

# The Stanton Street Harvest

JULY 30, 2009

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LOWER EAST SIDE'S PIONEER CSA

VOL. 4, NO. 7

## TODAY'S WEATHER AT WINDFLOWER FARM



64°/84°

Disease triangle indeed. Scattered thunderstorms throughout the day.

## TED'S LETTER FROM THE FARM

### This Tomato Blight Is Getting *Serious*

I'm writing this between sprays. I've been painting our tomatoes blue with copper. According to researchers at Cornell, it's the only material available to organic growers that has been shown to actually slow the spread of late blight. This is the disease that caused the Irish potato famine, and to this day it remains highly destructive.

Jan found late blight on Friday on an heirloom tomato variety on our farm, and it appears to be spreading. It has been all around us for weeks. There are no resistant varieties of tomatoes, although some are more tolerant than others. Cool, rainy conditions and a steady showering of fungal spores blown in from nearby farms and gardens have completed the disease triangle (host, pathogen, and environment). Conventional farmers have been using systemic fungicides to slow the epidemic. Those of us who farm organically are using copper, and giving our tomato foliage a metallic blue sheen.

Cornell's Bill Frye is one of the world's leading authorities on the disease. He says that it's the earliest and worst epidemic he's ever seen. He tells us that the only hope for a decent crop is to make repeated applications, covering upper and lower leaf surfaces. Following his advice has kept us busy.

Late blight is a terminal disease—we *will* lose our crop. But repeated applications of copper can postpone the

—continued on page 2

## IT'S THE CORN AND BEANS TIME OF YEAR

This is the week when Ted begins sending down corn or beans. His goal again this year is to alternate these summertime staples, sending one or the other every week for the next ten weeks. With that in mind, we offer these timely words of wisdom on storage and preparation:

**BEANS!** If your beans are stringy, snap off the top and tail of each bean, pulling down the side to peel away the strings. If not, the tops and tails can be cut off by lining up several beans to do at once. Tiny beans should be cooked whole, but larger ones cook better and faster cut up into uniform lengths or cut lengthwise into halves or quarters, a process called frenching, which you can do laboriously with a sharp knife or more quickly with a gadget sold for this purpose.

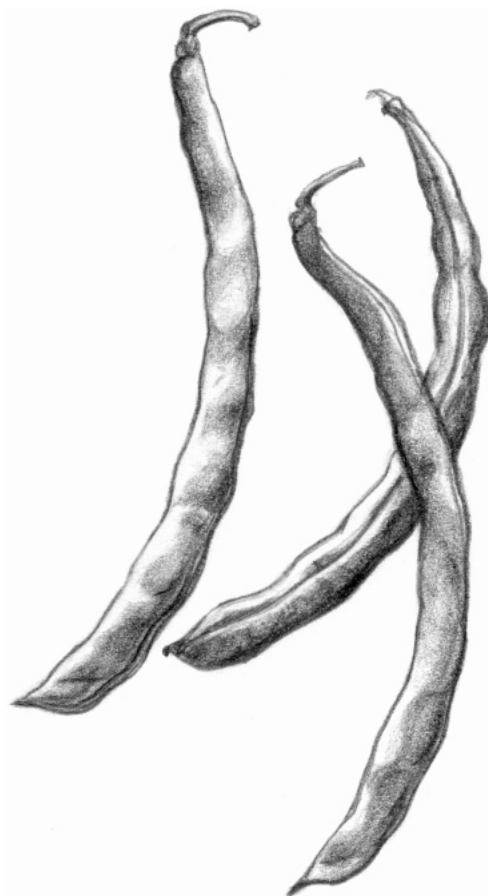
Green beans should be cooked very quickly to make the most of their bright color, firm texture, and fresh flavor. Drop them into a large quantity of salted boiling water, and after a few minutes test one for doneness. It should be tender but not soft. Baby beans will blanch to tender-crisp in less than a minute. Five-inch-long beans take about 5 minutes. When the beans are done, drain them and serve right away with a little butter and olive oil.

You can store unwashed beans in a perforated plastic bag in your refrigerator's vegetable bin for up to two weeks.

**CORN!** If you want it at its delicious and juicy peak, it's best to eat your sweet corn within a just few days of harvest.

Considering the number of ears most people can eat in one sitting, it probably won't be a problem to use what you have right away. If you must put off eating corn, leave the husks on and refrigerate

### Crisp, Tender Beans: Good for the Soil and Good for You



the ears in a plastic bag for as little time as possible. After about four days the corn's sweetness diminishes. Though it's still perfectly edible and tasty, corn at this stage is more suited for use in recipes than for eating right off the cob.

—continued on page 2

## Community Notes. . .

### NEXT WEEK'S VOLUNTEERS

Remember, we need *four* volunteers for each shift, and *two* shifts per season from each member.

#### Aug. 6 Early Shift (5:00-6:30 p.m.)

Jen Small, Lea Bonnier, Brian Voll, Adam Chilenski

#### Aug. 6 Closing Shift (6:30-8:00 p.m.)

Tessa Huxley, Elizabeth DeGaetano, Tina Carr, Rupa Bhattacharya

### BREAD REMINDER

You're hereby reminded about Hot Bread Kitchen's online store. Just visit: [hotbreadkitchen.org/hbkcsamenu.htm](http://hotbreadkitchen.org/hbkcsamenu.htm). It's simple to use, and you can pay for your order with PayPal. Even if you don't have a bread share, you can buy HBK's delicious stuff a la carte, and they'll deliver it every other week along with the shares. (Order deadline is Thursday before 10 a.m.)

