

ONE POTATO



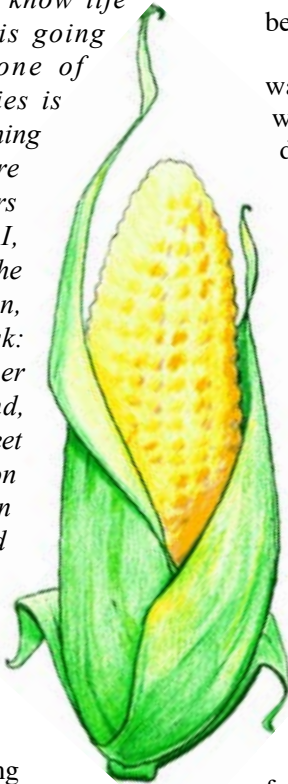
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NEWS FROM THE FIELDS OF
DRIFTLESS ORGANICS

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 12 AUGUST 27-29, 2009

THE BOX

W eek #12! You know life on the farm is going good when one of your biggest worries is how you'll fit everything into the box! We are knocking on the doors of September and I, for one, shudder at the thought. Once again, like every year I ask: 'Where has the summer gone?' This weekend, let's all throw that sweet corn and zucchini on the grill, crack open that watermelon and collectively relish in the summer of 2009. Life is GOOD!



H i everybody. Mike asked me to write something for the newsletter this week, and it's my pleasure to share some thoughts. I've done some traveling and lived at farms abroad, so Mike asked me to share some perspective on growing food in different places as well.

We're savoring the days of sweet corn here. Last Friday we had a crew pizza party and some scrumptious sweet corn on the grill as well. The corn on the grill reminded me of my experience with corn on the cob in Zambia.

It was my second day in the country, and I was out walking in Lusaka, the capital city, near the federal buildings and the embassies. Along one of the streets in this area, in the shade beneath a row of tall trees with branches only near the top, several women were situated next to a large metal bowl with black and ashy charcoal at its bottom. Suspended over the charcoal were a few ears of corn, without the husks. It was mid-September, and only a month and a half previously that I had been in Wisconsin, enjoying the first sweet corn in late July before I left for my trip (yes, if you haven't heard, it was the coldest July on record for

the Midwest, and corn and other crops have been late because of it).

Seeing grilled corn on the cob for sale was enough to recall home for me, and I was more than a little curious if corn tastes differently when it's called maize. If I recall correctly, the ear of corn cost me 100 kwacha, or about 3 cents. The taste of the maize on the cob, at least in Zambia, is quite different than our sweet corn. The kernels were tough like old broccoli stem skin, and it tasted more starchy than sweet. But it was hot and salty, and I finished it satisfied.

One day last week a friend of Elihu, another crew member at Driftless, visited us for lunch at the farm. She and Elihu have both returned recently from Malawi, which is right next door to Zambia. The two of them cooked an African-themed lunch for the farm with sima as the main dish. Sima, known as nshima in Zambia, is a thick porridge made from corn flour that is eaten with one's fingers. It's the staple food of much of sub-saharan Africa, and I ate it daily in Zambia. Compared with the maize on the cob that I ate, it is a much more pleasant way to eat corn, and everybody at the farm seemed to enjoy it as well (though not everybody was as eager as I was to eat with my fingers).

Back to Zambia now. A short walk from the corn vendors stood the National Museum. In front of the museum I encountered a large statue of a man breaking a chain in half with his arms, and the word FREEDOM underneath the man. Zambia gained independence from England in the 1960's. Now many people in Zambia are working to gain independence from surplus food aid from the United States. The United States sends tons of surplus corn to Zambia as food aid. While much of this corn gets

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| ARUGULA |
| BROCCOLI |
| CURLY PARSLEY |
| GARLIC |
| GREEN BELL PEPPERS |
| GREEN ZUCCHINI |
| HEIRLOOM TOMATO MIX |
| MINI RED WATERMELON |
| POBLANO PEPPERS |
| RED POTATOES |
| RED TOMATOES |
| SUNGOLD TOMATOES |
| SWEET CORN |
| YELLOW ONION |

cooked into nshima that goes to people in dire need, much of it also goes to people who would otherwise buy their corn from local farmers or grow it themselves. "We want the freedom to grow our own food;" I was told by one farmer named Mubanga Kasakula, "when someone can get free food from USAID, why would they buy food that we farmers grow here?"

