



# ONE POTATO TWO

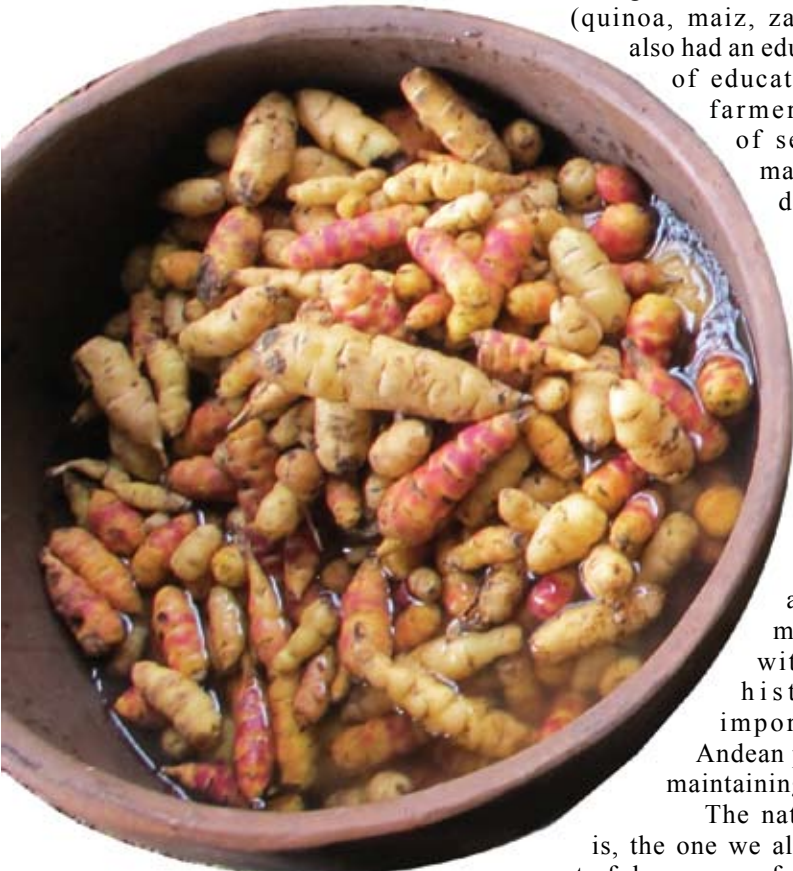
NEWS FROM THE FIELDS OF DRIFTLESS ORGANICS

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*Week Ten! To be perfectly honest, we are kind of hurting here as we enter week 10 of the CSA season (and something like week 8 of no rain). Well, that's not exactly true - we have had some rain - but it has been a far cry from enough to keep the plants healthy and productive. We've been irrigating when and where we can, and watching stuff struggle where we can't irrigate. This is just another reminder of how vulnerable we truly are to the whims of nature. But alas, I think we'd all rather have it this way than to have flooding. And, this mini-drought highlights why it is so important to have diversity on a farm - our kale (which really loves and need lots of water) might be dying, but our tomatoes (which thrive in drier conditions) have never been looked better! Speaking of diversity...*

## TOBY ENGEL GOES TO ECUADOR

**W**hen you think of Ecuador you probably think of the Galapagos. Blue footed boobies, tortoises penguins, and a myriad of other unique and exotic species.



*Mijorka, a relative to potatoes*

While the biodiversity of the Islands is remarkable, I want to write about the biodiversity of the mainland, and the work being done by people in Ecuador to preserve the remarkable range of native varieties of edible foods. The nation of Ecuador for example has permanently banned transgenic seeds/plants as stated by the 2008 constitution.

My name is Tobiah Engel, the younger brother of two of the bossmen, Noah and Josh. I spent the last 4 months studying and doing an internship in and around Quito, Ecuador.

My internship landed me with the Red de Guardianes de Semillas (Network of guardians of seeds, and hereinto referred to as 'La Red'). This organization is a network of seed banks around Ecuador, Southern Colombia and Northern Peru. They focused on educating farmers of the importance of collecting and saving seeds instead of always buying seeds from seed giants. To that end, in addition to offering over 400 varieties of seeds (quinoa, maiz, zanahorias), they also had an educational mission of educating Ecuadorian farmers in the ways of seed saving and maintaining a bio-diverse farm

Although my work with the organization was regulated to cleaning seed as they came in, taking photos of them and other very general 'interny stuff' I wanted to write a little about my experience with Ecuador and historically the importance that the Andean people placed on maintaining biodiversity.

The natural world, that is, the one we all live in and are part of, has a way of causing things to go extinct. Floods, fires, hurricanes, time

## THIS WEEK'S BOX

- Banana Peppers
- Cilantro
- Collard Greens
- Cucumbers
- Garlic
- Green Bell Peppers
- Jalapeno Peppers
- Mixed Bag o' Tomatoes
- Purple Carrots
- Sungold or Red Saladette Tomatoes
- Sweet Corn
- Red Onions
- Red or Yellow Watermelon

and giant seed companies are all major factors. That is not to say however, that as a part of this natural world we can not take our own steps to maintain important plants genetic lineage. What the Andean culture of South America has long known is that having a large number of varieties of potato, quinoa and other native plants would allow people to have food even if one variety or the another became diseased or failed for some unknown reason. In our modern, western culture (and other modern cultures, Ecuador included) this practice of saving seeds has somehow escaped us. The work of maintaining a seed bank is not easy, and getting the seeds from farms, and then back into the hands of farmers even trickier. The payoff is immeasurable however.

