacho Recipe

Member Rick Robson says this recipe "is enough for 2". We found it was enough to feed 4 to 6.

- ◇ 1 small cucumber
- ◇ 1 small green pepper (or purple)
- ◇ 2 medium tomatoes (more is fine here) diced
- ◇ 1 medium onion
- ◇ 3 to 4 cloves of garlic

- ◇ 3 tbsp olive oil
- ◇ 3 tbsp red wine vinegar
- ◇ Juice of 1 to 2 limes
- ◇ 2 tbsp tomato paste
- ◇ 2 cups (+/-) tomato juice (Rick uses Snap-E-Tom tomato and chili cocktail)

Method:

- ◇ Into a large bowl, grate or finely chop the cucumber (seeds OK or cut out the seeds and add to the puree mixture below), add chopped pepper, half the onion, then the diced tomatoes.
- ◇ In a food processor or blender add the other half (or none) of the onion, minced or squeezed garlic, olive oil, vinegar, lime, and tomato paste. Puree this mixture. Add the Snap-E-Tom and mix again.
- ◇ Add the puree to the bowl and mix well.
- ◇ Check seasoning
- ◇ Cover and chill. I usually can't wait but several hours of chilling lets the flavor develop.

Gazpacho with Homemade Croutons

From the Gillespies via Kitchen Window by Bryan Miller at npr.org.

- ◇ 3 pounds ripe tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped (about 6 cups)
- ◇ 1 cup chopped red onion
- ◇ 1 large red sweet pepper, seed and chopped
- ◇ 1 tablespoon chopped garlic

- ◇ 2 teaspoons chopped, seeded jalapeno, or to taste
- ◇ 6 tablespoons fresh herb (either coriander, dill, chervil, parsley or basil work); coarsely chop
- ◇ 1/4 cup olive oil
- ◇ 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- ◇ 3 tablespoons fresh lime or lemon juice
- ◇ Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- ◇ 1 1/2 cups peeled seeded and cubed cucumbers

1. Blanch tomatoes in large pot of boiling water for 30 seconds. Drain in a colander. Cool under cold running water. Peel tomatoes. Halve tomatoes crosswise. Working over small bowl, squeeze gently to extract seeds. Discard seeds.
2. Combine all ingredients except 2 tablespoons of the herb in the bowl of a food processor. Pulse to a coarse texture. Transfer to a bowl and taste. Sprinkle remaining herbs over each serving. Serve with crusty bread.

Homemade Croutons

- ◇ 2 tablespoons olive oil, or as needed
 - ◇ 1 clove garlic, crushed
 - ◇ Six-to-eight slices stale French or Italian bread, cut into small cubes
- In a medium skillet over low setting, heat the olive oil. Add the crushed garlic and cook for a minute, stirring. Stir in the bread, coating with the garlic oil. Toss the croutons until golden and crunchy. Sprinkle over servings of soup.

Your Share Items

Okra

Many of you in the CSA are more familiar with okra than we are, though 3 years of growing and eating it has made us a big fan. It is a very simple vegetable to cook, and when prepared properly, doesn't need to be "slimy." Try cutting the top off, cutting it crosswise into little rounds, coating it with a mix of cornmeal, flour, breadcrumbs, salt, pepper and cayenne, and frying it in some vegetable oil for 3 to 4 minutes until tender (don't overcook). Eat hot with a little ketchup on the side. We look forward to hearing some good okra recipes for next week's newsletter.

Eggplant

One of the most widely cooked vegetables in the world, there are a few things that are good to know about eggplant. First, if you are not familiar with it remember that if you cook it like you would mushrooms, you should be happy. Then you won't be eating undercooked eggplant (a definite turnoff). Second, despite what cookbooks say, you do not have to peel or salt you eggplant, since yours is so fresh. Third, while tasty, eggplant is actually low in protein and vitamins compared to other veges, but keeping the skin on will help give you some fiber. And fourth, check last years newsletters for some nice recipes, or contact us with your favorite.

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