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Cycle Farm CSA Newsletter

Week 11- August 30, 2012

This week's share

- 2 summer squash (Costata romanesco and Yellow Crookneck)
- 1/3 lb chard (Five color silverbeet and Fordhook giant)
- 1/3 lb green beans (Red swan, Marvel of Venice, Provider, Rattlesnake, Empress)
- 4 cucumbers (2 slicers: Mideast peace, Marketmore 76; 2 lemon)
- 1 1/2 lb tomatillos (Plaza latina)
- 3 onions (Ailsa Craig)
- 3 eggplant (Ai qua)
- 4 jalapeño (3 Craig's grande and 1 Czech black)
- 2 bell peppers (Purple beauty)
- 3 lb tomatoes (2 lb mixed cherry and pear; 1 lb slicers: Aurora, Uralskiy Ranniy, Tigerella, Moongold, Paul Robeson, Wapisinicon peach, Katja, Pink Caspian)
- 4 garlic (Korean purple and Persian star)

Hello CSA Members!

Happy Blue Moon everybody. Biodynamically this is probably very significant for our farm, we ought to get our preparations on.

We've had a great week, lots of wonderful discoveries. We found a big, beautiful praying mantis. She was checking out the bike trailer in the garage, we moved her out to the grapevines. We also discovered that we are unintentionally growing a bumper crop of huitacoche, aka "corn smut" or "Mexican corn truffles". It is a gnarly looking fungus that's growing on our popcorn crop. And it's edible. If you are interested in trying some, let us know.

We've discovered a rabbit in our field. A very well fed rabbit. Other happenings on the farm include getting fall peas and radishes planted, and lettuces transplanted into the beds.

We had minor irrigation troubles - but things are working again, tiptop form. We pressed three 5-gallon buckets of crab apples and have a batch of cider fermenting. We had an opportunity to meet the state extension food preservation agent and we learned about the rules and regulations for home canning and selling at the market. We've begun mental preparations for butchering next week, decided we're going to practice on the rabbit. And the sunflowers are now over 10' high, you have to check them out. Holy mackerel.

Mexican corn truffles



Hidatsa shield figure beans

Purple beauty bell pepper



Praying mantis friend

Annexation: an observation

On Monday, last week, the Spearfish City Council voted to annex the area east of Evans Lane. This is a stepping stone toward annexing a larger area of the valley, including Cycle Farm. While many residents of the valley are opposed to annexation due to obvious tax reasons and increased infrastructure and maintenance costs, we feel that there is a larger concern. Land in the County has a minimum lot size of 2 acres per residence. Under City zoning, the potential number of houses per acre increases dramatically. This means the land that is currently agricultural or open space will become much more valuable as potential housing developments. Access to land is one of the biggest hurdles facing new farmers today. Having substantial increases over the already high price of land makes it that much harder to get started - or continue - in farming. We understand the City has offered to grandfather-in certain ag-related elements and operations. This is great for us, for now. But in the future, what if we want to sell our land to another farmer? What if we ever look at expanding our farm? Spearfish Valley is one of the best spots for growing vegetables in Western South Dakota. Sacrificing this resource is not a sound option for the long term resiliency of this community. There is currently a petition in circulation to get Council's decision brought to a city-wide vote. We urge you to sign this petition, and get your friends to sign too. And, even more important, please vote against annexation in November...at least until the City has better plans in place for the long term preservation of agricultural lands.

Penne with summer squash and ricotta (another recipe modified from Deborah Madison. We just can't get enough. She's brilliant.)

1 cup fresh ricotta
2 lbs costata romanesco and/or yellow crookneck squash
2 Tbs olive oil
3 plump garlic cloves
3 Tbs chopped marjoram or basil
sea salt and black pepper
1 lb penne
fresh grated Parmesan

Put water on for pasta. Set ricotta out to warm up to room temperature. Slice squash on the diagonal a 3/8" thick, then slice into strips so that each piece resembles the quill-shaped pasta. Heat oil in a wide skillet. Add squash and saute over medium-high heat until golden, about 5 min. Add garlic and marjoram, toss with squash and turn off the heat. Season well with salt and pepper. When water boils, add penne. Cook until al dente, then drain and add it to the squash. Toss, season with salt and pepper, add ricotta cheese in spoonfuls. Grate the cheese over the dish and serve.

We don't have any fresh herbs this year, but come to the Farmer's Market downtown this Friday or back in the City Park starting this Saturday. Our friends Talli and Dahl with Moonrise Mountain Ranch have excellent herbs.



Pressing crab apples for cider



Very tall sunflowers

Happy eating!
Your farmers,
Trish and Jeremy