



Cal Poly Organic Farm Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

Welcome to Week 25! As always, life on the farm is grand!

Featured Staff Member

I thought CSA members might like to know a little more about the students and staff that make all the great produce available to us. The first featured CPOF staff person is Bradley Booker. Brad is a Cal Poly grad student who has been working at the CPOF for a little over two years. At the end of this quarter (next week) he will have completed all class work for an MS in Agriculture – Specialization Crop Science. After completing 1 more experiment he will be writing his theses on No-till Vegetable Production.

What is your job at CPOF?

Crew Leader. The Crew Leader takes direction from the farm manager and sees that projects are completed.

Have there been any changes on the farm since you have worked there?

CSA membership has gotten a lot bigger so the number of people working has significantly increased. Terry Hooker, an original farm manager left which was a big surprise. The transition to new management has been seamless though.

Where were you brought up?

Grand Island, Nebraska, a city with a population of around 40,000 people which is in the middle of the state. It is the 3rd largest city in Nebraska.

How did you get from Nebraska to Cal Poly?

That's kind of a long story: After high school I joined the Marine Corps and served 6 years as a Signals Intelligence Specialist. I then attended the University of Mobile branch campus in Nicaragua and received my BA degree in Political Science. I soon realized my Political Science degree wasn't going to be of much practical use to me so when I met a person from Texas who was starting a farm I invested my savings and grew specialty vegetables for 2 ½ years. After that I worked for a year in Santa Barbara at Fairview Gardens, an organic urban farm and that is where I got interested in sustainable organic farming. I had a lot of questions about why and how some things on the farm happened, scientifically, and decided to come to Cal Poly.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Sticking out the farming enterprise in Nicaragua. Though the farm failed, I learned more in those 2 ½ years than at any other time in my life.

What has been the greatest influence on your life?

The many years I lived in Latin America. I came to appreciate people - social interaction - more and materialism less.

What do you value most in your friends?

That they are interesting - the diversity of their ideas and their differing points of view.

Fall/Winter Season 2006 - 2007

Week 25 Produce

4 March - 10 March

Kale, Toscana - Growing Grounds (full)
Leeks - Growing Grounds (full)
Honey- Cal Poly Honey Project
Bunched Onions- CPOF
Turnips, Purple Top- CPOF
Cabbage, green- CPOF
Frisee-CPOF
Water Cress- CPOF
Beets, Chiogga-CPOF
Kale, Red Russian- CPOF

What are your long-range goals?

Long-range, I would like to have my own farm, the location doesn't matter.

I would like to thank several farm employees and teachers and the CSA for helping me accomplish my goals at Cal Poly.

Something New In Your Boxes - Honey

The Cal Poly Honey

Honey naturally crystallizes especially in colder temperatures. Scientifically, it is a supersaturated solution of sugars which want to go to their lowest energy state, and that is also a crystallized state. There is often a misconception that crystallized honey is a honey that has somehow turned “bad” - this could not be any further from the truth.

Some honey floral sources are less prone to crystallization than others, for example black button sage honey, is very desirable in our industry for that reason and it also tastes excellent.

Unfortunately, due to the vagaries of nature we did not get much sage honey, but we made a terrific crop of summer honey of mixed floral sources that crystallizes rapidly. This honey is a mixture of yellow star thistle, toyon, and mustard.

Heating honey to the point that it melts every seed crystal tends to denature the enzymes that bees add and which give honey so much of its pleasant and delicate flavors. If one can get the crystallized honey out of the jar and eat it directly by spreading it on toast then it will retain more flavor than if it is heated to clarity. However, at times the honey in the honey bear gets hard as a rock and it becomes necessary to gently heat it up in order to use the handy dispenser.

To gently heat honey: fill a saucepan with water as high as the pan and honey container will allow (or just to the height of the honey). For gas stoves turn the heat as low as possible until the honey is liquefied. Shaking the honey around seems to help and it keeps your eye on it – it can take awhile. For glass jars – don't heat too rapidly or the cold honey and hot water interface will cause the glass to crack. “Gently” heat the honey. Once the honey starts to melt in the glass jar the temperature can be increased. Melting the plastic honey bears at high temperature tends to disfigure the container. Using a microwave to heat honey is a “no - no” and turns it into something that resembles honey but tastes like something unpleasant – possibly leaching plastic into the product.

