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Box #11
Odd Week
6 September 2017

Contents
Dill: Couple Boxes
Parsley: Flat Leaf, Family Boxes
Broccoli
Brussels Sprout Tops
Cucumber
Eggplant
Melon: Watermelon
Onions: Yellow
Potatoes: White Superior
Tomatoes: Slicers, Juliet

New Stuff: Brussels sprout tops, eggplant, tomatoes, watermelon
Choice Box: Mix

One of the techniques for growing Brussels sprouts with nicely sized sprouts is to break off the top of the plant at a certain point in its development. Without its top, the plant puts more energy into forming sprouts and not in growing upwards. Breaking the tops off Brussels sprouts is rather labor intensive. Several years ago, we gave this job to our Hmong crew, and watched with amazement while they stuffed the tops into garbage bag after garbage bag, then hauled them all to their car. The next week, they brought lunch and we got to taste what all that hauling was about. Wow! Sweet, tender, especially the stalk. Who knew? We've been eating them ever since and sharing with our CSA members.
If you're new to our CSA family, you've probably never eaten the top of a Brussels sprout plant before. No worries: it may be unusual, but it's really good. Eat everything: the leaves, the stems and **especially** the stalk. Store these greens in the plastic bag they come in, and enjoy them within 3-4 days. Cabbage worms enjoy the leaves as much as we do, so you're likely to find some. Wash the tops thoroughly before using. You can eat them steamed, sautéed, stir fried, in soup--anything you put greens in you can put these in. Steaming is my favorite, followed by sautéing with bacon. Choose your favorite method and enjoy!
Altho eggplant is low in calories and high in fiber, it does not contain large amounts of vitamins or minerals. It is available in many, different cultivars, from the pear-shaped, Italian variety, the long slender Asian, the small white "chicken egg", to others that are pink, green, lavender, striped and so on. We find the pear-shaped Italian to be a good, all-round eggplant. These will be on the small side.
Always cook eggplant before eating as it contains a toxic substance called solanine. This is the same, bitter material that makes green potatoes taste bad. Cooking eggplant changes the solanine chemically so it's safe to eat. Store eggplant in the vegetable drawer in your fridge, but use it within a week.
Having an Italian mother, I grew up with Eggplant Parmesan. When my mother taught me to cook, she gave me the putzy, repetitious jobs. I remember adding seemingly endless glugs of oil to the skillet when frying eggplant slices for Parmesan—the stuff sucked it up like a sponge. Years later, I tried a vegetarian sandwich that contained grilled eggplant and was amazed. What a delicious revelation! Grilled until soft, that purple vegetable tasted completely different, rather like beef.
This is the sauce the restaurant brushed on their eggplant before grilling (it works great for zucchini and summer squash, too):

Grilling Sauce for Eggplant

In a small bowl, whisk together:

¼ cup olive oil
1 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
1 Tbsp. soy sauce
salt & freshly ground pepper

Soy sauce helps to emulsify the vinegar and oil. Wash the eggplant(s), and cut off the tops, no need to peel. Slice them into lengthwise slabs, ½" thick. Brush both sides with the grilling sauce. Grease your grate, and grill the slices over the coals, turning as needed. They're done when you can't see any whitish streaks, and the slabs are moist and limp. Once you taste these, you'll want to buy several eggplants at your next farmer's market and grill a bunch. They are especially good in sandwiches, salads and hors d'oeuvres.
Now that you feel like using your oven again, you can brush your eggplant slabs with this same sauce, and lay them on an aluminum-lined sheet pan (something with sides so the oil won't drip off and cause a fire). Bake in a 400 degree oven until the slabs are about ¾ done, turn and bake until the slabs are transparent-looking. Grilled/baked eggplant is perfect for Eggplant Parmesan.
The tomatoes are just starting to ripen, so the amounts in this week's box are small—a few slicers and a Juliet, which looks rather like a small Roma tomato, but is actually a large grape type tomato, very tasty. The slicing tomatoes are several varieties from round

Celebritys to heirloom types with odd shapes.
There're lots of green fruits out there, so be patient: there's more a-comin'!
To bring out a tomato's best flavor, store them on your counter. Some of the tomatoes you receive will not be fully ripe, showing some green or a lighter red than a ripe tomato would be. They will turn redder if you give them a few days out on your counter. They'll be just fine for about a week, longer when they're ripening.
Chuck and I like to grow a yellow-fleshed, seeded watermelon called "Peace". This yellow watermelon has a milder, more complex flavor than a red watermelon, and is bred to be smaller, which allows us to put them into your boxes.
Our watermelon patch has done well this season. Each plant has 2-3 melons on it, and they are ripening nicely. **FYI**--these watermelons are extremely delicate. If they get jostled too much, they'll crack open, rather like eggs. The Peace watermelons will go into your boxes whole, but they may not arrive that way. If you get a cracked one, eat it sooner rather than later. Cracking doesn't affect the flavor, just the shelf life.
The broccoli this week has a rather strong flavor, tending to bitter when eaten raw. This goes away completely when you cook it.
CSA member Mary Mirasola sent this recipe last year:

Mediterranean Ratatouille Chicken

1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into large strips
1 clove garlic, crushed and minced
1 cup eggplant, cut into ½ inch cubes
1 small zucchini, thinly sliced
1 medium onion, sliced
1 small green pepper
1 14 ½ oz. can diced tomatoes
2 tsp. capers, drained
4 tsp. Parmesan cheese
12 oil-cured olives
8 leaves fresh basil, chopped (or ½ tsp. dried)
2 Tbsp. olive oil or olive oil cooking spray

Spray a 10 inch frying pan with cooking spray (or use the 2 Tbsp. olive oil). Heat to medium hot and put chicken strips in frying pan. Add garlic. Turn chicken once when lightly browned.
Add all other ingredients, except Parmesan cheese. Cover and simmer for 15 min or until vegetables are tender. Sprinkle cheese on top and serve immediately over pasta or with bread sticks.

Field Notes

Last Thursday, our small field crew stayed late to plant lettuce and kale. We finished the last row just as the sun was setting. This week, we'll plant the last of the lettuce, the spinach, then we'll be done transplanting until November, when we put garlic in the ground.
Saturday gave us a little rain, about .4". Our transplants were grateful and are growing well.
Chuck has been busy with his seeder, and small rutabagas are sprouting from the soil. We'll see how big they are at the end of October.

Just a reminder that **Farm Day** will be Sunday, Sept. 24th. We'll start at 1pm and go to 4pm. See you then!

Summer seems to have slid into fall rather quickly. Ah, well, good sleeping weather.
Take Care,

TERRY & CHUCK