



Sogn Valley Farm

CSA Newsletter Sept. 27-28, 2016

www.sognvalleyfarm.com

Greetings,

Here we are, at the second-to-last CSA box of the summer season. How fast it went! We hope some of you will join us to celebrate the season at our on-farm potluck and tour **this Sunday, Oct. 2, from 4-7:30 pm.**

And if the thought of the CSA ending brings you sadness (rather than a sigh of relief) know that we have a few fall CSA shares available. Ok, that's the last plug, I promise :)

The fall weather has arrived. It's 45 degrees outside as I finish up this newsletter on Tuesday morning. All crops grow more slowly at cool temperatures, but cold weather has a differential effect on crop quality. This weather is just plain bad for peppers, tomatoes, and other warm-season crops, which suffer when temperatures drop below 50 degrees. Others, such as root crops (beets, carrots, radishes, etc.), brassicas (broccoli, kale, cabbage, etc.), and greens (spinach, lettuce, arugula), actually improve in quality.

I have hinted in a couple of newsletters that some crops get sweeter in the fall. I figured I'd give you a quick primer on the underlying chemistry of that phenomenon:

You all have probably sprinkled salt on your front steps during the winter to melt ice. This works because salt lowers the freezing point of water, making it liquid at temperatures below 32°F. This happens because salt molecules act as solute, thereby preventing the water molecules from packing into the dense arrangement associated with solid ice.

Sugar is also a solute, and would work like salt if you spread it on your steps during the winter. This "anti-freeze" characteristic of salt and sugar also helps explain why the aforementioned cool-season vegetables get sweeter in the fall.

In response to lower temperatures and shorter day length, plants produce sugar in

What's in the box?

Sweet potatoes: As promised in last week's newsletter, we've given you some sweet potatoes! They have only gone through a few days of the curing process, which converts starch to sugar, heals scrapes and wounds acquired during harvest, and thickens the skin. As a result, these sweet potatoes are better suited to savory dishes than ones that emphasize the sweetness of these tubers. Try this week's recipe! Note: we found that a few of the sweet potatoes developed a tinge of green on their skin during the first day of curing, before we covered our humidity chamber with a dark fabric. Unlike potatoes, which produce a toxic alkaloid called solanine when exposed to sun, sweet potatoes do not contain this compound and are thus safe to eat. However, next year, the sweet potatoes stay in the dark from day one! Sweet potatoes should be stored at room temperature, out of direct light.

Broccoli (full shares) or Romanesco cauliflower (half shares): Full shares are receiving another helping of broccoli, while half shares are receiving Romanesco cauliflower. I wish we could have given half share boxes more Romanesco in the box two weeks ago, so I'm glad to be able to provide another head this week.

Salad mix with arugula: We're spicing it up a bit by adding some arugula to the lettuce mix this week. Arugula has a distinctive peppery flavor, which should be noticeable but not overbearing in combination with the lettuce.

Leeks: We use leeks in soups and stews, or in sautés as a more flavorful alternative to onions. We've washed these, but there tends to be some hidden soil just underneath the layer where the leaf meets the shaft, which should be rinsed before use.

Curly parsley: As we enter "soup season," we thought we would give you one more bunch of parsley. Use as a garnish, or in tabbouleh or green smoothies.

Butternut squash: Butternut squash is, in my opinion, one of the more versatile winter squashes. It can be peeled and diced up, unlike other hard-rinded and ribbed squashes. Our favorite ways to eat it are roasted (like sweet potatoes) and in soup. Check out this week's butternut squash soup recipe.

Green cabbage: Make up a stir-fry or slaw, or hang onto it until next week and make some borscht with the beets you'll be receiving.

Celeriac: We had a market customer say he prefers celeriac to potatoes for making hash browns. Grate and fry up with some butter and garlic—sounds good to me! Also, try substituting for the celery in this week's squash soup recipe. Note: Last time you received celeriac, I wrote that you may observe "hollow heart;" we have noticed that some roots may also have patches of soft brown tissue inside. While this can be pared out before use, we gave you multiple celeriacs to improve your chances of receiving a defect-free root.

Colored bell peppers (full shares only): Possibly the last sweet peppers of the year!

On Deck

Some of the items you'll likely see in your last box of the summer season.

Spinach — Beets — Turnips — Daikon radish — Onions — Potatoes — Cauliflower (a big maybe)

the cytosol (the liquid contained within each cell in plant tissue). This is crucial because water expands when frozen, and the cytosol (which is comprised mostly of water), if frozen, would cause rupture of cell walls and subsequent plant death. By pumping sugars into the cytosol, the freezing point of water is lowered and the plant can withstand subfreezing temperatures without harm. Warm-season plants, such as tomatoes and basil, do not have this adaptation, because freezing temperatures never occur in the environment in which they evolved.

Now, let's all be thankful that vegetable plants evolved to use sugar, rather than salt, as their anti-freeze solute of choice!

Enjoy this crisp, fall weather,

Dana

Curry Roasted Sweet Potatoes

This has become a fall and winter staple in our home. We rarely make it the same way twice, often playing around with complementary spices, such as cumin, coriander, cinnamon, turmeric, ginger, garlic, and cayenne. Here's a basic recipe for you to start with.

Ingredients

2-3 lbs sweet potatoes
1 tsp curry powder (more if you want a more bold flavor)
2 Tbsp coconut oil, softened in microwave or saucepan if hardened
Sea salt (start with 1/2 tsp, and add more to taste)

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Peel sweet potatoes, if desired, and chop into a medium dice.
2. Combine sweet potatoes, coconut oil, curry powder, and sea salt.
3. Spread out in a single layer on a baking sheet and bake for 30-45 minutes, stirring after 20 minutes.

Butternut Squash Soup

This has been our go-to squash soup for years. It's more on the savory side, calling for onion, celery, carrot, and potato, unlike many recipes that call for apples and other sweeteners. It uses several items included in last week's box, which you may have left over

Ingredients

2 tablespoons butter
1 small onion, chopped (or half a leek, thinly sliced)
1 stalk celery, chopped (or half a celeriac, peeled and chopped)
1-2 medium carrots, chopped
2 medium potatoes, cubed
1 medium butternut squash - peeled, seeded, and cubed
1 quart chicken or vegetable stock
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Directions

1. Melt the butter in a large pot, and cook the onion, celery, carrot, potatoes, and squash 5 minutes, or until lightly browned. Pour in enough of the chicken stock to cover vegetables. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover pot, and simmer 40 minutes, or until all vegetables are tender.
2. Transfer the soup to a blender, and blend until smooth. (Alternatively, use a stick/hand blender to puree the soup right in the pot.) Return to pot, and mix in any remaining stock to attain desired consistency. Season with salt and pepper.

Recipe source: <http://allrecipes.com/recipe/77981/butternut-squash-soup-ii/>