A little known fact about the Cal Poly Honey Bee Project is that we are on our 3rd year without any petrochemical, and / or antibiotic treatments. We are utilizing genetic strains of honeybees (Russian, SMR and Hygienic) and our own survivor stock that are naturally tolerant of the Varroa mite, and the many viruses associated with this devastating pest. Although we have significant winter losses and attrition we feel proud to offer this honey produced on Campus in the spirit of sustainability. Our goal is to provide the honeybee industry an example of sustainability and leadership through example – easier said than done.

Best regards, Scott Jeffreys

Director Cal Poly Honeybee Project

Requests and Contributions

New Request: How can frisee and escarole be used?

Contributions: Wow! The response to requests for recipes using butternut squash, for both soup and ravioli, was wonderful. Luckily I still have a butternut squash or two so I can't wait to try some of these recipes. Thank you all so much.

The first two soup recipes are from Jenni Metzger who says "the first soup gets rave reviews whenever I make it!"

Both are from Cooking Light magazine and can be served either pureed or not

Butternut Squash-White Bean Soup

Cream adds a smooth finish to the soup, while crumbled bacon and toasted pumpkinseeds lend a salty crunch.

3 bacon slices
1 cup chopped onion
2/3 cup chopped celery
3 garlic cloves, minced
4 cups (3/4-inch) cubed peeled butternut squash (about 1 1/2 pounds)
1/4 cup dry white wine
4 cups fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon ground red pepper
1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
1/4 cup whipping cream
1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 (15-ounce) cans Great Northern beans, rinsed and drained
3 tablespoons unsalted pumpkinseed kernels, toasted

Cook bacon in a Dutch oven over medium heat until crisp. Remove the bacon from pan, reserving 2 teaspoons of drippings in pan; crumble the bacon, and set aside. Add onion, celery, and garlic to pan; cook 3 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally. Add squash; cook 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add wine; cook until liquid almost evaporates. Stir in broth, cumin, red pepper, cinnamon, and cloves; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer 5 minutes or until squash is tender. Stir in cream, oregano, salt, black pepper, and beans; bring to a boil. Remove from heat. Sprinkle each serving with bacon and pumpkinseeds. Can also top with cilantro pesto, sour cream or other nut

Yield: 6 servings (serving size: 1 1/2 cups)

NUTRITION PER SERVING

CALORIES 324(30% from fat); FAT 10.7g (sat 4.3g,mono 3.4g,poly 2.1g); PROTEIN 17.7g; CHOLESTEROL 18mg; CALCIUM 129mg; SODIUM 774mg; FIBER 9.2g; IRON 4.1mg; CARBOHYDRATE 42.2g

Butternut Bisque with Cider Syrup

2 large butternut squash (about 4 1/2 pounds)
1/2 cup grated peeled fresh ginger
3 cups water
2 1/2 cups thinly sliced leek (about 4 large)
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup whole milk

Bring 2 1/2 cups cider to a boil in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook until reduced to 1/2 cup (about 20 minutes); cool. Cover and chill.

Preheat oven to 400°.

Cut squash in half lengthwise; discard seeds and membrane. Place squash halves, cut sides down, on a baking sheet; bake at 400° for 1 hour or until tender. Cool. Remove pulp; set aside. Place grated ginger on several layers of paper towels. Gather the edges of paper towels together; squeeze paper towel bag over a small bowl, reserving ginger juice. Discard solids. Set aside. Combine 1 1/2 cups cider, water, leek, and salt in a Dutch oven. Bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 40 minutes or until leek is soft.

Add squash, ginger juice, and milk to leek mixture, stirring well. Cook 15 minutes. Place half of squash mixture in a blender or food processor; process until smooth. Pour pureéd squash mixture into a large bowl. Repeat procedure with remaining squash mixture. Return pureéd squash mixture to pan. Keep warm. Ladle soup into bowls; drizzle with cider syrup.

Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 1 cup soup and 1 tablespoon syrup)

NUTRITION PER SERVING

CALORIES 149(8% from fat); FAT 1.4g (sat 0.7g,mono 0.3g,poly 0.2g); PROTEIN 3.3g;
CHOLESTEROL 4mg; CALCIUM 147mg; SODIUM 177mg; FIBER 2.9g; IRON 2mg;
CARBOHYDRATE 34.5g

From Wendy Waldron

Cream of Butternut Squash Soup with Roasted Garlic

1/2 bulb garlic (6-8 cloves tin their papery covering), unpeeled
1/2 T olive oil
2 1/2 - 3 lbs butternut squash, peeled, seeded and rough cut into 1-2" cubes (6-8 cups)
1/4 c olive oil
1 shallot, thinly sliced
2-3 T fresh sage leaves, coarsely chopped
1/4 t fresh thyme, coarsely chopped (or pinch of dried thyme)
1/4 c parsley, coarsely chopped
4-6 cups vegetable or chicken stock (canned is fine) or water
1/2 t salt
1/2 c crème fraiche -This can be purchased already prepared (my preference) or prepared at home. Instructions for home preparation follow the soup instructions.

Heat oven to 375°. Cut top off 1/2 garlic bulb, drizzle with 1/2 T olive oil and wrap in foil. Place in preheated oven for 20-30 minutes, until garlic is soft and golden. Remove from oven, cool.

Heat $\frac{1}{4}$ c olive oil in large, heavy-bottomed sauté or casserole pan over medium-high heat. When oil is shimmering, add shallot and herbs, lower heat to medium-low and sauté until shallot has a deep golden brown color. Add squash, salt and enough stock or water to cover. Simmer, covered, until squash is soft and can be easily pierced, 25-30 minutes. Turn off heat.

Squeeze roasted garlic from bulb into food processor or blender. Puree it with about 2 cups of cooked squash and enough stock to process. (Blend carefully; ingredients are hot.) Pour into large bowl. Repeat until all squash is pureed. (If you don't have a processor or blender, cooked squash and roasted garlic can be squished by hand with a potato masher.) Return squash puree to pan and blend with remaining stock. Turn heat to low and whisk in crème fraiche. Heat thoroughly without boiling. Salt and pepper to taste.

Serve immediately. Garnish with fresh ground pepper, chopped parsley and/or croutons.

French cultured cream

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups heavy cream

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup low-fat (1 percent to 2 percent) buttermilk

Pour cream and buttermilk into a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup jar with a lid. Replace the lid, shake well, and allow mixture to rest at room temperature for 6 to 8 hours. Refrigerate for at least 24 hours before using; the mixture will reach its optimal thickness after 4 or 5 days.

And From: Janet George

Butternut Squash Ravioli with Toasted Pecans and Sage

From Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone by Deborah Madison

1 butternut squash, about 2 pounds

Vegetable oil for the squash

2 tablespoons butter

Salt and freshly milled pepper

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup freshly grated Parmesan

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup dried bread crumbs

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds fresh egg pasta

Brown butter with pecans and sage

4 to 6 tablespoons butter

1 garlic clove, thinly sliced

2 tablespoons chopped sage

2 tablespoons chopped parsley

2 teaspoons chopped thyme

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup pecans, toasted and coarsely chopped

Freshly grated Parmesan or pecorino Romano

Preheat the oven to 375F. Slice the squash in two, remove the seeds, and brush the cut surfaces with oil. Bake cut side down on a sheet pan until soft, 30 to 40 minutes. Scoop out the flesh and measure 2 cups. Beat it with the butter until smooth and season well with salt and pepper. (If the squash seems watery, dry it out by stirring it in a skillet over high heat to get rid of extra moisture.) Add cheese and bread crumbs and mix well.

Roll out the dough and form into 2-inch ravioli circles or crescents, fill with squash mixture.

In a skillet large enough to hold the finished pasta, melt 4 to 6 tablespoons butter with the garlic, sage, parsley, and thyme. Cook until the butter is lightly browned and has a nutty aroma.

Cook the ravioli in gently boiling salted water for 4 to 5 minutes, then drain.

Add the of pecans to the skillet with the remaining chopped parsley, then add the ravioli to the sauce. Cook for 30 seconds, then serve dusted with Parmesan.