



ONE POTATO TWO

NEWS FROM THE FIELDS OF DRIFTLESS ORGANICS

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Week Eleven! What a difference a week can make. Last week, I was complaining about how desperately we needed rain - and now this week I can't stop talking about how good everyone feels and how great the crops look after Saturday's 2" of rain. We were blessed by this for sure, and these sunny 80 degree days are the icing on the cake. Things on the farm are cruising right along as we shift our focus to almost completely harvest mode. Sure, there are still all of those fall crops to tend to, but at this time of year, it is a LOT easier to keep the weeds at bay and as such, we have more time to reap the bounty that we have worked so hard for. One crop that we are so thankful to be reaping, is TOMATOES!!!

WELCOME BACK, TOMATOES!

To CSA members who have been with us for more than one season, you know of our past tomato troubles. In both 2009 and 2010, we have had near crop failures due mostly to different types of blight. Blight is a generic term for a plant disease caused by spores that attack the foliage and end up killing a plant in a matter of weeks. Due to a variety of different reasons, we got hit very hard two years in a row.

So far, 2011 has been a completely different story. I am knocking on wood as I write this (there's still a long tomato season left, after all, and anything could still happen). But for now, the plants are lush and growing just about out of control, the fruit is coming on strong and so much so that we are having a tough time keeping up with picking, and there is just a ton of green fruit getting ready to ripen in the next few weeks. So, what did we do right or differently to make this happen? Here are a few explanations:

Varieties: We grew a number of different varieties of tomatoes this year that are purportedly resistant to the diseases that have affected us in the past. One such variety is one we have been referring

to as a "saladette" tomato. It is the small round red one that is slightly larger than a cherry tomato. I personally have found that a couple of these are just perfect for a single meal; and it is great to not have half a cut-up tomato sitting in your fridge. Overall, it seems like these disease resistant varieties are slightly less flavorful, but it may be worth it if they can stay healthy when and if disease does strike our patch.

Mulching: This year, we decided to bite the bullet and use straw mulch in between our rows of tomatoes. We have always shied away from this in the past because of the time and expense involved. But, this year we rented a big 'ol bale chopper and Patrick spent a couple very long days spreading straw across the whole field *before* we planted. It worked great!

Pruning: We've been pruning the heck out of our plants and this keeps the plants from touching the ground as much. Plants that don't touch the ground are less likely to pick up the disease spores that live in the soil.

Grafting: You've probably heard of grafting in apple production, but did you know it was possible with tomatoes as well? We've just started experimenting with grafting a tomato variety we want to pick fruit from onto a root stock of a variety

THIS WEEK'S BOX

- Broccoli
- Cucumbers
- Curly Parsley
- Edamame
- Garlic
- Green Zucchini
- Mini Watermelon
- Mixed Bag o' Tomatoes
- Patty Pan Squash
- Rainbow Chard
- Sungold Tomatoes
- Sweet Corn
- Sweet Red or Orange Peppers
- Yellow & Red Onions

that has super good disease resistance (but not great tomato production). The few plants that we got to take look great and it is encouraging for the future.

Location: We planted our tomatoes on the windiest, highest spot on the farm. This allows for greater air movement which has kept the tomato plants dry and "fresh".

Weather: This summer's dry weather has maybe more to do with than anything that we have done. With rain and wetness come disease and there's just nothing you can do about it.

Luck: Maybe the disease spores just didn't show up in our neck of the woods. Maybe we had guardian angels looking over us. Maybe we did the right type of dance at the right time. Who knows, but whatever mojo we are conjuring up, I hope it sticks around.

As I say, I hope the tomatoes keep coming and I hope that you all welcome them with open arms. Remember, they are so easy to preserve! You can cut them up and freeze them, or slice them and throw into a dehydrator, or even can them in small batches. That way, you can preserve that Driftless Organics bounty for the seasons to come.

--Mike



Jon, in a sea of tomatoes...

Broccoli - those of you who don't like raw broccoli florets, may be pleasantly surprised by the sweet flavor & crunchy texture of the peeled stems, especially dipped in something tasty! Those stems also cook up nicely alongside the florets in stir-fries, scrambled eggs, soup, etc.

Cucumbers - getting sick of them yet? Try the nice cooling cucumber raita recipe on our website with any Indian or Middle Eastern menu.

Curly Parsley - nice in dips, pasta, eggs, or in the cucumber raita. Store in plastic in the fridge & use up within a few days.

Edamame - Yum! Such a fun, tasty snack or start to a Japanese meal. Simply throw the edamame, shells & all, into boiling, salted water. Cook for about 3 or 4 minutes, drain, sprinkle on some more salt, & cool a bit or completely. Eat by squeezing the beans out of their shells between your teeth. Did I mention yum? Store in plastic in the fridge until ready to cook.

