

Farm News

I hope that we aren't saying good-bye to too many members this week. **This is the last week for the Spring-Summer 25-week season** and I've enjoyed getting to know so many new members over the last few months. I hope you all have enjoyed meeting your farmers, visiting the farms, picking strawberries, preparing new recipes and eating new vegetables. If you are like me, I even made some new friends when I had to give away the abundance on weeks I was out of town, lol! If you want to continue to be a part of the Plant It Forward community, it's not too late to sign up for the next season. We've added a special season that will cover the rest of the summer, so check out our website for information about the 10-week summer season.

<http://plant-it-forward.org/our-produce/farm-share/>

** Look for an email with information about the next season's share and please let me know if you have any questions.

On other news, some of the farmers went to visit the First Presbyterian Church Vacation Bible School last week. The class of 4th and 5th graders are learning about the environment and how they relate to it. They built and painted some compost tumblers and generously donated them to us. When Guy, Habi and Naslyne (Constant's nephew) went to meet them we had a lot of fun talking about their favorite vegetables and fruits, about their gardens and our farms and about all the languages the farmers speak. Did you know that Guy speaks 7 languages, including Portuguese and Russian, plus several dialects from the Congo. Habi also speaks 5 different dialects and they all sound different. I'm amazed at the journeys all of our farmers have had and feel very honored to have them in our community now.



Have a happy and safe Fourth of July from all of us!

Chrisine, Habi, Alimassi, Elody, Sarment, Constant (Naslayne), Guy, Roy, Adrien, Albert, Cathy, Kassy, Colleen and Teresa

RECIPES

These are the most bountiful vegetables this week: Cucumbers, Malabar Spinach, Squash, Eggplant, Longbeans, and Mint.

Eggplant and Basil “Caponata” Salad

Ingredients

1 1/4 lb Eggplant, unpeeled, cut into ¾ in. dice
 1 Large Red Bell Pepper, seeded and cut into ¾ in. pieces
 1 large Yellow or Orange Bell Pepper, seeded and cut into ¾ in. pieces
 1/3 C, plus 1 tsp Extra-Virgin Olive Oil
 1 ¼ tsp Kosher Salt

2 tsp fresh lemon juice
 2 tsp soy sauce
 2 tsp dark brown sugar
 ½ tsp unsweetened cocoa powder
 2 tsp finely chopped fresh ginger
 1 ½ tsp minced fresh garlic
 2 Tbsp coarsely chopped fresh parsley
 12 large fresh basil leaves, torn into ¾ in. pieces
 (I often substitute mint)

From *Fast, Fresh, & Green*, Susie Middleton

This is one of my favorite vegetable cookbooks because it gives you some basic cooking directions for different preparations, plus some fabulous recipes. Ms. Middleton is an editor-at-large for Fine Cooking magazine.

Preparation

1. Preheat the oven to 475 degrees (F). Line a large heavy-duty rimmed sheet pan with a piece of parchment paper
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine the eggplant, bell peppers, 1/3 c olive oil and salt. Mix thoroughly, transfer to the sheet pan, and arrange the vegetables evenly in one layer. Roast the vegetables, flipping or stirring once with a spatula halfway through cooking, until the eggplant is shrunken and nicely browned, about 30 minutes. The peppers will be softened and somewhat browned on the skin side. Let cool for 5 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine the remaining ingredients (except the herbs). Whisk vigorously to mix and dissolve the cocoa. (This may take a few minutes.)
4. Transfer the vegetables back to the large mixing bowl and drizzle the dressing over them while stirring and folding them gently with a silicone spatula. It may look like a lot of liquid, but continue to stir gently, and the vegetables will absorb most of all of it. Add the parsley and basil and stir well to incorporate. Transfer to a serving platter and serve warm or at room temperature.

Notes: I often leave out the peppers and just make the eggplant. Then I use this as a topping on some pasta with some additional tomatoes.

Malabar Spinach Smoothie

Ingredients

1 cup grapes
 1/2 cup pineapple chunks
 2 cups packed, fresh Malabar spinach
 1/2 ripe banana, peeled
 1/2 cup water
 1/2 cup ice cubes

- A couple of mint leaves would be good too!

Instructions

1. Blend together and enjoy!

Roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) Leaves



Roselle is native from India to Malaysia, where it is commonly cultivated, and must have been carried at an early date to Africa. It has been widely distributed in the Tropics and Subtropics of both hemispheres, and in many areas of the West Indies and Central America has become naturalized.

The young leaves and tender stems of roselle are eaten raw in salads or cooked as greens alone or in combination with other vegetables or with meat or fish. They are also added to curries as seasoning. The leaves of green roselle are marketed in large quantities in Dakar, West Africa. The juice of the boiled and strained leaves and stems is utilized for the same purposes as the juice extracted from the calyces.

<http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/roselle.html>

Malabar Spinach



Malabar spinach (*Basella alba* or *rubra*, a redder variety) is actually not spinach at all. It's not even related! Well, OK, it's distantly related, but it doesn't taste much like spinach at all. When it's raw Malabar spinach has very fleshy, thick leaves that are juicy and crisp with tastes of citrus and pepper. When cooked, though, Malabar spinach does look and taste a lot more like regular spinach. It doesn't wilt as fast, though, and it holds up better in soups and stir-fries.

<http://www.thekitchn.com/what-is-malabar-spinach-91477>