

AJO COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE



Summer 2009 / Week 7 of 13

Editor: Nina Altshul Layout: Peter Altshul

Planned harvest: Melons (double share), Tomatillos, Tomatoes, Sweet Potatoes, Red LaSoda Potatoes, Armenian Cucumbers, Eggplants.

Introducing the “Trading Table”: At each pick-up, one whole share will be available for members to trade individual items from their own shares. Please trade whole portions and not partial portions, i.e. a whole unit for another whole unit. For example, you can trade your whole basket of tomatoes for a whole basket of tomatillos or the number of eggplants or potatoes assigned to each share. I hope this will allow you to enjoy your veggies even more!

News from the Farm: Farmer Frank reports that it is getting hot on the fields in Glendale. Right now, melons are still producing, but the tomato plants are boiling, even though there are still some green tomatoes on the stalks, and the squash is dying. It is just too hot! Frank expects to finish harvesting produce at the central farm by August 1 while planning the transition to his Duncan location. This means we are coming to the end of the first tomato season, but if all goes well we can expect the second crop of tomatoes in the fall. For all of us waiting for apricots and peaches from Duncan, here’s the bad news: the cold spring decimated the crop; however, we might still get some pears. In the meantime, more summer crops are coming our way: tomatillos, okra, and black eyed peas. And then, the green chiles...

“Localwashing”: With Americans’ new focus on buying products made close to home, corporations are moving quickly to co-opt the term “local.” This trend is spreading not only across healthy food store giants like Whole Foods, but mainstream industrial agrobusiness corporations and beyond. For example, Frito Lay’s new television commercials use farmers as pitchmen to position the company’s potato chips as local food; The International Council of Shopping Centers, a global consortium of mall owners and developers, is pouring millions of dollars into television ads urging people to “Shop Local” — at their nearest mall; even Walmart is getting in on the act, hanging bright green banners over its produce aisles that simply say “Local.” This new variation on corporate greenwashing — called localwashing — is in one way good news for local economy advocates: it represents the best empirical evidence yet that the grassroots movement for locally produced goods and independently owned businesses is having a measurable impact on the choices people make. Signs that consumer preferences are trending local abound. The U.S. is now home to 4,385 active farmers markets, one out of every three of which was started since 2000; also, the number of Community Supported Agriculture farms is well on the rise, as are food co-ops and neighborhood greengrocers. However, with corporations copying the language and tactics of local advocates, the term “local” is being heavily manipulated: some companies push marketing messages that work by association; another corporate strategy is to redefine the term “local” to mean not locally owned or locally produced but just nearby, pushing hard for “local” to include national chains and big-box stores. So, can corporations succeed in co-opting “local”? If local business and growers’ organizations are well established in an area, then probably not. However, where no local consciousness is developed, corporations might succeed in diluting the importance and true meaning of local, thus inhibiting a real grassroots movement from even getting started. But perhaps localwashing will ultimately make corporations even more suspect and further the case for shifting our economy more in the direction of small-scale, local and independent. (adapted from Stacy Mitchell’s article, available at:

<http://bestofneworleans.comhttp://bestofneworleans.com/gyrobase/Content?oid=oid%3A58458>)

Melon of the Week: Honey Yellow is a type of honeydew with yellow skin and orange flesh. The seed cavity is a bit smaller than other honeydews, and the flesh is very sweet and juicy.

RECIPES ETC.

Sataraš (“Sátarásh”)

This is a dish my mom would make at the peak of the tomato season. Take a medley of tomatoes from the farm (at least two baskets), wash and de-stem, then cut an x with sharp knife on the bottom of each. Boil a pot of water, and boil the tomatoes for about 30 seconds, or until you can see the skin split. Drain and let tomatoes cool enough to be able to handle them. Peel off the skin, halve and squeeze the seeds out, together with the liquid. Chop the tomatoes fairly small. Heat up 2 Tbsp of olive oil, add one or two small Glendale Gold onions, chopped, and sauté until slightly soft. Then add the tomato pieces, a clove of garlic, chopped, add salt and pepper and sauté on low heat for at least 30 minutes. (If you have any bell peppers, feel free to add them at the beginning of the cooking as well.) The clear juices should disappear completely, and towards the end make sure you stir often as the mixture thickens and can easily stick. Once the mixture is boiled down and very thick, you can stop cooking and store it in the fridge for later, or freeze. Otherwise, whisk 8 Ajo eggs (or 6 large eggs) in a large bowl, add a pinch of salt, a pinch of pepper and 1 Tbsp of milk. Then pour the eggs into the pan with the tomato mixture. Continue stirring until the eggs coagulate. Adjust the seasoning and serve with good bread and a generous amount of black pepper.

Salsa Verde

(submitted by Connie Villaverde)

1 CSA basket of tomatillos
2-3 banana chile peppers
Salt, pepper and oregano

Blanche the tomatillos with chiles. Reserve the water. Blend the tomatillos with chiles, and add water needed to reach the desired consistency. Blend, add salt and pepper to taste, and a pinch of oregano.

Nina’s Caponata

Caponata is Sicilian dish that is traditionally eaten as a warm vegetable side dish or a cold antipasto, with a good loaf of bread. It is also very good spooned hot over your pasta or grain pilaf. There are as many recipes for caponata as there are cooks, and I base mine on Jamie Oliver’s recipe from *Jamie’s Italy*.

4 Tbsp olive oil
3 medium eggplants, cut into large chunks
5 large ripe tomatoes, chopped coarsely (remove the skin

beforehand if you wish)

1 heaped tsp dried oregano
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 small Glendale Gold onions (or other type of onion), finely chopped
2 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely sliced
half a bunch of fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves picked and stalks finely chopped
1 cup fresh basil, washed and dried, torn into pieces
2 Tbsp capers
a handful of green olives, pits removed
2-3 Tbsp white or red wine vinegar

Start with a large pan, and warm up the olive oil. Add your eggplant chunks and dried oregano, season with salt and pepper and toss around until the chunks are coated with oil. Cook on high heat for about 4 to 5 minutes, every now and then giving the pan a shake. When the eggplant chunks are nice and golden on each side, add the onion, garlic, and parsley, and continue cooking for a couple of minutes. If the pan is getting too dry, add more olive oil. Throw in the drained capers and olives, and drizzle the wine vinegar over it. When all the vinegar has evaporated, add the tomatoes and simmer for about 15 minutes, or until tender. Then add your basil, and adjust the spices - add more salt, pepper or vinegar, if needed. Drizzle with some good olive oil and serve sprinkled with parsley and basil.

Nina’s “Green” Tepary Bean Chile

3 cups white tepary beans, cooked
4 small Glendale Gold onions, sliced in circles
1 bunch kale, washed and torn into pieces
1 CSA share tomatillos (5-8 tomatillos), removed from husks, washed and diced
6 banana chile peppers (or substitute jalapenos or serranos, but reduce the number unless you like it really hot!), sliced
2 Tbsp olive oil
salt, to taste
pepper, to taste
2 Tbsp oregano
Chipotle flakes, to taste

Fry onions in olive oil, add chile peppers and tomatillos, as well as salt, pepper and oregano, and sauté for a few minutes. Then add kale and sauté for a few more minutes. Add tepary beans with some of their cooking liquid (or add 1 cup of water or stock), and cook until the tomatillos start falling apart. Adjust the spices, and serve with your favorite corn bread.