

The Stanton Street Harvest

AUGUST 6, 2009

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LOWER EAST SIDE'S PIONEER CSA

VOL. 4, NO. 8

TODAY'S WEATHER
AT WINDFLOWER FARM



56°/76°

Finally! A break from the rain.
Partly cloudy skies.

TED'S LETTER FROM THE FARM

Ted Takes a Road Trip (But Not a Vacation)

I got away from the farm this week. I called two friends—both of them organic farmers—and proposed a road trip. Although we agreed that a day at the Lake George beach might be enjoyable, we opted instead to visit a friend and fellow CSA farmer at Norwich Meadows Farm. Zaid, the farmer there, and his all-Egyptian work force, grow many of their warm-season crops in high tunnels (very simple greenhouses), and we went to see how their crops were doing this summer when warm-season vegetables haven't fared especially well here in the Hudson Valley.

It turns out that their crops, too, have been later than usual. But they look great. They have 34 tunnels, and it takes eight men two hours just to open and close them every day. We also use tunnels (16 of them this year, each a bit smaller than Zaid's) for a portion of our crop, and we intend to use even more next year.

Tunnels can reduce the effects of cold, rainy weather and can reduce problems with insects and diseases. Having just been through the single rainiest July on record, and one of the coldest, we can appreciate the value these structures give to your shares. Next year, we'll probably have over two acres of greenhouse crops; we intend to grow under cover because we want to give you good quantities of peppers, eggplants, tomatoes and

—continued on page 2

ALAS! WE MAY NOT SEE MANY TOMATOES THIS SEASON, SO LET'S MAKE THE MOST OF THEM!

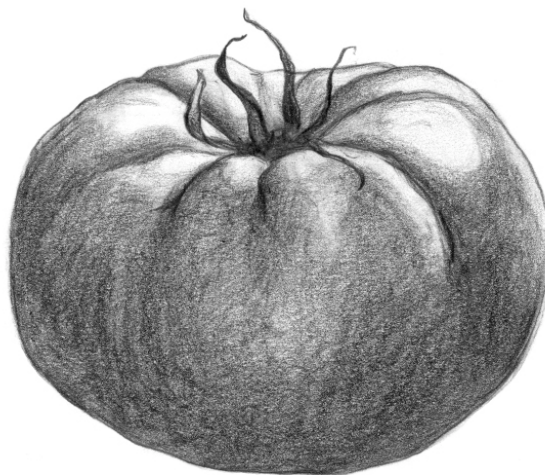
Tomatoes win the vegetable popularity contest by a long shot, despite the fact that so many tomatoes sold in this country are of dubious taste and texture. CSA shareholders can count themselves lucky, because the farm-fresh tomatoes we get are the best to be found: they're truly vine-ripened, juicy, sweet, and flavorful.

Of course, this year New York is infested with late blight, so tomatoes will be something of an endangered species this season. The best we can do is savor the ones that Ted manages to harvest before the blight eventually takes the whole crop.

How can you tell if your tomatoes are ripe? If they smell fragrant and yields slightly when squeezed, they're ready to use. If not, store them for a few days at room temperature. Putting dry tomatoes in a brown paper bag may accelerate the ripening process; a sun-free spot on your counter will also work.

Unless you have some very ripe tomatoes near to spoiling, avoid refrigerating them; cold temperatures kill their flavor and texture. You can dry tomatoes for long-term storage or you can freeze them in sauces or salsas.

If serving tomatoes raw or lightly cooked, give them a quick rinse and slice, chop, or cut them into chunks as desired. If you'll be cooking them for a substantial length of time, consider removing the skins, so they don't float around in your dish. To remove the skin, score a small X in the bottom of each tomato and place them in a pot of boiling water (or put them in a heatproof bowl and pour boiling water over the X's). Leave them in the boiling water for a few seconds (or for a minute or so if necessary); the skin will loosen and peel back slightly. Remove the tomatoes from the water and peel them under cool running water.



Some cooks recommend removing tomato seeds because they can distract visually from a dish. To remove seeds, slice your tomato in half horizontally and squeeze it gently into a strainer or bowl. Reserve the juice of cooking; it's full of Vitamin C.

One other thing: Avoid cooking tomatoes in aluminum or iron pots because tomatoes react with those substances, giving the dish a metallic taste. Tomatoes will also assume the "seasoning" of your cast-iron cookware, so use stainless steel.

Community Notes. . .

NEXT WEEK'S VOLUNTEERS

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

Aug. 13 Early Shift (5:00-6:30 p.m.)

