

THE TIPI TIMES

July 5, 2012, week 9 (green EOW)

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THIS WEEK'S BOX CONTAINS:

Swiss chard
Fennel, 1 large or 2 medium
Zucchini/squash, 3 lb?
Snap peas, 0.9 lb
Cucumbers, 1 (or maybe 2)
Walla Walla onion, 1
Bibb lettuce
Basil

Members at one site will get one slicing tomato.

NEXT WEEK'S BOX WILL PROBABLY CONTAIN:*

Cabbage, cucumbers, zucchini,
Walla Walla onion, an herb and
more.

MENU IDEAS

I advise you to continue grilling to prep ingredients for cold dishes like pasta salad. I always make a pot of hard-boiled eggs in weather like this, for egg salad sandwiches or to chop and add to salads. Here's what we cooked (or plan to cook) this week.

Pasta salad with snap peas, cucumber, Walla Walla onion and wilted Swiss chard.

Pizza cooked on the grill, using an old cookie sheet. A pizza stone should work great on the grill, but we don't have one and find the cookie sheet works fine. Toppings: grilled zucchini and Walla Walla onion.

Grilled tofu wrapped in lettuce leaves.

Farm cook Lacey made us Chilled Chard Soup with Lemon. See recipe below.

Farm News. It is incredibly hot and dry. This week feels much hotter than last week.

Steve continues to irrigate. The crops look OK, considering the conditions. Kale and collards have stopped growing, despite lots of watering. They won't grow again until it cools down. The bibb lettuce we picked this week is looser than usual and some leaves are tip-burned. The zucchini have grown explosively in the heat, so expect larger-than-usual squash. We have no means of slowing them down. It's likely that there will be long-term effects of this heat wave, but we don't know yet what those will be. Peppers are a concern. They are flowering now and can suffer 'pollen blast' at high temperatures, particularly if the nights remain warm. Tomatoes are also susceptible to pollen blast, but only at higher temperatures. Steve has irrigated the peppers both at the soil surface with drip tape and overhead with our traveling gun. The drip tape is enough to sustain the plants, but he hopes to bring the temperatures down with the overhead irrigation.

We are more worried about our crew than the crops. The sustained heat is wearing everyone out. Our farmhands are accustomed to working outside and are adapted to hot conditions, but working in this heat is very difficult. They watch out for each other, aware that a symptom of heat exposure is irrational behavior. No one has experienced heat stroke or heat exhaustion. If anyone gets light-headed, we send them to sit in the cooler and drink lemonade for a while. They voted to begin work early several days per week, which helps.

The crew worked today (July 4) to prep the CSA produce, then went home early after sharing a holiday potluck. Steve's contribution was crackers topped with sunflower butter and sliced Walla Walla onions. His sunflower butter and onion sandwiches have intrigued the crew for years, so it was a chance to share. They were a hit! We hope everyone enjoys their Fourth of July festivities. I'm sending this newsletter early, then we're off to our local fireworks.
Beth

Veggie Notes Please be patient if any of your produce seems a bit wilted. Everything looks good in the cooler right now, but could dehydrate quickly in this extreme weather. As I've mentioned before, if leafy vegetables seem droopy, submerge in cold water for 5 to 10 minutes to rehydrate.

Swiss chard - This is a close relative of spinach, but requires a bit more cooking. Use as a substitute in any recipe that calls for spinach, just cook the chard a little longer. We cut the stems separately so we can cook them longer than the leaves.

Fennel (large vegetable with a fat bulb and lacy fronds) - Fennel can develop a tough fibrous core in hot weather. We've graded out all that we can recognize. If you find a core in your bulb, cut it out before slicing the bulb.

Fennel is a 'swing vegetable'; it can be used raw or cooked. Clean well

and slice as thinly as possible for use in raw salads. It is good in simple salads prepared with olive oil, lime or lemon juice, salt and shaved parmesan cheese. Cooking softens and sweetens fennel, and mellows its anise flavor. Both the bulb and leaves are edible. Here are ideas from Alice Water of Chez Panisse about how to use fennel: 'It's strong anise characteristic seems to suit fish particularly well. ... We use fennel all the time. We add the feathery leaves to marinades for fish and to numerous salads, sauces and soups and we use them as a garnish, too. ... The bulbs are sliced and served raw in salads in various combinations with other vegetables, parboiled for pastas; caramelized and served as a side dish; braised whole; or cooked in vegetable broths & fish stocks.'

Cucumbers - The first cucumbers of the year! Some cukes are scarred by insects (cucumber beetles). I would like to be up-front about insect damage on cucumbers. You should expect some level of scarring on your cukes, although the amount of damage will vary from week to week. Organic insecticides are available to control cucumber beetles. We use them sparingly, and target the use toward keeping the plants healthy. We would need to spray continuously to avoid cosmetic damage, and we don't want to do that. The cucumber beetles emerged earlier than usual this year, so even early cucumbers have some damage. We suggest that you peel your cukes if the skin is scarred. We stopped growing the 'Diva' variety, which showed the most cucumber beetle damage. It is a delicious thin-skinned variety, but was also a magnet for the beetles.

Snap peas - This 'Cascadia' variety has done quite well despite the hot weather. These are very nice peas this week.

Walla Walla onion - We have just begun harvesting the early onions, so we only have one onion per box. We go through the field and pick the largest onions. Soon there will be lots more.

Basil (short stems with large ruffled leaves) - See last week's newsletter about how to store basil. The basil is lovely but the stems are too short to bunch with a rubber band. You will receive several un-bundled stems.

