

The Stanton Street Harvest

JULY 31, 2008

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LOWER EAST SIDE'S CSA

VOL. 3, NO. 7

TODAY'S WEATHER AT WINDFLOWER FARM



83°/62°

Scattered thunderstorms.
Chance of precipitation 40%

TED'S LETTER FROM THE FARM

Weather Woes And a Wet Week

By Ted Blomgren

I abandoned my tractor in the field on Saturday. I was preparing land for fall cauliflower, a crop I haven't tried to grow in a while, when the thunder and lightning and large raindrops came. By the time I gave up, the rainfall was heavy. I was working on the far side of the ravine, so I was soaked through when I made it back up to the house. I arrived to find that Jan had closed down all the greenhouses and that we were under a severe storm warning.

The blast that came through was powerful, but nothing compared with what came during the night. Jan and I awoke to the sounds of heavy rain, a brief period of hail, and roaring water. On her inspection tour in the morning, she found that the new dam had blown out, and that the roaring was the sound of our pond as it was being emptied. A dry August might be difficult to endure.

The young heron that had made its home near the pond was in the backyard harpooning frogs today. I don't know if the pond can sustain the heron now, but we are hopeful. He has already made a practice of visiting the other ponds in the neighborhood to round out his diet.

And so, for the second time this year, hail has ripped through our greens and battered our crops. Six inches of rain has fallen since Saturday, and more is expected on Wednesday. And I am again

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MORE WISDOM ON THE ART AND SCIENCE OF STORING YOUR VEGETABLES

YOUR BEST MOVE IS TO PLAN ON EATING THE MOST PERISHABLE ITEMS FIRST

We've talked up the green plastic storage bags in these pages so much that we are temporarily sold out. In the meantime, we saw the following Q&A in the on-line environmental magazine Grist.org about the wish to avoid using plastic for storage. We pass it along as food for thought.

Q. WHAT IS THE BEST WAY to store vegetables in the refrigerator? I have a small crisper drawer and lots of vegetables from the CSA. I don't want to use plastic bags but unfortunately they work well.

A. FIRST KEEP IN MIND THAT there is little difference between the environmental footprints of plastic and paper bags. I recommend using both in various situations, meaning: recycled-content, PVC-free, phthalate-free, reused (if possible) bags of either type. Now, some tips on storing produce:

1. Most fruit should be kept out of the fridge unless it is on the verge of spoilage. Everything traditionally known as fruit is included in this rule, plus tomatoes, but not zucchini. The fridge dries out the fruit, fills it with strange fridge-odor flavors, and kills the taste.

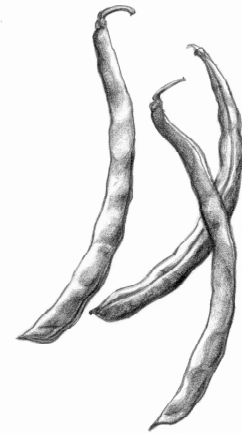
2. There is no need to refrigerate potatoes, onions, or garlic as long as you have a cool, dry cupboard in your home.

3. Much produce suffers from being washed and then stored. Especially do not store washed basil or mushrooms in a plastic bag; you will end up sad. I like to wash all my lettuce-y items at once and quickly pull them out for salads later, which presents the wetness problem. If I do have wet lettuce or salad mix, I put it in a paper bag and then into a plastic bag; others add a paper towel inside the plastic. The paper absorbs the moisture out of the leaves, yet keeps them moist enough that they don't wilt.

4. Almost all other veggies will wilt, shrivel, pucker, and rot at a more rapid pace if not encased in a vapor barrier. I've never found a crisper drawer that works, so I use and reuse plastic bags, which trap some of the moisture and delay spoilage. Any closed container should also work, including Tupperware-type containers made of plastic or glass.

Think how much more moist your own skin would be if you wore plastic bags on a daily basis. Since applying

Bean Counting



Beans should be cooked quickly to make the most of their bright color, firm texture, and fresh flavor. Drop them into salted boiling water, and after a few minutes test one for doneness. Baby beans blanch to tender-crisp in a minute. Five-inch-long beans take about 5 minutes. Drain and serve right away with a little butter and olive oil.

lotion to a vegetable will never make it appear younger and fresher, we must resort to using bags or resealable containers. And we must consume our vegetables on a first-to-rot, first-to-eat schedule. Have a great time with your summer produce, and don't worry too much about which type of bag you use. Fresh, healthy, local food is a higher priority.

reminded of how grateful I am that you have agreed to share in the risk of our farming.

