

THE TIPI TIMES

SEPTEMBER 27, 2007, WEEK 20

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THIS WEEK'S BOX CONTAINS:

Bok choy
Kabocha or acorn squash
Roma & slicing tomatoes
Italian frying peppers
&/or #2 bell peppers
Candy onions
Red onion
Basil
Garlic
Edamame OR carrots

NEXT WEEK'S BOX WILL PROBABLY CONTAIN:*

Leeks
Mustard greens or chard
Eggplant
and more

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

MAGGIE AND STEPHEN'S WEDDING. Maggie Schley and Stephen Jenkins were married at Olin Park this past weekend, on the most beautiful summer day. Many of you will remember Maggie and the imaginative vegetable crowns she wove into her blond hair each week when working at our farmers' market stand. White and purple turnip turnips crowned her head on her wedding day, looking perfect with the wedding dress she spun and knitted herself. There were so many imaginative, handmade touches. The wooden arbor her father built. The feast cooked by her good friends Sophie Barabus and family. The personal wedding vows. The ring bearer 'Morgan Jenkins, Esq.' (Stephen's dog). The flowers Maggie grew or collected from the wild. The pedicycle with a 'Just Married' sign that bore them away after the ceremony.

As the ceremony and celebration unfolded, we were honored to see all the ways our farm is woven into Maggie's life. Maggie has worked for us for ten seasons. As crew leader and Steve's 'right-hand woman', she is an essential part of the farm. During the ceremony, the friend marrying them reminisced about how Maggie and Steve met at the farmers' market, and how Maggie expressed her hidden crush by anonymously stuffing Stephen's mailbox full of leeks. An essay by Wendell Berry and Marge Piercy's poem 'Vegetable Love' were part of the ceremony. The guest list was a fabulous farm reunion, with over 30 current and former crew members as guests. The food was a feast of every crop ripening on the farm now, grown and harvested by the folks in attendance. Here's an incomplete list (all that Steve and I can remember): stuffed eggplant, cabbage strudel, tomato and mozzarella salad, roasted peppers, carrot-daikon salad, roasted beets, carrots, parsnips and potatoes, as well as lots of other great dishes.

A sparkling homemade chandelier hung in an open window at the wedding reception.

Dozens and dozens of glass crystals hung by ribbons from two nested bicycle rims, throwing arcs of rainbows on the floor and walls. The guests were invited to take a crystal home, leading the children to some serious decisions. A crystal we brought home hangs in the barn, a memory of the beautiful day and a wish for a sparkling future for Maggie and Stephen.

At left, Maggie in the wedding dress she spun and knit. What a creative woman.



MENU IDEAS. This is a transition time for us. The summer crops are ending (especially after the recent light frost), but the fall crops have not yet reached their peak. Soon we'll have broccoli and Brussels sprouts, Romanesco and salad turnips. In the meantime, this box mixes summer and fall veggies. Here's what I had in mind as we designed the mix. We've sent ingredients to make a last batch of tomato sauce: tomatoes, peppers, onion, basil and garlic. If you have any Anaheim chiles left from last week, roast or fry them and add to the sauce.

Pared with the summer crops are winter squash and bok choy, classic cool weather crops. Trying adding cubes of cooked winter squash to a finished pan of tomato sauce. The sauce ends up earthy but sweeter than usual, which is easily balanced with extra wine or vinegar. See below for another

recipe combining winter squash and tomatoes, as well as a favorite quick bok choy recipe. Some of the kabocha squash are quite substantial. If you will only eat one half of the squash with one meal, think ahead about what to do with the leftovers. Cooked, mashed squash is good for pumpkin bread or muffins, or can be frozen for another use. Consider baking half the squash and roasting the other half for tomorrow, as follows:

Roasted squash. Peel kabocha, buttercup, or butternut squash using a potato peeler, then cut into 1-inch cubes. Toss with a little soy sauce, then coat lightly with vegetable oil. Spread in a single layer on oiled cookie sheets without crowding and bake at 425oF until tender, turning once. Sprinkle lightly with paprika or ancho powder near the end of cooking. These browned, tasty cubes are a good side dish, or can be used to top pilaf, etc.

CHOICE BOXES. We are offering choice boxes this week at all sites except the Outpost stores. The choice box(es) will contain edamame and carrots. Please read the signs and follow the instructions to take just one portion (Hint: this week, that means one bundle of edamame OR one bag of carrots.) If the box appears empty, please look around, as there may be a second box under the first box or nearby. We offer these choice boxes to give members some control. We'll continue to offer them this fall, as long as everyone reads the signs and things go smoothly.