Our surplus corn in the United States gives us enough to worry about stateside as well (read the first part of Michael Pollan's Omnivore's Dilemma or watch the film King Corn if you're not familiar with our domestic corn woes). I for one am grateful to be a part of an alternative, more just and sustainable food system. The sweet corn in the box this week is growing in the field where we harvested giant collards last year, so we knew the soil was rich enough for sweet corn to do well. And it has done well. It has done so well, in fact, that we had to put up clanging pie tin towers to keep out the blackbirds. So enjoy the sweet corn, because it is meant to be enjoyed!

A REMINDER TO YOU:

Please try to bring back your empty boxes the next time you pick up your box, as we would love to reuse it again. The boxes are a bit tricky to get apart - just remember, don't force it because it may rip and once it's ripped, they are no good to us!
THANK YOU to everyone for your help in keeping costs (and resource use) down.

YOUR BOX

ARUGULA - Mix in with salad, use on sandwiches, braise at the end of a stir-fry.... the possibilities are endless.

BROCCOLI - I just read an interesting fact about broccoli in the Featherstone Farm Cookbook: it was virtually unknown & wasn't grown commercially in the U.S. until the early 1920's, even though it has been in cultivation in the northern Mediterranean for at least 1500 years. Don't forget that the healthiest way to cook broccoli is to lightly steam it - overcooking & microwaving kills it's nutrients! Store in plastic in the fridge & use it up within a week or so (the stems will keep longer).

CURLY PARSLEY - is great added to soups, sauces, egg dishes, or salads.

GARLIC - Store on the counter, use with just about anything!

GREEN OR RED BELL PEPPER - Your classic pepper, great on sandwiches or salads.

GREEN ZUCCHINI - again... maybe it's time to grate it & freeze it in the right quantity to make some

zucchini bread or add to a casserole at a later date. Or grill it & freeze it.

HEIRLOOM TOMATOES - You will be getting 4 different heirlooms this week: Nebraska Wedding' - (round, yellow, less acidic); a 'Cherokee Purple' (dark brownish-purple with green shoulders, bold tasting - my favorite tomato); a 'Pruden's Purple or Brandywine' - (reddish/pink, nice flavor) and a 'Red or Green Zebra' - (small, red or green and yellow stripes). They're best stored at room temperature (not in the fridge, where they will turn mealy). They are best eaten sliced on a plate all by themselves (or maybe with a bit of basil & olive oil & salt).

MINI WATERMELON - It's a miracle this chilly summer has yielded watermelons, so enjoy!

POBLANO PEPPERS - there will be two of these in your box. You can tell them apart from your green bell by their darker-green color and the fact that they come to more of a point at the end. Mildly spicy, they can be added to eggs, black beans, salsa, chili, fajitas, etc. Roasting really brings out their delicious flavor

YELLOW ONION - are a great all purpose onion. Store outside of fridge.

RED POTATOES - the skins still haven't quite set on these so use them within a week or so, stored in a dark, cool place or store in the fridge. These are divine either steamed, boiled, or blanched & roasted whole. They'll also make a killer skin-on potato salad or mashed potatoes! Please oh please, just don't peel them! They're organic - it's OK! - & the skins are packed full of minerals & vitamins.

RED SLICER TOMATOES - classic sandwich tomatoes. Every other weekers should check out the salsa recipes in last week's newsletter (online). Store on counter.

SUNGOLD TOMATOES - are still the best cherry tomato in my opinion. If for some strange reason you're sick of them, you can freeze them whole to pop into winter sauces.

SWEET CORN - try the great Elote recipe below! Store in fridge until ready to gobble up!

ELOTE (MEXICAN CORN ON THE COB)

You just learned how folks in Zambia use corn. Now here is a popular way to eat it in Mexico.

- 4-6 ears of corn
- 3 Tbsps mayonnaise
- lime wedge
- 2 Tbsps Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 tsp chili powder
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1/4 tsp cumin
- pinch of salt

Grill the corn for 12 minutes total. Continually move the corn so each side is grilled. In a bowl whisk together the mayonnaise and lime juice. In a separate bowl mix together the Parmesan cheese, chili powder, cayenne pepper, cumin, and salt. Spread the mayonnaise mix over the corn. Sprinkle the cheese mix over the corn.

ARUGULA PESTO SAUCE

A great alternative to your regular pesto and a wonderful spread for sandwiches...

- Your bag of arugula
- 1/4 cup pine nuts (or walnuts)
- 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 lg. clove garlic, chopped
- 2 1/2 tbsps. olive oil
- 1/4 cup hot water

In a food processor pulse together all ingredients except oil and water until arugula is chopped fine. With motor running add oil in a stream, blending mixture until smooth. Sauce may be made up to this point 1 week ahead and chilled, its surface covered with plastic wrap. Bring sauce to room temperature to continue. Stir in 1/4 cup hot water plus additional for thinner consistency if desired.