

# AJO COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE



Fall 2009 / Week 5 of 13

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**Planned harvest:** Melons, Bartlett Pears, Bell Peppers, Green Chiles, Butternut Squash, Red LaSoda Potatoes, Cucumbers and Pistachios.

**News from the farm:** As we are entering October and the traditional harvest season, Frank reports that the second batch of squashes is ripening on the vines in Duncan as well as on the Phoenix fields, so butternut, spaghetti and yellow, green and white acorns will be finding their way into our shares within the next few weeks. In the spirit of the season, the farm is planning to open its field at 40<sup>th</sup> Street and Southern as their Pumpkin Patch during the weekends. They haven't quite decided on the dates and hours, but are tentatively looking at starting on October 17. We will keep you posted!

As the regular watermelons have all been harvested, the yellow watermelons are next. Frank's beginning of the summer wish to grow melons well into the fall might just come true: right now it looks like we will be getting some type of melons all the way up to Thanksgiving! Tomatoes are ripening in Duncan nicely, too. The corn at the central farm in Phoenix is already at least 5 feet tall, so look out for more of the sweet Trucker's Delight in a few weeks.



As the weather is finally (we hope) starting to cool off, some of the first greens should be ready for harvesting soon, too. CSF Field Manager Tania, our CSA liaison, said that the first planting was not so successful – it was just way too hot. So we'll just have to be patient...

Also, Frank's pistachio trees in his orchard in Duncan did really well this year; we are getting them this week, and we hope you enjoy them!

**Pistachios:** The pistachios in your share this week are raw (not roasted or processed in any other way), just like they come off the trees. Pistachio nuts, which are related to cashews and mangoes, grow inside a hull so you have the nut, the shell, and then a hull around the shell. Most of our pistachios will have this outer skin or hull still on; it is dry and can be removed easily, and underneath it you will find the regular shell, which will either be opened or not. If the shell is not opened, use a nut-cracker or any other device to crack it open. The nuts can then be eaten as they are, raw: they are delicious and very sweet. However, if you prefer, you can of course roast them as well. The simplest way is to leave them in their shells and add some salt, salt and chili powder, or sugar and cinnamon, and then roast on a tray in the oven. Just like with any other nuts, be careful not to burn them. But you can also soak them in brine, dry them and then roast them. In order to do this, the recipe calls for 2 to 3 ounces of salt dissolved in 4 ounces (1/2 cup) of water. Pour this salt solution into a deep saucepan over high heat. Add about 8 to 10 cups of pistachios and stir until all of the water has evaporated and salt is deposited on the nuts. Spread the nuts on a cookie sheet in a preheated 250 °F oven and roast 1-1/2 to 1-3/4 hours, depending on your taste preference. Stir every 30 minutes.

# RECIPES ETC.

## **Fried Okra**

(submitted Floyd Lacewell, aka the Eggman)

This is how my mom cooked Okra back in South Carolina when I was a kid. Try it out.

Cut okra into bite size pieces. Mix corn meal and flour half & half in a zip lock bag. Place okra into the bag and shake until coated. Heat a couple of tablespoons of olive oil in frying pan. Stir okra in and cook until golden brown. EAT!

## **Tania's Baked Breen Tomatoes**

Arrange your green tomatoes in a baking dish, top down, sprinkle with olive oil, salt and black pepper and bake at 375 °F for about 20-30 minutes. Take out of the oven, sprinkle feta cheese all over the tomatoes, add a bit more olive oil, salt and pepper and bake for another 10-15 minutes. Sprinkle with fresh basil just before serving.

## **Nina's Roasted Bell Peppers**

3 bell peppers  
2 Tbsp flat-leaf Italian parsley, finely chopped  
1-2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped  
1 Tbsp olive oil  
1 tsp lemon juice or vinegar  
salt and freshly ground pepper to taste  
feta cheese (optional)

Wash and roast your bell peppers like you would roast your chiles, i.e. until charred all over, put in a plastic bag or bowl, cover, and let steam and cool. When the peppers are cold enough to handle, remove the skin, stem and seeds as well as you can, but do not wash since that will remove the taste as well. Cut the peppers into 2-3 inch strips, arrange on a plate or bowl, and sprinkle evenly with parsley and garlic. Then add the salt and pepper, and pour on olive oil and lemon juice or vinegar. Let stand for at least half an hour at room temperature, or for longer in a refrigerator; if you are working with warm peppers, the tastes will absorb even faster. Serve at room temperature as a side dish to your grilled meats, or as an antipasto, simply as is, or sprinkled with some feta and accompanied with a slice of good bread.

## **Nina's Simple Butternut Squash Laksa**

This Asian coconut-based curry soup is traditionally served over thin noodles, such as rice vermicelli. For a heartier meal you can add cubes of tofu, cooked chicken or shrimp towards the end of the cooking time. This recipe works well with sweet potatoes, too.

1 Tbsp sunflower or sesame oil  
2 small butternut squash (or 1 big one), roasted or steamed, peeled  
2 small Glendale Gold onions, minced  
1 celery stick, including leaves, chopped  
½ inch fresh ginger root, grated  
1 garlic clove, minced  
1 can coconut milk  
2 Tbsp soy sauce  
1 tsp favorite red curry paste (or more, to taste)  
½ cup (Thai) basil (and/or cilantro), minced

Heat up the oil, add the minced onions and sauté for a few minutes. Then add the celery, garlic, ginger and soy sauce and sauté for a few more minutes. Add the squash puree, stir, and add the whole can of coconut milk. Then pour water into the can, stir and pour that into the pot as well. Bring to a gentle boil, add more water for desired soupy consistency, add your curry paste and minced basil and/or cilantro and simmer for another 3-5 minutes before serving with a wedge of lime or lemon.

## **Green Tomato Salsa Verde**

(adapted from *The New York Times*)

1 pound green tomatoes  
2 to 3 jalapeño or Serrano peppers (more to taste)  
1/2 medium onion, preferably white, chopped, soaked for five minutes in cold water, drained, rinsed and drained again on paper towels  
Salt to taste  
1/2 cup coarsely chopped cilantro  
1/4 to 1/2 cup water, as needed (optional)

Preheat the broiler. Line a baking sheet with foil. Place the green tomatoes on the baking sheet, stem-side down, and place under the broiler about 2 inches from the heat. Broil two to five minutes, until charred. Using tongs, turn the tomatoes over, and grill on the other side for two to five minutes, until blackened. Remove from the heat. When cool enough to handle, core the tomatoes and remove the charred skin. Quarter and place in a blender or a food processor with a steel blade.

Add the remaining ingredients, except the water, to the blender or food processor, and blend to a coarse or smooth puree as you prefer. Transfer to a bowl, taste and adjust seasonings, and thin out with water if desired. Allow to stand for 30 minutes or longer before serving to allow the flavors to develop. You may wish to thin it out after it stands.

This will keep for a couple of days in the refrigerator but is best freshly made.