

THE TIPI TIMES

May 26, 2011, week 2 (green EOW)

Tipi Produce, 14706 W. Ahara Rd., Evansville, WI 53536, 608-882-6196, csa@tipiproduce.com

THIS WEEK'S BOX CONTAINS:

Asparagus, 1.5 lb
Bok choy
Spinach
Red leaf lettuce
Radishes
Green garlic
Rhubarb, 1.5 lb.

NEXT WEEK'S BOX WILL PROBABLY CONTAIN:*

Asparagus, escarole,
spinach, lettuce, white
salad turnips, scallions,
and more

*depending on weather, critters
& other forces of nature.

Farm Notes. It was a busy week here at the farm. Everyone appreciated the warm weather. It was so warm that we had to pick our asparagus fields twice on Monday. Asparagus is a thermometer; the warmer the weather, the faster it grows. We devoted lots of energy to weeding this week. We have to keep ahead of the weeds at this time of year or risk losing an entire crop. Steve cultivates our fields first with the tractor, but cannot kill the weeds growing right next to our crop plants. The workcrew then comes in to clean up the field with hoes. It is a big, ongoing job.

We planted sweet potatoes on Friday. It seems an implausible crop for our climate, doesn't it? I researched sweet potatoes this winter and heard stories of successful crops grown in Wisconsin. It's always fun to try something new. Sweet potatoes are grown from cuttings called 'slips'. The six-inch slips looked pretty odd when they arrived by mail; rootless and shorn of all their leaves before shipping. We planted them on Friday, then found by Sunday that they didn't look very good. I contacted a farmer friend who wrote "Beth, the slips always look horrible, horrible, horrible after planting; like they are dead; but they are not." That was comforting, as our slips looked merely horrible. By Tuesday, they had improved. I dug around and found some slips had already formed new 1-inch roots. That's pretty amazing for a leafless, rootless stalk. We won't know until fall if we'll get a good crop but we are hopeful.

Spicy Bok Choy with Sesame Noodles "From Asparagus to Zucchini", third edition, by MACSAC

1 pkg. (8-9 oz.) fresh sesame- or garlic-flavored linguine
1 Tbsp. peanut oil
1 Tbsp. sesame oil
1 Tbsp. minced ginger
2 tsp. minced garlic
½ tsp. hot red pepper flakes
4 heads baby bok choy, heads cut in half lengthwise (or 1 large head, cut into 1-inch strips)
8-12 brown mushrooms, thick-sliced, or 1 yellow sweet pepper, cut into chunks
1 cup sake (rice wine) or chicken stock
2 Tbsp. soy sauce

Boil noodles in lots of salted water until barely tender. Drain and keep warm. Meanwhile, heat a wok or very large, heavy skillet over highest flame. Add oils, swirl the pan to coat the bottom, and add the ginger, garlic and hot pepper flakes. (Keep your face away from the steam; it's spicy!) Stir-fry for 30 seconds or less, then add the bok choy and mushrooms (or sweet pepper) and continue to stir-fry another 2-3 minutes. Add the sake or stock and soy sauce, cover the wok, and let steam until everything is tender, 5-8 minutes more. Divide the noodles among 4 soup plates or deep bowls. Portion the bok choy mixture over the noodles. Serve immediately. Makes 4 servings.

Q & A. Here is a recent question from a member that I'd like to answer for everyone.

Q: Why did we ask members to put TWO email addresses in the contact lists for their email program?

A: We plan to use csa@tipiproduce.com for most of our communication this season. Please use this address if you need to get in touch with us. However, I've found it helpful to have a second address available for weekly emails if there are problems with our main address. It happens every year. Thanks for including tipi@litewire.net in your contact lists.

VEGGIE NOTES. See last week's newsletter for storage and cooking notes on asparagus, rhubarb, and green garlic.

Asparagus - We had a big harvest this week, due to the warm weather over the weekend. Next week's harvest will probably be smaller.

Bok choy (large rosette with thick white stems and green leaves) - This Asian green is good for stir-frying or sautéing. It is also good in soups. You can think of the stems and leaves as two separate vegetables. The stems require longer cooking. The leaves will cook almost as quickly as spinach. Bok choy stores well, so feel free to pull off leaves as you need them, or use the whole head at once. Refrigerate in a plastic bag.

Spinach - We suggest that you use this tender spinach for salads. It is fine for cooking, but will shrink dramatically once wilted. We expect to send larger quantities of spinach for cooking next week.

Lettuce - Handle the lettuce gently. It is very succulent and delicate because of the recent wet weather. We washed all the veggies (we always do) but expect to have to wash the lettuce carefully this week.

Asparagus and White Bean Salad

Adapted from a variety of sources.

Ingredients:

1/2 lb. cooked asparagus, cut into 1-inch chunks

1 15-oz. can of cannellini beans, drained (or substitute great northern or navy)

1 stalk green garlic, thinly sliced and minced (or substitute 1 finely minced garlic clove)

a drizzle of olive oil

2 tsp white wine vinegar

black pepper

salt to taste

optional ingredients or substitutions:

- 1/2 lb. spinach, wilted

- 2 handfuls chopped arugula

- Sliced radishes or salad turnips

- finely minced chives, a small amount of minced oregano, or minced parsley. Almost any fresh herb is good in this salad. I avoid mint when making this salad with asparagus because I find it overwhelms the flavor of the asparagus.

- Fresh lemon juice is a great substitute for the vinegar.

- Fresh mozzarella cut in chunks,

- Ricotta salata cut in chunks, or crumbled feta cheese

Directions:

Mix everything together gently. Adjust salt and vinegar to taste. If you add many optional ingredients, you will need to increase the amounts of oil, vinegar, salt and green garlic. You can eat the salad right away, or refrigerate for 30 minutes to allow the flavors to blend. Serve cold or at room temperature.

Rhubarb Custard Pie. *Beth's notes: A few members contacted me to ask for this recipe. Here it is.* Bill and Rachel Caplan contributed this recipe, which was one of Rachel's father's favorite recipes. Bill reports that people will line up at potluck dinners just to snag a piece of this pie.

1 unbaked 9 inch pie crust (use your favorite recipe)

2.5 C chopped rhubarb

1.25 C sugar

2 TB flour

4 eggs, separated

8 Tbsp powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 400oF. Beat the egg yolks and mix with rhubarb, sugar and flour. Pour into raw pie crust. Bake at 400 for 1 hour.

Meanwhile, beat the egg whites with the powdered sugar until stiff. Lower the temperature to 350, and top the pie with the meringue. Bake for another 15 minutes, or until brown.