



Bear Prints

Volume 12, Number 13

September 7, 2009

Yes the big end of the season party is scheduled for Saturday, October 3rd. We start around 4 and go well into the night. We used to schedule it around Columbus Day weekend, but now we just always have it the first Sat. in Oct. so its easier for people to plan. It is a not to be missed event!

Chinese Cabbage Stir-Fry (from Victory Garden Cookbook)

1 Chinese cabbage
Hot red pepper flakes
3 T peanut oil
2 quarter-sized pieces of fresh ginger
1/2 tsp. sugar
1 tsp. salt
2T water or broth
Wash and cut cross-wise into 1-1/2 inch pieces. Heat the oil in a wok or large frying pan, & cook ginger for 1 min. Add cabbage & pepper & cook stirring constantly for 2 min. (lower heat if it begins to brown). Stir in sugar & salt, then add water or broth. Cover & cook 2-3 min. until tender but crunchy. Add sesame oil or soy sauce.

Farm News

Since we started farming we have been slowly making the fields out of the woods. Mike has a photo from when he was really little that shows the whole farm practically cleared. The clearing and creation of new fields is all the more important over the years as we grow in customers or lose rented fields to development. We aren't growing the CSA at this point, but we are worrying about the latter, since we probably won't have Nashoba next year. So, Mike has been diligently working with his excavator to make another new field at the top of the hill, this time to the right of the stone wall. It's a lot of work, but it is so nice to look out from the farm stand and see all the open area where it used to be woods. Mike also started to spread compost behind the greenhouse where we plan to put up the new greenhouse to plant tomatoes in next season. That excavator sure comes in handy! He used it to turn the compost as well. We've been getting lots of grass clippings and leaves dropped off again, and he has to keep up with moving it or it ends up creeping down the road.

Speaking of which, he used the excavator to take out those rocks in the road leading to the farm stand. Less to trip on and a little more even now in front of the shop. These things seem to take time to get around to, since there's so much else to do. The big rocks are still piled on the side for now.

What's New In Your Share This Week

New this week is **Chinese cabbage**. Mike says we haven't given it out yet, but I feel like it's déjà vu all over again! Anyway, this is the Napa type of Chinese cabbage, & I know we haven't given that out, even if you had the lettuce type. The Napa variety has a stalk to the leaf, similar to a bok choy. The Victory Garden Cookbook by Marian Morash (you older folk may remember her from PBS) is a great book to have as a reference. Not only does it have great recipes, it also gives a description of how to grow veggies and store them and has about every veggie known to mankind. That is pretty impressive, since it came out in 1982, before a lot of these things were popular.

For Chinese cabbage she recommends using the wide ribs raw for dip. You can also use the raw Chinese cabbage in coleslaw recipes, either the "garden variety" or the Asian kind, with rice wine vinegar and sesame oil. When substituting Chinese cabbage for regular green cabbage reduce the cooking time in recipes. It is great sliced or shredded in stir-fry. Cabbage of any variety goes well with mashed potatoes, or at least there are lots of recipes combining the two, either steamed, mashed together as leftovers and or in soups. Marian recommends adding cabbage at the end of cooking soups, so it doesn't get all mushy. Remember, never overcook your cabbage!

Bear Hill Farm CSA

Anne & Mike Gagnon

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*PICK UP MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, OR
FRIDAY
3 PM UNTIL 7 PM*

*(Please make arrangements at least one week
in advance to switch your pick-up day.)*

CSA Since 1998

COME ANYTIME —
THIS IS YOUR FARM!

Winter Thoughts this Labor Day

Happy Labor Day! I talked with Anne today and she is busy “laboring” in the kitchen, putting foods up for the winter. I, too, have been busy processing jars of my favorite jams and chutneys. There is a change in the air, no denying it: time to start gathering firewood and woolen...okay, maybe it’s a *little* soon for that! But my squirrel instincts do come out in September, and it’s a good time to think about what we will be eating this winter.