### BORROW A BOOK, PEOPLE!

We've stocked a lending library with some of our favorite produce-centric cookbooks and other titles about local and sustainable agriculture. They're available to members for browsing or borrowing every Thursday. Just ask a volunteer for help with checking out.

—*Letter from the Farm, from page 1*

inevitable. I was just on the phone with a friend who farms in Columbia County. He had just finished ripping out all of his tomatoes. He had concluded that his tomato crop wasn't worth the cost of twice-weekly copper sprays. Our tomatoes are in three locations on the farm, and so far the disease is in just one. We will dig up the most infected plants in that field tomorrow. Our plan is to spray twice a week, with the hope that we can deliver some tomatoes to you.

So, what is the worst case? We might have a summer without tomatoes. We'll keep you posted.

The Stanton Street Harvest is published weekly by and for members of the Stanton Street CSA (P.O. Box 971, NYC 10002; <http://stantonstreetcsa.wordpress.com>). Thanks to core groupers Lucinda Sears (for her lovely illustrations) and Laura Schalchli (for her editorial wrangling). Most of the recipes and food info from cookbooks by Alice Waters, Deborah Madison, Farmer John Peterson, and other food geniuses. Please send questions, recipes, letters to the editor or other contributions to [stantonstreetcsa@gmail.com](mailto:stantonstreetcsa@gmail.com).

### CUCUMBER SALAD

from our very own Farmer Ted

2 cucumbers  
Salt  
1 tablespoon sugar  
1/2 cup distilled white vinegar  
2 teaspoons grainy mustard  
Lettuce leaves  
2 tablespoons mild extra-virgin olive oil  
Cut the cucumbers into thin rounds.  
Toss with 2 teaspoons of salt in a colander and allow to drain for 30 minutes.

Squeeze the excess liquid from the cucumbers. Whisk together the sugar, vinegar, and mustard in a large bowl, then stir in the cucumbers. Marinate, chilled, for at least 2 hours (to enhance the sweet sour blend of the sugar and vinegar). Drain the cucumbers, reserving the marinade and mound on top of the lettuce leaves. Whisk the olive oil into the reserved marinade and drizzle over salad.

Serves 6 to 8

### GREEN BEAN & CHERRY TOMATO SALAD

from *Chez Panisse Vegetables* by Alice Waters

1 pound green beans  
1 pound cherry tomatoes  
1 large shallot  
3 tablespoons red wine vinegar  
salt and pepper  
3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
Optional: basil or other herb

Top and tail the beans, and parboil them in salted water until tender. Drain and immediately spread them out to cool. (The beans retain more flavor if you avoid shocking them in cold water.) Stem the cherry tomatoes and

cut them in half. These steps can be done in advance.

For the vinaigrette, peel and dice the shallot fine and put it in a bowl with the vinegar and salt and pepper. Whisk in the olive oil. Taste and adjust the balance with more vinegar, oil or salt as needed. Toss the cherry tomatoes in with the vinaigrette; this can sit for a while. Do not add the green beans until just before serving or they will discolor from the acid in the vinegar. For variety, the salad can be garnished with basil or some other fresh herb such as parsley or chervil.

Serves 6

### COUSCOUS & CORN TABOULI

This simple salad was being prepared by chefs from the National Gourmet Institute for Health and Culinary Arts a while back at the Union Square Greenmarket. We sampled it, loved it, and asked for the recipe.

1 cup couscous  
1 cup boiling water  
1/4 teaspoon sea salt  
1-2 tablespoons lime juice  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
2 ears sweet corn  
1/2 jalapeño pepper  
1/4 cup cilantro, chopped  
Salt and pepper

Place the couscous in a small heat-proof bowl. Pour the boiling water and

salt over the couscous; cover and let stand for 5 minutes. Remove the lid, fluff with a fork and set aside. Whisk together the lime juice and the olive oil. Add this dressing to the couscous.

Shuck the corn and slice the kernels off the cob. Set a sauté pan with 1 inch of water on to boil. Blanch the kernels in the boiling water for 1 minute, drain, and set aside to cool.

Cut the jalapeño in half, remove the stems, and scoop out the ribs and seeds. When the couscous and corn have completely cooled, add the corn, jalapeño and cilantro to the couscous. Mix to thoroughly combine. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and serve. Serves 2

—*The Scoop on Corn and Beans, from page 1*

Corn is a low maintenance vegetable. No handling is necessary if you eat raw corn on the cob—yes, it's delicious—our plan to cook it in the husks. Otherwise, shuck the cob by pulling the husks down the ear and snapping off the stem. (The silks practically fall off on their own if

you cook the corn in its husk.) Rinse the shucked cob under cold running water and remember that worm damage is not a cause to throw away the whole ear; just cut out the damaged section. To cut kernels off the cob, stand the cob upright on its base and run a sharp knife from the tip of the ear down to the base.