



News from the Fields of Driftless Organics

Week #13! What a week! Days filled with sun and very comfortable temperatures makes for great working conditions and we are getting a ton of stuff done. We have a few of college folks that are leaving the crew and headed back to university, so we are trying to get ahead off some of the larger looming projects like garlic and onion cleaning. We'll be sad to see Lauren, Luke, Forest, Lilly and Mike Palm go, and rest assured, they will be sorely missed.

We continue forward, working hard and having fun in the sun!

U p o n mastering the art of growing local vegetables, Josh decided he wanted to produce another item used in the kitchen and eaten on a near daily basis: a salad and cooking oil. After some research, he found a crop to grow that does quite well in our region; that, if pressed right, creates a great tasting oil and one that is actually quite healthy. Finally: a **local** salad and cooking oil: what a great idea!

This is the fourth year that Josh has been growing sunflowers to make sunflower oil, and it might be the most beautiful crop we grow. The oil in your box is from seeds we harvested in 2009.

To make oil from the seeds, Josh found a processor in Spooner, Wisconsin who cold-exPELLER presses the sunflower seeds in a controlled environment to protect the integrity of the oil. The result of this simple process is pure sunflower oil, with all the

delicious flavor a season in the sun and rich Driftless soil has given to the seeds.

Never used sunflower oil before? Don't worry, there's dozens of easy ways to cook with it, from simply dipping fresh bread in it to making hashbrowns. The main thing to remember is that because this oil is unrefined, the tiny particles that make up the flavor profile will smoke at high frying



heats. So this sunflower oil is best used for low temperature frying (less than 300 F) if you want to use it on the stove top. But don't limit yourself to the stovetop. Try this oil in a salad dressing with various vinegars and cooking wines. Try it in baked goods; you will love the rich flavor the oil provides. Try substituting sunflower oil anywhere you would use olive oil.

There are a few other things you should know about sunflower oil. It is considered to be among the most healthy of cooking oils. It is low in saturated fats

THIS WEEK'S BOX:

- Basil
- Cucumbers
- Edamame
- Eggplant
- Garlic
- Green Zucchini or Yellow Patty Pan Squash
- Jalapeno Peppers
- Pimiento Peppers
- Poblano Peppers
- Red Lettuce
- Red Onions
- Roma Tomatoes
- Sunflower Oil
- Sweet Peppers
- Yellow or Dragon Tongue Beans

and high in polyunsaturated fats (the "good" fats that do not raise cholesterol like saturated fats). It is also high in Vitamin E, which is involved in the prevention of a wide host of diseases, from cancer to cardiovascular disease to cataracts. It is also healthy for our soils, since it rotates well with a number of the vegetables we grow. And it is healthy for the atmosphere, since using a local cooking oil instead of imported oils means less fossil-fueled transport.

It is so great to witness the increased popularity of, and demand for, the sunflower oil. There is at least a dozen cafes, bakers and restaurants in the Viroqua and Madison areas that use it as a staple in their food preparation. In addition, there are a number of natural food co-ops that carry it and the bottles sell mighty well at the farmers market as well. What excites people is not only the great taste of the oil - but also the fact that it is the only locally produced cooking oil around.

Right now a field of this year's sunflower crop is coming up just up the road from the farm. The sunflower fields are brilliant, and they represent one more way we are working hard to sustainably grow you delicious and healthy food. Enjoy!

Chile Rellenos

4-5 poblano peppers
1 small cippolini onion, thinly sliced
4 oz. Monterey jack or queso blanco cheese,
cut into long sticks

sauce:

5 roma tomatoes
1 medium onion
4 cloves garlic
1 jalapeno, seeds removed (optional)
1 tsp. marjoram
1/8 tsp. ground cloves
pinch of sugar & salt
2 Tbsp. oil
1 c. chicken broth

optional, if you want chiles breaded & fried:

4 eggs, separated
1 c. flour
oil for frying

Roast poblanos, either over gas burners or in the broiler, turning, until skin is blistered & blackened all over. Place in a bowl with a lid & set aside for 10 minutes to steam and cool. Remove blackened skin under cool running water. Make a slit down half of each chile, starting at the stem end. Carefully remove seeds (you may want to wear gloves to prevent chile-burn) & stuff each pepper with 1/4 of the cheese & sliced onions. You can close the opening with a toothpick if you wish.