L. Bonner, G. Anderson, T. Garcia, X. Garcia

Aug. 13 Closing Shift (6:30-8:00 p.m.)

R. Schoenberg-Jones, A. Zimmerman, C. Fernandez, J. Chung

DON'T FORGET YOUR "EXTRAS"!

The **next deadline** for placing orders for "extras" from our friends at www.csalewiswaitefarm.com is this **Saturday, August 8 at midnight**. All manner of delicious meats, cheeses, yogurts, breads, honey, jams and sauces are available for purchase directly from the farms and artisans who produce them. The goods will be delivered next Thursday, August 13.

—Letter from the Farm, from page 1

squashes even if we have another season is as cold and rainy as this one.

We also noticed that Zaid's outdoor crop of tomatoes, like those on many farms in our area, have late blight. We were happy to commiserate. Diseases are widespread on organic and conventional farms alike this year. One of my travelling companions, Brian, does not have late blight. He says that his crops have been under water so much of the time that they have not had the chance to catch a windborne disease. They suffer instead from a common wet-soil fungus called Rhizoctonia.

Sue, my other travel mate, has also watched her crops become submerged several times this year. She had six inches of rain in just one day last week (we had four and a half that day), and wonders if she'll have any winter squash to harvest this year. I hear this and feel grateful that our farm is on high ground. It is raining hard as I write this. Although we probably won't have flooding, nutrients are being washed downstream, weeds are thriving because we can't cultivate in the mud, and our planting schedule has been disrupted. But the forecast calls for some drying weather ahead. With some luck we'll be able to plant the next round of lettuces and the last of our fall broccoli and root crops.

BRAISED GREENS WITH CUCUMBER

from our very own Farmer Ted

2 cucumbers, peeled
1 bunch of greens: choy, chard, beet greens, spinach, whatever you have
1 tablespoon olive oil
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/4 cup water
3 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
Halve the cucumbers lengthwise and scoop out the seeds. Cut crosswise into 1/2-inch thick pieces. Slice the greens—

leaves, stems and all—crosswise into 1/2-inch thick pieces. Place a frying pan over medium-high heat. Add the olive oil and, when hot, add the cucumbers and pepper. Saute for just a few minutes until the cucumbers soften slightly yet retain some crunch. Add the water and greens and increase heat to high. Continue cooking, stirring and tossing a few times, until the greens are tender and most of the liquid has evaporated, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in the dill. Serves 6 to 8

SUMMER SQUASH WITH GARLIC AND HERBS

from *Chez Panisse Vegetables*, by Alice Waters

Choose a mixture of very fresh squashes. Trim and slice or cut them into julienne. Sauté in olive oil in a pan until tender and just beginning to brown.

Add a generous amount of freshly chopped garlic and basil or marjoram, and season with salt and pepper. Cook a minute more, until the garlic releases its aroma; squeeze over a bit of lemon juice, and serve.

BROWN-BUTTERED CORN WITH BASIL

from *The Gourmet Cookbook*, Ruth Reichl, ed.

Corn off the cob can be fun too. . . .
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
3 cups corn kernels (about 4 ears)
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1 cup shredded basil

Heat butter in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderately high heat until foam subsides and most of the butter is golden brown.

Add corn to skillet, season with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring, until tender, about 4 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the basil. Serves 4

GRILLED PEACH BOURBON FIZZ

from shareholder Cathryn Davis Zommer

Here's a change of pace on the recipe front! Cathryn created this delicious summertime drink, which was named Grill Club NYC "Best Cocktail" last month. So we had to share it with you.
2 ounces cheap bourbon
1 1/2 ounce elderflower syrup (from IKEA, or use St. Germaine Liqueur)
1 grilled skewer of peaches (about 5 minutes per side)
3 healthy dashes of peach bitters (I use

Fee Brothers)
Seltzer

Grill one skewer of peaches per cocktail. Place the grilled peaches in a cocktail shaker and muddle aggressively, until pureed (or, ideally, use a blender). Add bourbon, peach bitters, elderflower syrup, and ice to shaker and shake vigorously. Pour using a wide-mouth strainer into a glass filled with ice. Leave 1 inch for the seltzer. Stir and serve garnished with a peach slice and straw.

As I told you last week, our tomatoes are infected with late blight. So, this week, you'll be getting another tomato tease, which I suppose is better than no tomatoes, but not what we had hoped to send you. We'll also send sweet corn or beans, which we'll plan to rotate for the next several weeks.

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.