



Cal Poly Organic Farm Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

New Thursday drop off at Pacific Coast Home and Garden

The Pacific Coast Home and Garden store on Santa Barbara Ave off Broad St in SLO has graciously offered their nursery area (in the back of the store) as a place we can drop your CSA harvest shares.

If you would like this drop off location please email or call us immediately. The PCHG drop off will be THURSDAYS from 3:30-6:00pm starting on Thurs Dec 6th. Call 756-6139 or e-mail: orgfarm@calpoly.edu



Jerry's Corner: Field Notes from the Farmer's Mouth

Jerry Mahoney, Production Supervisor at CPOF, giving you the farmer's perspective on your CSA harvest share.

Fall is finally here! Our first frost after Thanksgiving damaged our warm-blooded crops-- tomatoes, peppers, and summer squash--but it's not all bad news. Brassicas (like broccoli, Brussels sprouts, kohlrabi, cabbage) and root veggies thrive in cooler weather. Bring on the soup!

Looking for holiday gift ideas? This year **why not give the "Gift of Veggies."** Gift certificates for a one-time large CSA share are available now for \$26.50. Simply call: 756-6139 or e-mail: orgfarm@calpoly.edu and we can arrange to send you a "Gift of Veggies" holiday certificate.

Now is the time for students to enroll for the Winter Season of the Cal Poly Organic Farm's Community Supported Agriculture Program. The **10-week long season will begin on January 14th and will continue thru March 17th.** Student shares cost \$19/week and are available for pick up at the Farm on Monday or Thursday from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Current student members may pick up the registration form which will be available by the share sign-out sheet on regular CSA days. For more information or to enroll, please visit: www.calpolyorgfarm.com or e-mail: orgfarm@calpoly.edu or call: 756-6139.

Schedule Reminder: There will be a two-week break in the Cal Poly Organic Farm Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program during the winter holiday. Please note: shares will not be available for pick up or delivery on the weeks beginning 12/24 and 12/31.

Week 11 Produce

December 3 – December 9
Full Shares expect 10-12 items
Small Shares expect 8-10 items
From the following list:

Basil (Living Soil, Cayucos) – Since the oils in basil are highly volatile, it is best to add the herb near the end of the cooking process, so it will retain its maximum essence and flavor.

Butter Turnips - Sauté turnip greens, then season with tamari, lemon juice and cayenne pepper.

Head Lettuce - (Red Butter or Green Leaf)

Carrots - Shredded raw carrots and chopped carrot greens make great additions to salads.

Beets – (Chioggia, Bull's Blood, or Early Wonder Tall Top) Combine shredded carrots, beets and apples, and eat as a salad.

Cilantro - Coriander leaves are featured in the culinary traditions of Latin American, Indian and Chinese cuisine.

Bunching Onions - By the Middle Ages, prescribed to alleviate headaches, snakebites and hair loss.

Baby Bok Choy – Stir fry!

Bell Peppers – Perfect for crudités: a brilliant splash of color and the perfect crunchy complement for dips.

Rosemary - Add to omelets and frittatas.

Broccoli - Both cooked and raw broccoli make excellent additions to your meal plan.

Red Russian Kale - Braise chopped kale and apples, then sprinkle with balsamic vinegar and chopped walnuts.

Parsley - Make a basil-kale-parsley pesto blend!

Winter Squash - Top puréed cooked winter squash with cinnamon and maple syrup.

Unless otherwise noted, all your vegetables are certified organic.

www.calpolyorgfarm.com

VEGETABLE OF THE WEEK: Bunching Onions

"It's hard to imagine civilization without onions." -Julia Child

Because onions are small and their tissues leave little or no trace, there is no conclusive opinion about the exact location and time of their birth. Most researchers agree that the onion has been cultivated for 5000 years or more. Since onions grew wild in various regions, they were probably consumed for thousands of years and domesticated simultaneously all over the world. Onions may be one of the earliest cultivated crops because they were less perishable than other foods of the time, were transportable, were easy to grow and could be grown in a variety of soils and climates. While the place and time of the onion's origin are still a mystery, there are many documents, from very early times, which describe its importance as a food and its use in art, medicine and mummification.