VEGGIE NOTES. Winter squash. We have a good crop of winter squash this year, better than any recent year. There were fewer squash bugs and cucumber beetles this year and we speculate that's why the winter squash did well. This bounty surprised us. We expected the squash to deteriorate in the wet weather, but it came through beautifully. We've harvested delicata, Sweet Dumpling, kabocha, buttercup, acorn and butternut squash. Some types do not store as long as others, so we'll send those first. For example, delicata squash do not store well, so we sent them and the Sweet Dumplings last week. This week's kabocha and acorn are next in line.

Italian frying peppers. (red or green, tapered) These peppers are sweet, excellent for frying or for fresh use. Some of the peppers will be wrinkled. This is not a problem, just a sign that the peppers are especially ripe. Keep the frying peppers separate from the Anaheims that we delivered last week (if you have leftovers), as the Anaheims are hot, and somewhat similar in size.

Tomatoes. You'll receive a mix of Roma and slicing tomatoes. We're amazed to still have good quality tomatoes this time of year. I would call these 'cooking tomatoes'; they don't match a summer tomato in flavor, but are quite good for cooking. We are reluctant to give up on tomatoes each fall, as we know these are the best tomatoes that any of us will enjoy until next summer.

Basil. We clipped the frost-damaged basil and it regrew nicely in the recent warm weather. I still doubt we'll have enough to sell extras, but you never know.

STIR-FRIED SPICED BOK CHOY (or cabbage)

This is quick and easy, tasty either hot or cold. From "Recipes: Cooking of China." Serves 4.

1 lb. bok choy, Chinese cabbage (napa), or green cabbage
1½ Tbsp. sugar
2 Tbsp. white vinegar
1 Tbsp. soy sauce
1 tsp. salt
¼ tsp. cayenne pepper or 1 tsp. paprika
1 Tbsp. peanut oil, or flavorless vegetable oil

PREPARE AHEAD: 1. With a cleaver or sharp knife, trim the top leaves of the bok choy and the root ends. Separate the stalks and wash them under cold running water. Cut each stalk, leaves and all, into 1-by-1½-inch pieces. If you are substituting green cabbage, separate the leaves and wash in cold water. Then cut the leaves into 1-by-1½-inch pieces.

2. In a small bowl, combine the sugar, vinegar, soy sauce, salt and cayenne pepper, and mix thoroughly. Have the oil within easy reach.

TO COOK: 3. Set a 12-inch wok or 10-inch skillet over high heat for about 30 seconds. Pour in the oil, swirl it about in the pan and heat for another 30 seconds, then turn the heat down to moderate. Immediately add the bok choy and stir-fry for 3 to 4 minutes. Make sure all the pieces are coated with oil. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the soy-vinegar mixture. Transfer the bok choy to a platter and let it cool to lukewarm before serving. Or, if you prefer, serve it chilled.

MASALA WINTER SQUASH

Mark Bittman, 'The Best Recipes in the World.' Serves 4. Time: 40 minutes.

"Most squash preparations are fairly bland, sweet, even insipid, but not this one, a lovely winter stew that can be a centerpiece for vegetarians (or for meat eaters with the addition of a few cubes of boneless chicken). A good rice pilaf would suit this fine. It would also be at home alongside plain grilled steak. Other vegetables you can prepare this way: semi-ripe plantains, potatoes or sweet potatoes."

1 large onion

5 garlic cloves, peeled

1 small dried chile or 1 tsp hot red pepper flakes, or to taste

2 Tbsp. corn, grapeseed or other neutral oil

salt and black pepper to taste

1 Tbsp. curry powder, or to taste

1 cup chopped tomato (canned is fine), optional

about 1 ½ lb winter squash, like butternut or firm pumpkin, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes

lime wedges for serving

1. Combing the onion, garlic and chile in a food processor and grind until pasty. Put the oil in a large skillet or flameproof casserole with a lid over medium heat and add the onion mixture along with some salt and pepper and the curry powder. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion begins to brown, 5 to 10 minutes.
2. Add the tomato or ½ cup water along with the squash. Cover and adjust the heat so the mixture simmers steadily. Cook, stirring occasionally and adding more water if necessary, until the squash is tender, about 20 minutes. Serve with the lime wedges.