Garlic - the garlic is fully cured now and can be stored on your counter or in your pantry like you would with store bought garlic. You will be getting 1-2 heads of our German hard neck variety, which is all-around great tasting a versatile garlic.

Green Zucchini & Patty Pan Squash- CSA member Luanne can attest that patty pan makes

a fine zucchini bread. Try grating it & freezing in ziplocks to pull out this winter for use in bread, soup, or casseroles.

Mini Red or Yellow Watermelon - Watermelon are so much better when eaten cold. Stick in your fridge (or better yet your freezer) to get them nice and chilly: the perfect treat on a hot summer afternoon.

Mixed Tomatoes - A mix of red slicers, romas and heirlooms. Curious as to what varieties you have? Have a look at our website and follow the recipe page to tomatoes. There's pictures!

Purple or Dragon Tongue Beans - The dragon tongue beans are a flatter, larger but very tender variety of bean. Both the purple and the dragon tongue are delicious raw or cooked, but are prettiest when raw, as they both lose their purple color with cooking. Store in plastic in the fridge & use within a few days.

Rainbow Chard - substitute for spinach in any cooked recipe. Or saute them with some garlic or shallots & the saute mix. The stems are gorgeous, tasty, & nutritious, too - just cook them a little longer than the greens or they'll still be really crunchy. Store in plastic in the fridge for up to a week.

Saute Mix - Mostly arugula, this mix has some purple mizuna in it as well. We suggest wilting this mix into a stir-fry (added

at the last minute); but if you are truly adventurous, you can eat it as a raw salad. Why is it so holey you ask? Well, this is what happens when you grow Asian greens (like arugula) without spraying them with insecticide or covering them with an expensive plastic cover that you will eventually have to throw away. I am sure you'll find that they taste just as great with holes as without! Eat 'em up quick.

Sungold Tomatoes - always our favorite cherry tomato. Try it in the bruschetta recipe, below! They're also delicious cooked: halved on top of pizza, sauteed & tossed in pasta, or roasted with purple/dragon beans.

Sweet Corn - Picked yesterday in the early morning and then iced to keep its sweetness. Enjoy!

Sweet Red & Yellow Peppers - Not to worry, there is NOT a spicy pepper in your box this week (even if it may look like there is). You may be getting a red or yellow bell, or a red or yellow 'bull horn' (a sweet Italian frying pepper). All of the above are sweet and tasty and go great on sandwiches or in eggs. I especially like peppers because they are fast to prepare and go in just about anything. Questions about which pepper is which? Check out the recipe page on the website. There's photos!

Yellow & Red Onions - Your onions can be stored on your counter now that they are cured.

Tomato & Olive Bruschetta

1 loaf french bread, cut into thin 1/4 inch slices
olive or sunflower oil for drizzling
2 cups tomatoes, seeded & diced small (a mix of slicers/romas & sungolds are nice)
1/4 c. onions or shallots, minced
1/4 c. green, kalamata, or oil-cured black olives, coarsely chopped
1-2 cloves garlic, minced
3 Tbsp. fresh basil or parsley, chopped
1 Tbsp. olive or sunflower oil
salt & pepper to taste
cream cheese or goat cheese (optional)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line cut bread on a sheet pan in a single layer to make crostini. Drizzle or brush with oil. Bake until just starting to toast, about 10 minutes (check frequently as the type of bread, pan, & oven will all vary baking times). Let cool. Meanwhile, mix tomatoes, onions, olives, garlic, basil/parsley, oil, salt, & pepper in a bowl. Spread each crostini with a bit of cheese, if desired, top with tomato mixture, & serve immediately. Serves 6-8.

Lebanese Chard & Bean Salad

4 c. chard and/or saute mix, whole leaves & stem
1 c. green, purple or dragon tongue beans, cut or snapped into thirds
1/2 medium onion, finely sliced
1/3 c. plain yogurt
1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
1 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped
1/2 c. walnuts, coarsely chopped & toasted
1/2 c. sweet peppers, very thinly sliced

Steam chard for a minute or two (greens for slightly less time), until just wilted. Run under cold water to cool & drain. Arrange it on a serving platter. Steam beans for a couple of minutes, cool, drain, & place on top of wilted greens. Arrange onion & sweet pepper slices on top of beans. Mix yogurt, lemon juice & parsley together in a small bowl & drizzle over salad. Top with walnuts & extra parsley for garnish. Add toasted pita wedges for a complete meal!