Onions range in size, color and taste depending upon their variety. There are generally two types of large, globe-shaped onions, *Allium cepa*, classified as spring/summer or storage onions. The former class includes those that are grown in warm climates and have mild or sweet tastes. Sweet onions have higher water content and are served either raw or cooked. Storage onions are grown in colder climates and, after harvesting, are dried, attaining dry, crisp skins. Storage onions contain high sulfur content and less moisture, so they can be kept in storage for longer periods of time. The storage onion is used in cooking, providing a sharper and more flavorful taste than sweet onions and are usually named by their color: white, yellow or red.

In addition to these large onions, there are also smaller varieties. Green onions are known by several names depending on region: "scallions," "green onions," "spring onions," or "bunching onions." Bunching onions may be produced from immature, thickly planted varieties of *Allium cepa* or from a perennial species that grows in bunches and does not form a real bulb, *Allium fistulosum* (also known as *Japanese* or *Welsh onions*).



Storage

- * Storage onions should be kept cool, dry, and in the dark; they should last well for up to one month.
- * Bunching or green onions are meant to be used fresh. Look for smooth, firm, white bulbs and bright green tops. Store unwashed onions, wrapped in a paper towel to help prevent their odor from spreading to other foods, in a plastic bag placed in the vegetable drawer of the refrigerator for up to 7 days.

Nutrition

Research has shown that onions are low in calories and are a source of dietary fiber. Fresh onions also contain vitamin C, with one medium onion providing 15 to 20 percent of the daily requirement. Additionally, onions can aid in disease prevention due to their antioxidant content. Antioxidants can reduce the risk of body degeneration and disease by inhibiting the damage caused by oxidative free radical chemical compounds to nutritional and bodily lipids, proteins and nucleic acids.



Preparation Tips:

- * In most instances, both the white end and green tops of the green onions can be used. Rinse the onions off under cold running water and then remove dried, wilted layers. Cut off damaged tops. Trim off the root ends. Onions are ready to be served whole or thinly sliced when called for in a recipe.
- * Bunching onions are well suited to use raw and thinly sliced in salads, or as additions to cooked foods, especially Oriental and Asian dishes. Sprinkle green onions and sesame seeds on plain rice.
- * They're also a delicious garnish for vegetable soups and with eggs, cheese and fish. They can be chopped fine and used on baked potatoes or added to mashed potatoes.
- * Another easy garnish is to cut off the root end of a scallion, and make several cuts downward, about one and one-half-inches long, through the root end in crisscross fashion to make a scallion flower.
- * Although green onions are generally eaten raw, they can also be grilled, sautéed, or used in stir-fries.
- * Bunching onions develop a succulent sweetness during the roasting process and can be served as an appetizer or a side dish. Wash them and discard any discolored areas. Toss them in a little extra virgin olive oil, lay them on a lightly oiled baking pan, and roast at 375°F for about 15 to 20 minutes, turning them frequently with a spatula. To avoid drying, you can cover them with aluminum foil, dull side up.

RECIPES

Spicy Kale-Almond Pesto and White-Bean Pasta

From Delicious Living Magazine, April 2005. Thanks Mallory!

1 bunch kale, washed and drained
4 ounces dried penne pasta
1/2-cup whole almonds, toasted
1 1/2 tablespoons garlic (about 5 large cloves)
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1/2-teaspoon salt
Juice of two lemons, divided
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 19-ounce can white (cannelloni) beans, rinsed and drained
1/8-teaspoon salt
1-teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
1/4-1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
Freshly ground black pepper



1. Cut lower stems from kale. Steam kale over 2 quarts boiling water for 5 to 7 minutes, until tender. Transfer to a colander to drain. Do not discard water. Add pasta to water on stove and return to a boil, stirring. When pasta is al dente, drain.
2. Meanwhile, place almonds in a food processor and process until well chopped. Add garlic, cheese, 1/2-teaspoon salt, and juice of one lemon. Carefully squeeze water from steamed kale and remove leaves from stems; discard stems. Pat leaves dry with paper towels and chop roughly. Pat dry again and add to food processor. Process until all ingredients are finely minced. With motor running, add 2 tablespoons olive oil in a stream until a thick pesto is formed.
3. In a medium bowl, toss beans with juice of one lemon and 1/8-teaspoon salt.
4. In a large skillet, heat 1-teaspoon olive oil over medium heat. Add crushed red pepper flakes and fry for about 1 minute. Add kale-almond pesto and cook, stirring, for about 30 seconds. If pesto seems too thick, thin with a small amount of water. Add pasta and beans and toss gently until thoroughly heated. Sprinkle with black pepper and serve immediately.