I can hardly claim that all of the winter produce my family eats is local and sustainable. We especially enjoy a lot of tropical fruit January through March, and by the time April comes around I’m so desperate for a head of lettuce that I don’t even look at the label. (It’s all so expensive, too! My wallet is **so** not prepared for the end of farm season!)

One item that absolutely will not grace our plates this year, though, is winter tomatoes from Florida. We all avoid them, I think, because they were obviously picked green and they are not bred for flavor—tasteless and bland, a poor excuse for the real dripping, meaty fruit. But every once in a while you encounter a winter recipe that requires a few tomatoes, say for a stew, and it’s tempting to reach for that pyramid you see in *every* grocery store year-round. When cooked and well seasoned, after all, they’re quite palatable.

But not for me, not anymore. That’s because I read a Gourmet article in the spring (as well as a series of online updates) about the near-slavery conditions of the workers who pick 90% of our winter tomatoes. Immokalee, Florida seems to be the center of US winter tomato agriculture; they are almost all giant farms, and almost all the workers are *terribly* mistreated. Workers (often illegal immigrants) are offered room and board as part of their pay; but the “room” turns out to be the back of a truck, and their \$5 “showers” are from the backyard garden hose. If they try to leave, they are threatened with beatings or tied to the truck. Over 1000 men & women were freed in 7 cases brought by the Florida DA since 1997, according to Gourmet. (All of my description came from this article, which you can google—as well as info from other sources.) This news astounded me, but it’s well documented; and I hope you will be moved to join me in avoiding FL winter tomatoes until conditions improve.—Anna Barker (annabarker@charter.net)

Recipes: Salads & Sides

Carrot and Cucumber Salad

From Kitchen Secrets: Best of Cooking Light, 2008

- 3 TBS low-sodium soy sauce
- 2 TBS rice vinegar
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2 tsp canola oil
- 2 tsp dark sesame oil
- 1/2 tsp minced garlic
- 1/4 tsp ground red pepper
- 2 C chopped seeded cucumber
- 10 ounces carrots, cut in matchstick pieces
- 1 tsp sesame seeds, toasted

Combine first 7 ingredients in a large bowl, stirring well with a whisk. Add cucumber and carrots; toss well. Sprinkle with sesame seeds. Yield: 8 servings.

Rotini, Summer Squash, and Prosciutto Salad

From Kitchen Secrets: Best of Cooking Light, 2008

- 3 C uncooked rotini (corkscrew pasta, about 8 ounces)
- 1 1/2 C coarsely chopped yellow squash
- 1 1/2 C coarsely chopped zucchini
- 4 ounces thinly sliced prosciutto, chopped
- 3 TBS chopped red onion
- 2 ounces fresh mozzarella cheese, chopped
- 1/4 tsp *each* salt and pepper

- 2 TBS white balsamic vinegar [to maintain golden color]
- 1 TBS extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp finely chopped fresh rosemary

Cook pasta according to package directions. Add squash and zucchini during the last minute of cooking. Drain pasta mixture; rinse under cold water.

Heat a large nonstick skillet over med-high heat. Add prosciutto to pan; cook 5 min or until crisp, stirring frequently.

Combine pasta mixture, prosciutto, onion, and cheese in a large bowl; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Combine vinegar, olive oil, mustard and fresh rosemary in a small bowl, stirring with a whisk. Add vinegar mixture to the pasta mixture, tossing gently to coat. Yield: 4 servings.

Green Beans with Crushed Walnuts

From Superfast Weeknight Dinners

- 1 pound green beans, trimmed
- 2 tsp butter
- 2 TBS finely crushed walnuts
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp freshly grated whole nutmeg

Place beans in a large saucepan of boiling water; cook 5 min.

Drain. Heat butter in a large nonstick skillet over med-high heat. Add crushed walnuts, sauté 1 minute, stirring constantly. Add beans, salted, and grated nutmeg; cook for 1 min. Yield: 6 servings.