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Box #15
Odd Week
6 October 2021

Contents
Parsley
Beets: Orange, Red & White – Couple Boxes Only
Broccoli
Brussels Sprout Stalk
Chard
Fennel: Family Boxes Only
Lettuce:
Peppers: Shishito
Tomatoes: Juliet, Slicers

New Stuff: Brussels sprouts, fennel
Choice Box: ??

Brussels sprouts are one of those fall vegetables that taste better after they've been thru several frosts. These have been thru several frosts. Brussels sprouts also require a long time to mature, so we plant them by mid-May at the latest. They are grown mainly for the edible buds, or "sprouts", but the leaves are good too (as you already know). You may notice that the sprouts grow up the stalk in a spiral pattern. Most of the sprouts will be firm, but sprouts at the top and bottom of the stalk may be loosely formed. Nothing wrong with that, they're still edible and taste great.
Brussels sprouts (*Brassica oleracea*) are part of the cabbage family and native to the Mediterranean. They first appeared in northern Europe in the 5th century. European farmers cultivated them around the 13th century, and they became very popular in the Netherlands and Belgium, especially around Brussels, hence the name.
Brussels sprouts are high in vegetable proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins A, B_6, C and K, dietary fiber and minerals. Their flavor and nutritional value are best when used soon after harvest.
To store, cut or snap the sprouts from the stalk and place them in a plastic bag. They will keep for a week or longer in the crisper drawer in your fridge.
Before cooking Brussels sprouts, trim the bottom, then peel off and discard any yellowed or damaged outside leaves. You can cook them whole or halved (my preference). Despite some claims, they do not cook faster if you cut an X in the bottom—it just takes longer to get them into the pan. Because of their stronger flavor, I prefer Brussels sprouts cooked until they're tender all the way thru, but still retain a light green color. I use 2-3 tablespoons of butter, some salt and pepper, a skillet on low heat, covered. Stir them a few times, let the edges brown to caramelize their sugars, and cook them 10-15 minutes or so, until just soft. Or, try them roasted, just like beets. Brussels sprouts are also good in soups, stews and pot roast. Their flavor improves with every frost, but frost is not in the forecast for the next 2 weeks. Expect to see them in these last, 4 boxes.



Brussels Sprouts with Chorizo
In a wide skillet, over medium-high heat, warm:
2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
Add: **8 oz. Spanish chorizo, chopped in 1/2-inch pieces**
Let chorizo sizzle for a minute or so and mash with a wooden spoon until it crumbles and releases some of its fat. Cook, stirring, until slightly browned, about 2 minutes more. Use a slotted spoon to remove chorizo and set aside. Leave oil bubbling in skillet.
Add: **1 ½ pounds Brussels sprouts, trimmed and sliced in half**
Salt and pepper
3 garlic cloves, minced
½ tsp. pimentón (Spanish smoked paprika)
Stir to mix thoroughly, turn heat to low, cover and cook until sprouts are tender and lightly browned, about 15-20 minutes. Stir now and then during cooking.
When Brussels sprouts are tender, return chorizo to pan and cook, stirring, 2 minutes more. Sprinkle with parsley and transfer to a serving dish. Serve hot.
NOTE: If you don't have chorizo, any sausage or ground meat will do.

Fennel is a popular vegetable in Europe for its unique taste and ability to pair well with many other flavors.

Fennel has been used for hundreds of years as an aid to digestion. It's high in vitamin A, calcium, potassium and iron. The bulb and leaves have a mild, black-licorice flavor that is very good in salads, especially coleslaw, vegetable dishes and with fish. The frugal cook likes it because all of fennel is edible: bulb, stalks and leaves. To use, cut off the top of the root from the bulb, which is tough, and chop off the leafy stalks for use later. Wash the bulb under cold, running water to get out any dirt that may have sifted down between the layers. Place the bulb flat on your cutting board and slice it in half. Set the cut side down on your board and slice lengthwise.
Use the feathery leaves as a fresh herb. They lose some flavor each day, so go thru them as quick as you can. Or, add them to your next batch of pesto, or potato salad. You can dry fennel leaves on paper towels in your microwave. Store the dried, chopped leaves with your other herbs. If you make stock, the fibrous stalks are an excellent flavoring. One of our site managers cuts the stalks into 4" lengths and stores them in a jar of water in her fridge: it's one of her children's favorite snacks. Like sugar cane, they chew on the stalks to get all the tasty, tender bits, then spit out the fibrous part.
Making an infusion (think tea) is a way to use a small amount of something, and get good flavor out of it. Here's how you can do that with your fennel:

Fennel with Fish
Clean the fennel as described above, reserving some fronds to add later. In a 10" sauté pan, over medium heat, add:
2 Tbsp. butter
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1-2 fennel bulbs, cleaned and sliced thinly
- sauté just until the fennel begins to brown.
Add: **½ cup water, stock or dry white wine**
-add the stalks, cut into 4" lengths (so you can remove them later), cover the pan, turn the heat to low, and cook the fennel until it is completely soft, about 15 minutes. While the fennel cooks slowly and flavors the liquid, snip off the rest of the leaves and chop them up. When the fennel is done, push the pieces toward the sides. You should have a thin layer of fennel-infused liquid on the bottom of the pan. If you don't, add more water, stock or wine. Scrape the bottom of the pan to loosen any stuck-on bits (this is called "de-glazing"). Add enough fish to fill up the area inside the cooked ring of fennel, season with salt, freshly ground pepper, and half of the chopped fennel leaves if you intend to turn the fish over. If you're using thin fillets, like Tilapia, you won't need to turn them over, so sprinkle all of the chopped fennel over the top. Cover the pan again, and simmer slowly, just until the fish is no longer transparent in the middle, but is still moist. The length of time will depend on the thickness of the fish. The best rule I've found is the simplest: Measure the fish at its thickest point, and cook it 10 minutes per inch, regardless of the cooking method. The fennel bulb is tender and delicious, but the stalk will be too fibrous for eating, so remove the stalks before serving.

I know I've written about my quick and easy way of freezing tomatoes and peppers before, but it seems a good time to repeat it.
Wash the tomatoes, dry them and place them in the freezer. If you have a lot, put them on a sheet pan and freeze everything. When frozen, drop the frozen tomatoes into a freezer ziplock bag. When you need a small amount for a recipe, just take out one or 2 from the bag. Put the frozen tomato under running water, and the skin splits so you can peel it right off. Let it thaw a little, and it's easy to chop up.
For peppers, wash it, cut out the core and seeds, and freeze. I'll often do this with a few damaged peppers, place them wherever in my freezer, and drop them in a ziplock bag once they're frozen. Take a few sections out of the bag, chop them up and you're in business.

Field Notes
We got about an inch of rain from the recent storms. Soaked into the ground pretty quickly, it was so dry. The big news here is: the barn is getting a steel roof. We've been living with the roof we have for 20 seasons, and it's sprung a few minor leaks over the past 5 years. This is the year we fix that. Chuck found a source for good, heavy-grade, used steel roofing at about a third the cost of lighter-grade new. After some delays coordinating schedules, the roofing crew started Monday, and almost completed the south side. They should be done by Wednesday, God willing and creek don't rise.



There will be both slicing and canning tomatoes for sale again next week. We may be adding paste tomatoes and tomatillos as well. Looks like warm weather for a few more weeks, so everything will keep growing.
Enjoy!
Terry & Chuck