

Cobble Hill CSA

community supported agriculture 

Newsletter

www.cobblehillcsa.org

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Last summer I had the opportunity to attend a screening of a great documentary, *The Real Dirt on Farmer John* at Rooftop Films (www.rooftopfilms.com). *The Real Dirt on Farmer John* is the award-winning true story of third-generation American farmer John Peterson's hero's journey of success, tribulation, failure and rebirth, through his childhood in the '50s, the tumultuous '60s, the hippie-influenced '70s, and the farm-crisis '80s, culminating in his transformation-based creation of a biodynamic, organic CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farm serving 1,500 families in the Chicago area with weekly fresh produce.

It's an engaging film, in part because Peterson doesn't quite fit the stereotype of the typical mid-western farmer. Unlike his neighbors, who in the past rewarded his eccentric ways with accusations of drug running and devil worship, Peterson sees farming as a celebratory and creative act. An iconic image from the film features Peterson driving his tractor around the farm, resplendent in a pink feather boa.

If Peterson were merely a quirky guy, however, this wouldn't be much of a story. His efforts to save his family farm and to broaden education about sustainable

food and farming are heroic. In addition to providing food to its CSA shareholders, Angelic Organics, provides a range of workshops and training opportunities for the public and professional farmers alike.

Like many CSAs, Angelic Organics produces weekly newsletter, but wanted to provide their shareholders with a more comprehensive resource. The result being that this year, they published *Farmer John's Cookbook: The Real Dirt on Vegetables*, which includes seasonal recipes; information on storage, preparation, culinary uses, and partner foods for a wide variety of produce; commentary from Farmer John, his workers, and shareholders; as well as essays on the history of Angelic Organics, biodynamics, and anthroposophical nutrition. I've only just delved into it and I'm already hooked.

The recipes in this issue are adapted (okay, shortened, since we don't have the luxury of space) from *Real Dirt*. For more information about Peterson and Angelic Organics go to www.angelicorganics.com. You can order the cookbook from their site or on www.amazon.com.

Amy Blankstein

Notes From Green Thumb Farm

August is here and so is the hot dry weather. No rain in the last two weeks has begun to stress out some of our crops, especially the greens—lettuces, chards, beets, and herbs. With our wide selection of crops, however, many are still doing well.

Tomatoes are just starting so we should have plenty for the next couple months. Summer squash are doing well with the heat, as are our beans—the soy, lima, and cranberry beans are growing nicely. Eggplants are beginning, cucumbers are continuing and melons are still a ways away.

Our fall crops—oriental greens, rutabagas, and turnips have all been planted, as well as our broccoli, brussels sprouts, kales and cabbages. With a little bit of rain, all will be well.



Organically yours,
Farmer Bill

2007 Farm Bill Moves to Senate

On July 26, the House passed a version of the 2007 farm bill, which, while making some progress in terms of nutrition, food security, supporting local food systems, environmental and conservation issues, has fallen far short of expectations by a broad coalition of groups pushing for stronger reforms, particularly regarding enormously costly and—according to a wide political spectrum—archaic farm subsidies.

The debate continues as the bill moves to the Senate, which will begin deliberations in September. Senators Brown (D-OH) and Durbin (D-IL) introduced the Farm Safety Net Improvement Act of 2007 this week. Ralph Grossi, president of the American Farmland Trust, describes the Brown-Durbin bill as progress. "It's a real commodity reform proposal that AFT has been working on for over two years," says Grossi.

We'll keep you posted on commentary and developments as the summer progresses.

Fennel

Fennel, which plays a dual role as both vegetable and herb, is slightly sweet with a delicate anise flavor. The leaves, the stalks and the bulb can all be used for cooking. To store the fernlike leaves, cut the stalks off at the bulb, they can then be placed in a small amount of water and loosely covered with a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to five days. The unwashed bulb, wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge will keep for at least a week.

Fennel can be eaten raw in salads, braised, sauteed, or grilled. It goes nicely in cream sauces, with lemon, and fish, but complements a wide variety of vegetables, legumes and meats.

According to the Farmer John's Cookbook: The Real Dirt on Vegetables, a traditional Italian appetizer is raw fennel, brushed with olive oil and lemon juice, sprinkled with salt and pepper.

Baked Zucchini Halves Stuffed with Wild Rice & Quinoa

This is a great side dish for roast chicken or grilled fish. Remember to rinse the quinoa thoroughly before cooking it in order to remove all traces of its natural coating that can cause a bitter taste.

- 1 large zucchini, halved lengthwise
- 1 1/2 cups cooked quinoa
- 1/2 cup cooked wild rice
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 1/2 teaspoon olive oil
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 rib fennel or celery, chopped
- 3/4 cup fresh bread crumbs
- 1 teaspoon salt
- butter (optional)

Remove and reserve the center from each half of the zucchini, being careful not to puncture the bottom or sides. Transfer the hollow sides, cut side up to a baking dish.

Coarsely chop the zucchini centers and transfer to a large bowl. Add the quinoa, wild rice, and Parmesan, stir until well-combined.

Heat the oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion and celery, cook for 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Stir in the bread crumbs and salt. Continue to cook, stirring constantly, until the bread crumbs are well mixed in and heated through, about 1 minute.

Add the bread crumb mixture to the quinoa/rice mixture and combine.

Stuff the hollow zucchini halves with the mixture. Cover with aluminum foil, bake for 40 minutes.

Remove the foil. If you wish, dot each half with a pat of butter. Continue baking until zucchini is very tender and the filling is golden brown, about 10 to 20 minutes. Serve warm.

Roasted Eggplant & Tomato w/ Pine Nuts

This recipe can be served over greens or with toasted whole-grain bread or pita on the side. The addition of a few lumps of creamy goat cheese makes for a tasty topping.

1/4 cup roughly chopped pine nuts or slivered almonds

1 lb. eggplant (about 1 medium eggplant)

1/2 lb. ripe tomatoes (about 2 small or 1 large tomato), stems removed, seeds squeezed out, diced

1/4 cup apple juice or white grape juice

3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley

2 tablespoons grainy mustard

2 tablespoons fresh lemon or lime juice

2 cloves garlic, minced or pressed

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 375°. Toast the nuts in a dry skillet over high heat until they start to brown and become fragrant, about 1 minute. Transfer to a dish to cool.

Brush a baking sheet with a light coating of olive oil. For a larger eggplant, quarter it lengthwise and cut each quarter into two or more long narrow slices; for a smaller eggplant, cut lengthwise into six or eight slices. Arrange slices on the baking sheet; pile diced tomato around the eggplant. Roast until the eggplant is soft, 30 to 40 minutes.

In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, juice, balsamic vinegar, parsley, mustard, lemon juice, garlic and salt until the dressing is thick.

Remove the vegetables from the oven and flip the eggplant pieces over with tongs. Spoon about two thirds of the dressing over the cut surfaces. Set aside to cool.

Once the eggplant has reached room temperature, transfer slices to individual plates, divide the tomatoes evenly among the plates and drizzle the remaining dressing over the tomatoes. Sprinkle on the toasted nuts and season each serving generously with salt and pepper. Serve at room temperature.

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