Mini Cheddar and Green Onion Quiches

Pie pastry for 2-crust pie
2 tablespoons butter, melted
1 cup thinly sliced green onion, divided
1 cup shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
3 large eggs
1 teaspoon salt
freshly ground black pepper, about 1/8 teaspoon
1 teaspoon Dijon or other spicy mustard
1 cup half-and-half, or half heavy cream and half whole milk

1. Grease and flour mini muffin pans and heat oven to 400°.
2. Roll pie crust out to about 1/8-inch thickness. Cut out 2 1/2-inch rounds; fit into the mini muffin cups. Brush pastry with butter.
3. Sprinkle about 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of green onion into each cup; top with a small amount of shredded cheese.
4. Whisk together the remaining ingredients; spoon 1 scant tablespoon into each cup, just short of the top of the pastry. Sprinkle each with a little more green onion.
5. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until set. *Makes about 36 mini quiches.*

Cheddar and Green Onion Mashed Potatoes

3 pounds baking potatoes, russets
3/4 cup half-and-half
4 tablespoons butter
1 cup shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
4 green onions, thinly sliced
salt and pepper, to taste



1. Cut potatoes into large chunks and put in a saucepan; rinse. Cover potatoes with water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and boil gently for about 20 minutes, until tender.
2. Drain the potatoes and transfer to a large bowl. Add the half-and-half and butter; beat until smooth. Stir in shredded cheese and sliced green onions. Add salt and pepper to taste. *Serves 6.*

Butternut Squash Gnocchi with Balsamic Brown Butter

Recipe courtesy *Emeril Lagasse, 2002. A CSA member told me about this recipe. It's surprisingly simple and delicious! Add a sprinkling of cinnamon for a touch of sweetness.* -- Mallory, Cal Poly Organic Farm

1 butternut squash, about 2 pounds, cooked and mashed
1/4-cup olive oil
3 teaspoons salt
1/4-teaspoon white pepper
1/2 teaspoon finely chopped fresh oregano
1/2 teaspoon finely chopped fresh sage
1/4-teaspoon ground nutmeg
2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more as needed

Balsamic Brown Butter:

2 sticks unsalted butter
1/4 cup minced shallots
1/4-cup balsamic vinegar
3 tablespoons chiffonade fresh sage
Salt

Garnishes:

Freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
1 tablespoon chopped chives
Shaved Parmesan

1. Work the olive oil, 1/2 teaspoon of the salt, white pepper, oregano, chopped sage and nutmeg into mashed butternut squash. Sprinkle the flour over the mixture and using your hands, work into a smooth, soft dough. Cover the dough with a damp kitchen towel and let rest for 30 to 45 minutes.
2. Turn dough onto a lightly floured surface and divide into 4 equal portions. Roll each portion between your palms into a long rope, about 3/4-inch thick. If the rope won't hold together, return it to the bowl with the remaining dough and work in more flour, 1 teaspoon at a time, as needed. Cut each rope of dough into 3/4-inch long pieces. Press each piece against the tines of a floured fork, and then drop into the lightly floured surface. (Gnocchi also can be placed in a single layer on a lightly floured baking sheet and refrigerated for several hours. Alternately, the gnocchi can be frozen for 1 hour then transferred to an airtight container and frozen for up to 1 month.)
3. In a large pot, bring 4 quarts of water and 2 teaspoons of salt to a low boil. Add the gnocchi in batches and cook just until they float to the top, 1 1/2 to 2 minutes (or 3 minutes for frozen gnocchi.)
4. For the Balsamic Brown Butter: In a medium saucepan, cook the butter over medium heat until brown bits form and it has a nutty aroma, about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and add the shallots, balsamic vinegar, and sage. Stir well. Adjust seasoning, to taste.
5. Remove the gnocchi from the water with a slotted spoon and dry on towels. Transfer to a large serving dish and gently toss to coat with the balsamic butter. Garnish with black pepper, parsley, chives, and shaved Parmesan.