Meanwhile, make the sauce: Combine all ingredients except the oil and broth in a blender & blend until smooth. Heat oil in a medium skillet & add sauce. Simmer over medium heat for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add broth & simmer for another 10 minutes or so.

At this point you can leave chiles as is & simmer them in the sauce until cheese is melted (a healthier alternative), or you can bread and deep fry them (even more delicious & authentic):

Beat egg whites until stiff. Fold in yolks and a pinch of salt. Roll each chile in a pan with the flour until coated. Tap off excess flour. Dip into the egg mixture. Heat 1/4" of oil to 365 degrees. Slide each chile into hot oil & fry until golden brown, then carefully flip to fry other side. Drain on paper towels, then simmer in sauce for 5 minutes & serve with warmed corn tortillas.

Basil – It is time to make some pesto!

Try combining it with our sunflower oil for a twist on classic basil pesto. Remember, pesto freezes very well!

Poblano Peppers – There are 4 or 5 of these medium sized darkish green or red peppers. They sort of look like a squashed bell pepper and are the classic peppers to use in Chile Rellenos, recipe below. I learned how to make them by this little old lady in the mountains of central Mexico while studying abroad many years ago (& of course have never tasted better!). This recipe looks complicated, but is worth it. Poblanos can range from slightly spicy to quite spicy, so use caution while handling (best to use gloves when handling any hot peppers, as the capsaicin in the seeds & membranes can cause a painful burn. If you do get burned, soak your hands in cold water with baking soda for relief).

Cippolini Onions – these Italian heirlooms have extra thick walls & rich, sweet onion-y flavor that makes them ideal for frying or caramelizing. For a simple grilled steak topping, saute sliced cippolinis in olive oil with freshly ground black pepper for a couple minutes over high heat. Pour in a splash of balsamic vinegar to deglaze the pan & serve on the steak.

Cucumbers – Store in the crisper drawer of your fridge.

Garlic – cured German Red - has cloves that are relatively small but full of flavor & bite. Store in a dark, dry, cool place.

Edamame – boil these tasty snacks in salted water for about 5 minutes. Drain, cool, & sprinkle a bit more salt. Pop beans out of the pods with your fingers or your teeth. A great popcorn alternative during movies! If you are getting sick of them, they freeze very well! Just blanch, pat dry with paper towel, and put in freezer bags with the air sucked out.

Eggplant – Once again, you will either be getting the classic dark purple eggplant or the lighter purple skinny and long Asian eggplant. Taste, texture and how they cook are very similar. Best to store on your counter or in the warmest part of your fridge.

THIS WEEK'S BOX by Dani Lind

Roma Tomatoes – Our first tomato crop was decimated by disease (see last week's newsletter), but we went ahead and bought some organic romas from our friends from Keewaydin Farms in Viroqua. Let's hope our second round of tomatoes comes through in September.

Red Lettuce – yea! Lettuce is back! Summer lettuce can get wilted fast - to revive, trim the end & soak the head in lukewarm water for a few minutes. Drain well & put in a plastic bag with a paper towel in the fridge.

Red Onion – cured red onions have a nice bite and are great in sandwiches. Store on counter or in pantry.

Red Roaster Pepper – There will be one of these larger red sweet peppers - this was a trial variety that tastes great! Use and store as you would a bell pepper.

Sunflower Oil – we wanted all of you who haven't tried our oil yet to have the chance to get hooked! We are so proud of this healthy locally grown & processed oil. Its nutty, rich flavor makes it a hit in baked goods, pesto, and salad dressings. You can also cook with it, but it has a relatively low smoke point like olive oil, so best not to deep fry with it. Try it in the Basil Pesto recipe or your favorite pancake recipe.

Sweet Mini Peppers – for a pretty appetizer, slice these cuties in half lengthwise, remove seeds & stem, & stuff with cream cheese, fromage blanc, or mascarpone with a basil leaf & a few pine nuts or toasted walnuts. There will either be an assortment of red, yellow and orange or all orange. Store in the fridge for up to a week.

Watermelon or Canteloupe – Best stored in the fridge and used up within a week or less.

Yellow or Dragon Tongue Beans – these are both so pretty you should really just eat them fresh or lightly steamed & drizzled with lemon juice & sunflower oil.