This weeks share will consist of green snap beans, two heads of red Romaine lettuce, both showing a bit of wear from the hailstones, a handful of yellow onions, three cucumbers or zucchinis, 1 1/2 lb. of red and gold beets, two sweet Italian frying peppers, a few tomatoes or an eggplant, and a selection of cooking greens.

Community Notes...

NEXT WEEK'S VOLUNTEERS

Aug. 7, Early Shift (5:00-6:30 p.m.)

T. Lee, D. Kalinowski, A. Ben-Naim

Aug. 7, Closing Shift (6:30-8:00 p.m.)

J. Mann, G. Anderson, E. DeGaetano

ALL BALANCES ARE DUE!

If you chose the deferred payment plan, your second payment was due on July 3. Most of us are now paid in full, but a few payments remain outstanding. If you still owe a balance, please bring a check next week. We've got to send another big check to Farmer Ted soon. If you need to know your remaining balance, ask a core member or send us an e-mail. Thanks!

LET US EAT LOCAL

On Sept. 9, Just Food will be hosting a terrific night of food and fun, bringing together New York's most talented chefs, farmers, producers and community leaders. Taste fabulous cuisine prepared with locally grown ingredients by celebrity chefs, and sample wines, beer and spirits from local vineyards, brewers and distilleries—all while relaxing at picnic tables on the Water Taxi Beach. None other than Ted Blomgren will be one of the evening's honorees! And Little Giant (whose proprietors are your co-shareholders) will be one of the participating restaurants. Get more details at www.justfood.org.

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 shareholder Lucinda Sears for the lovely illustrations. We plundered most of the recipes and food info from cookbooks by Alice Waters, Deborah Madison, Farmer John Peterson, and other food geniuses. **We heartily encourage all shareholders to send questions, recipes, letters to the editor or other contributions to stantonstreetcsa@gmail.com.**

QUICK BREAD & BUTTER PICKLES

(from our very own Farmer Ted, by way of the August 2008 issue of *Cooking Light*)

2 3/4 cups thinly sliced cucumbers

3/4 tablespoons kosher salt

1/2 cup thinly sliced onion

1/2 cup sugar

1/2 cup white vinegar

1/4 cup cider vinegar

1/8 cup packed brown sugar

3/4 teaspoon mustard seeds

1/4 teaspoon celery seeds

1/16 teaspoon turmeric

Combine cucumbers and salt in a

large bowl; cover and chill 1 1/2 hours. Drain and rinse the cucumbers under cold water. Drain again and return them to the bowl. Add the sliced onion.

Combine the sugar and remaining ingredients in a medium saucepan; bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Pour the hot vinegar mixture over the cucumber mixture; let stand at room temperature for one hour. Cover and refrigerate 24 hours. Store in an air-tight container in refrigerator up to two weeks.

Yields 8 1/4-cup servings

SUMMER SQUASH & ROASTED CORN FRITTATA

(from shareholder Anya Kamanetz)

Anya tells us this dish is delicious for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

2 bulbs of green garlic

1 small onion

4 small summer squash or zucchini

2 ears of corn

4 eggs

Organic milk or cream

Grated semihard cheese, such as cheddar, swiss, asiago, fontina

Fresh herbs, such as dill, rosemary, basil, oregano in any combination.

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Husk and rinse off the corn. You can roast it directly on the oven rack at 450°F. for 10 to 15 minutes, turning once until a few kernels are browned on each

side. Or you can microwave it in a shallow dish with a little bit of water at the bottom for 4 to 5 minutes. When it's done, slice off the kernels. Set aside.

Saute the onion and garlic in olive oil and/or butter over low heat in a cast-iron skillet or other broad flatbottom pan. Slice the squash very thin; add to pan and saute until translucent.

Beat the eggs with half a cup of milk. Pour over the vegetables in the pan and add the grated cheese. Fold gently with a spatula to mix.

When the eggs are almost set, scatter the chopped fresh herbs and the corn over the surface and press down with the spatula to make an even layer. Cover so the top of the eggs can set.

Serves 4

GREEN BEAN AND CHERRY TOMATO SALAD

(from *Chez Panisse Vegetables* by Alice Waters)

Of course, there's no need to wait for cherry tomatoes; you can substitute any kind of chopped tomatoes in this simple summer salad.

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