The goal, in the indigenous community that I lived is to become sovereign. One of the specific goals of my community, La comunidad Tola Chica, is to be food sovereign. They have built a community seed bank (separate from La Red), and have a working community school which helps to instruct the young children in the ways of seed saving, amongst other sustainability teachings.

The take away thing I learned in my experience in Ecuador was that people around the world are very concerned with the power and influence of giant seed firms, and that a very effective way of combating them is to simply remove them completely from your farming practices. Perhaps we can learn a thing or two and start building our own store of seeds in each community around the Midwest? It can be done.

*--Tobiah Engel*

## Tom's Fresh Tomato Salsa

2 medium red slicer tomatoes or  
4 roma tomatoes (or combination of  
the two)  
1/2 red onion, coarsely chopped  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 - 3 jalapeno peppers, finely chopped  
(seeds removed if you don't like it too  
hot)  
1 banana pepper, finely chopped  
3 Tbsp. cilantro, chopped  
1 lime, juiced  
1/2 cup black olives, chopped.  
salt to taste

Mix all ingredients & let sit for an  
hour for flavors to marry. This salsa  
will produce a fair amount of juice  
that you may want to drain off. Great  
with chips or quesadillas.

## Cucumber & Green Olive Relish

2 cups cucumbers, seeded (& peeled if  
you wish) & cut into small dice (1/4" or  
less)  
1/3 c. green olives, coarsely chopped  
1/4 c. onion, coarsely chopped  
1/4 c. green pepper  
1/4 c. fresh parsley, chopped  
2 Tbsp. fresh mint OR oregano,  
chopped  
juice & zest of 1/2 lemon  
1 Tbsp. white wine vinegar  
1/2 tsp. sugar  
salt & pepper to taste  
1 tsp. olive or sunflower oil

Combine lemon juice, zest, vinegar,  
sugar, salt & pepper in a medium  
bowl & whisk until sugar & salt are  
dissolved. Add oil while whisking. Toss  
in remaining ingredients & serve or  
refrigerate. Serve with grilled chicken,  
crackers, or combine with salad greens,  
chickpeas, & feta cheese for a main  
course salad.

**Banana Peppers** - You will be getting  
two of these yellowish-green peppers  
that are slightly elongated and mildly-  
spicy. They add a nice tang to your salsas  
or to chili.

**Cilantro** - we just had to borrow some  
cilantro from a neighboring farm so you  
could all make some salsa verde with your  
tomatillos (we insist). Check out the recipe  
below. Store your bunch of cilantro in a  
plastic bag in your refrigerator.

**Collard Greens** - strip the leaves from  
their stems & cook up like you would kale  
- steam, saute with garlic & white wine, or  
add to stir-fries, soups, pasta, or sauces. If  
you're a juicer, I throw it in carrot-ginger-  
apple juice a lot. Store in plastic in the  
fridge & use up within a few days.

**Cucumbers** - hopefully you're not  
getting sick of them yet. Check out our  
website's recipe page for some yummy  
bread & butter refrigerator pickles you  
can put away for later, or try the cucumber  
green olive relish recipe below. Store on  
the counter for a day or two or the fridge  
for a couple more.

**Garlic** - The garlic is now cured, so it can  
be used and stored as you would normal  
garlic that you buy at the store. Best to be  
stored out of sunlight, in a cupboard.

**Green Bell Peppers** - great for topping  
pizza, nachos, or salads or adding to eggs,  
pasta, etc. Store on counter for a couple  
days or fridge for longer. Easy to freeze  
- simply chop up & throw it in a freezer  
bag - no blanching necessary.

**Jalapeno Peppers** - You will be getting 4  
of these little green peppers and they are  
to add some spice to your salsas. To be  
safe, you should use gloves when chop-  
ping up the jalapenos, as the oils may  
burn your skin. If no gloves are available,  
I highly recommend washing your hands  
thoroughly after chopping.

**Purple Carrots** - This is a new variety  
of purple carrot that we are trying this  
year that actually tastes pretty good!  
The purple is just on the skin, so don't  
peel them if you want to preserve their  
beauty. Best to store them in the plastic  
bag they are in.

**Sungold or Red Saladette Tomatoes**  
- Great in salads or as a snack. Store  
on your counter and pop 'em in your  
mouth everytime you walk past.

**Sweet Corn** - I say this every year, but  
I really recommend making *elote* with  
some of your sweet corn. Boil as nor-  
mal and then (in this order): rub a lime  
wedge over the ear, add mayonaise,  
chili or chipotle powder and then par-  
mesan cheese. It is so freakin' good.

**Mini "Edonis" Melon** - These little  
guys won't last long so eat 'em up.  
They are a mini-cantaloupe type wa-  
termelon that we are trying this year  
for the first time. Let us know what  
you think!

**Mixed Tomatoes** - please don't refriger-  
ate your tomatoes - just store them in a  
bowl or a paper bag on the counter. We  
are giving you a variety, of romas, slic-  
ers, and heirloom tomatoes. For more  
info on each type, visit our website and  
follow the links to the recipes page. If  
you can't get to them all, chop them up  
& freeze them for later use.

**Red Onions** - are tasty & beautiful fresh  
in salads & sandwiches & salsa, but also  
caramelize beautifully as they're a little  
bit higher in sugar content than yellow  
storage onions.

**Red or Yellow Watermelon** - There's  
nothing quite like a cold watermelon  
on a hot day. Store in your fridge and  
eat it up quick!

**HEY FOLKS!** Just a friendly reminder to please keep bringing back those empty CSA boxes!  
The more we can reuse, the more we save and the more we can keep those share costs down.  
**THANK YOU** from your farmers at Driftless Organics.