Chilled Chard Soup with Lemon

Adapted from Vegetarian cooking for Everyone, by Deborah Madison
Farm cook Lacey Smith made this soup for us and it was wonderful.

Ingredients

2 T olive oil

1 onion, chopped (*Lacey's note: I used our Walla Wallas and they cooked & tasted alright, just didn't brown*)

3 yukon gold or red potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced

1 large bunch chard, stems removed

Juice of large lemon

1 1/2 tsp Salt, plus to taste

pepper to taste

diced cucumber (optional)

plain yogurt or sour cream

Instructions

Heat oil in soup pot over medium high heat. Add onions and potatoes and cook, stirring occasionally until onions are translucent and starting to stick to the bottom of the pan, about 8-10 minutes.

Add a half cup water and simmer, scraping the bottom of the pot. Add the greens and salt and let wilt. Then add enough water to cover everything by an inch, about 6 cups. Bring to a boil, then partially cover and let simmer for 12-15 minutes.

Let soup cool a bit so you don't get splattered, then puree. Return to soup pot and add lemon and salt and pepper to taste.

Cool soup and adjust seasonings one more time. Serve topped with chopped cucumber and a dollop of yogurt or sour cream.

Salad with Caramelized Fennel and Pancetta

Contributed by [Local Thyme](#).

Dish Type: Brunch, First Course, Side Dish · Total Time: Under 30 Minutes

If there is anything better than bacon, it just might be caramelized bacon with fennel bulbs. This salad calls for pancetta, which is the Italian equivalent for bacon. It's cured without smoking, so it's more delicate and blends nicely with the fennel. If you want to use smoked bacon, go ahead, but know that it might overpower the caramelized fennel.

Note: You can prepare the fennel and pancetta mixture on the grill instead of the oven. Follow the directions but place the fennel mixture in a grill pan on the top rack over a medium-low flame. It will cook more quickly on the grill than in the oven, so keep a close eye on it and stir several times.

Servings: 4

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients

1 Fennel bulb, large (or use two small)

4 ounces Pancetta, thinly sliced and roughly chopped

2 cloves Garlic, minced

2 tablespoons Light Brown Sugar

1 tablespoon Extra Virgin Olive Oil

1/2 teaspoon Kosher Salt

Black Pepper, freshly ground

1 head of Lettuce, washed, dried and torn into bite size pieces (about 5-6 cups)

2 tablespoons Red Wine Vinegar

1 tablespoon Lemon Juice

1 teaspoon Honey

1/4 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Salt and Pepper, to taste

Instructions

Preheat oven to 400°. Prepare a parchment-lined baking sheet.

Trim the fennel bulb, or bulbs, of stalks and fronds, and trim any discolored areas. Reserve stems and fronds for another purpose. Slice each bulb in half, and then into 1/2 inch wedges. In a medium bowl, toss the fennel wedges, pancetta, garlic, brown sugar, olive oil and 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt and several grinds of fresh black pepper. Spread evenly on the baking sheet, and roast for about 20 minutes, giving it a shake half way through. It's done when the pancetta is crisp and the fennel bulbs are slightly browned and caramelized, about 20 minutes total. Remove from oven and allow to rest on the baking sheet while you finish the salad.

In a small jar with a lid, combine the red wine vinegar, lemon juice, honey, salt and fresh pepper to taste. Secure the lid, and shake well. Add the olive oil, and shake some more until the vinaigrette emulsifies. Place the lettuce in a salad bowl, and add the caramelized fennel and pancetta mixture. Toss with the vinaigrette just before serving.

Recipe adapted from Giada De Laurentis' Everyday Italian.

Recipe Type: Dairy-Free, Gluten-Free, Nut-Free, Omnivore, Salad

Zucchini and Swiss Chard Frittata

Contributed by [Local Thyme](#).

Dish Type: Breakfast, Brunch, Main Course · Total Time: 30-60 Minutes

I have several go-to dishes when I have a pile of veggies waiting to get used up -- pastas, risottos, curries, stir-fries, soups, and of course, the frittata. This one came out so good the first time I made it that I always think of it when I see chard and zucchini together in the fridge.

Servings: 6

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 35 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 bunch Swiss Chard
- 6 Eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/4 cup Milk
- 1/2 teaspoon Salt
- 2/3 cup Parmesan Cheese, grated, 3 tablespoons put to side
- 1 tablespoon Olive Oil or Sunflower Oil
- 1 tablespoon Unsalted Butter
- 1 small Zucchini, diced
- 2 cloves Garlic, minced
- Pepper, to taste

Instructions

1. Clean the chard, and strip the leaves from the stems. Keeping leaves and stems separate, rough chop each.
2. In a small bowl, stir together eggs, milk, 1/2 teaspoon salt and all but 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese.
3. Preheat the broiler to high. Heat oil in a 10-inch nonstick oven proof pan over medium high heat until the oil shimmers. Melt the butter in the hot oil. When the foaming subsides, add zucchini and chard stems and sauté until tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic and chard leaves and stir until leaves wilt, about 2 more minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
4. Give the egg mixture one more stir, then pour it into the skillet, tilting the pan to distribute the eggs evenly. Cook over medium heat for about 4 minutes, until eggs begin to set up. Sprinkle remaining 3 tablespoons cheese over the eggs, and place under the broiler until puffed, set and golden on top, about 2-3 minutes. Every oven's broiler is a little different -- if yours runs hot and fast, pull eggs out sooner, if your eggs aren't set, cook a little longer. Serve hot.