

Ajo CSA Week 4

What did you do with your produce share?

A belated welcome to the fall season for Ajo CSA! We now have 11 shares, with some people sharing shares, and we will continue to do the distribution on Fridays, at 6 pm at 901 Morondo (enter from Saguaro, purple gate in the stone wall).

Volunteers are still being sought for doing the pickup at the farm.

Let me briefly recap our pickup etiquette (adopted from those used at different CSAs):

1. Bring your own bags.
2. We all handle the produce as little as possible. We would like you to do the same. Please do not pick through items to get the best-looking ones. Our vegetables are bred for flavor, not for looks or shelf-life—therefore, they tend to bruise and spoil when handled repeatedly. Please just take the portion indicated and move along to the next crate.
3. Take your whole share: No more, no less. If you take more, you are taking from someone else's share. If you take less, you create leftovers. If you don't want something, talk to other members about trading!
4. Be as punctual as possible. If you can't pick up, ask a friend to pick up your share for you or let me or another member know; we can save it for you for a day or two but only if arranged in advance. If you do not show up and do not get in touch with me, you will forfeit your share.

We are continuing to get okra and chiles since this is what the farm currently has after a hot Arizona summer, but this will soon end. The Tucson CSA website has a lot of great recipes for both okra and chiles. They also have an idea for those of us who struggle to find ways to use our fresh green chiles: Why not make dried red chile powder or beautiful red chile ristras? Fresh green chiles left out of the refrigerator will slowly begin to turn red and then dry. Keeping them in a basket or strung up and hanging away from heat, moisture and direct light will help them dry without molding. (But check frequently, discarding any with signs of rot.) Fully dried chiles can be ground into a base for a delicious enchilada sauce, and both chile powder and ristras make excellent gifts.

Wheat berries

They work best if first soaked (like dry beans) and then cooked. To boost their nutrients, you can also leave them soaking longer, for approx. 24 hours till they start sprouting. When cooked you can use them as breakfast cereal (lightly ground, and with milk or soymilk, like porridge), as a substitute for rice, in soups and stews, casseroles, for stuffing, e.g. bell peppers, etc. If, however, you want flour instead, you will have to grind the berries yourself. A coffee grinder will do the job just fine. Before using, the grains have to be cleaned: Crooked Sky Farms' grains are mostly clean, but they do include some chaff and also tiny black wild mustard seeds from the field. The seeds are harmless and can safely be left in. The chaff can be removed by winnowing the grains before use.

To winnow grain, stand out of doors in a breeze or in front of a fan, and pour the grain from one bowl into another a few times and let the chaff blow away in the breeze. Just like with dry beans, I recommend taking a big enough baking tray and sorting through to remove any other impurities.

And for those concerned with industrial food production, chemical poisoning and carbon footprints, local and seasonal eating and supporting your local economy, I wholeheartedly recommend Barbara Kingsolver's new book *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle. A Year of Food Life* (2007). You are welcome to borrow my copy as soon as I finish reading it!

It is great to be back, and I am looking forward to sharing your recipes and tips!

Nina