



August 8, 2008

Newsletter

Issue #27

BloomingNow!

Features Fresh from the Farm

Community

Supported

Agriculture

From the field...

Gleaning, according to Wikipedia, is the act of collecting leftover crops from farmers' fields after they have been commercially harvested or on fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest. Some ancient cultures promoted gleaning as an early form of a welfare system. For example, ancient Jewish communities required that farmers not reap all the way to the edges of a field so as to leave some for the poor and for strangers. There is a famous painting called "The Gleaners" by Francois Millet (1857), as well as a more contemporary film called "The Gleaners and I" about the French law requiring farmers to let peasants onto their land to pick through leftover produce. So if you see the term at the farm, you now know the origin of the word. We utilize it to open up pickings in fields where we think the crops are below our

high standards for inclusion in the share, but there is still edible food to be found for those who want to make the effort to pick. (For example string beans and strawberries past their prime). We usually don't put amounts on "gleaning" as it is sort of understood you get what you get. Hopefully that clears up any confusion!

Things at the farm are moving along smoothly as we coast into August. Feels like we are over the hump of the season, reaping the rewards of all the planting and tending of the past few months. Now is when we eat our fill of tomatoes, so we can look past those forlorn "looks like a tomato, doesn't taste at all like a tomato" fruits in the grocery store this winter. The work days are still typically 10-11 hours for our crew— as the accompanying photo shows— that's

a lot of wear and tear not just on our bodies, but sneakers and jeans too! One of the benefits of all that physical work is a great nights sleep, often brought on before the initiative is taken to cook up all those yummy farm veggies for dinner that we work so hard to grow. So if you just can't seem to find a way to put in those required work hours in the field, —as someone, probably a hungry, tired someone, suggested— feel free to bribe us with dinners! I know, we are totally shameless!

Speaking of lots and lots of tomatoes, I just read that you can freeze tomatoes whole. Besides my favorite slow roasted plum tomato preserving technique (borrowed from Barbara Kingsolver), I will have to give this one a try. Looks simple for the canning fearful. Enjoy the fruits of August! —Farmer Tricia

The Journey of the Sunflower

Ah Sun-flower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the Sun:

Seeking after that sweet golden clime

Where the travellers journey is done.

— William Blake

Who doesn't love the beautiful sunflower, with its cheerful face and range of colors; its geometrically precise inner spiral?! Anyone who has watched how a sunflower

turns its face to follow the path of the sun across the sky, can understand that this flower has captured the attention of people for thousands of years, and was seen by many as not only an important food source, but also a sacred ceremonial symbol.

The origin of the word sunflower is Helios, the Greek god of the sun, and anthus, meaning flower. The Chinese hold sunflowers as a symbol of longevity. In flower lore it is a symbol of loyalty. In Peru, the

giant sunflower was worshipped as a sacred image of the sun-god by natives of the Inca Empire. Incan priestesses wore large sunflower disks made of gold on their garments. In the Andes mountains images of the sunflower were hammered into gold and placed in temples.

The Plains Indians of North America would place bowls of sunflower seeds on graves to nourish the spirits of the dead on their journey to the

News and Notes:

- **Next potluck:** Saturday, **August 16th at 6pm.** Celebrate the Full Moon with a Full Belly!
- **Pick-up on Friday Sept. 12 is switched to Thursday the 11th, one week only.** If you would prefer to pick-up that Tuesday instead, let us know. Farmer Tom has been asked to officiate at his dear friends wedding in California. Thanks for your understanding!
- **Coming up new in the share:** sweet peppers, cantaloupes, romano beans
- **REMINDER: Don't forget your required volunteer work times.** Full shares owe us 4 hours and half shares owe us 2 hours...or you must pay \$7.25 per hour missed at the end of the season. Consider helping with the Harvest Celebration.
- We would like to hold our **Harvest Celebration Saturday, October 11.** If you are interested in being involved please let us know. It can be lots of fun, with kids crafts (scarecrow making and pumpkin decorating), games like potato sac races, a wagon ride, live music, a raffle and a potluck. Email the farm to get involved!
- Have some favorite **recipes** using farm fresh ingredients? Send them our way— so we can share them in future newsletters!

Continued on page 2

Swiss Chard, Beet and Goat Cheese Empanadas

12 medium size or 20 small empanada discs
(use homemade empanada dough for
baking—see recipe that follows, or store
bought)
4 small beets, peeled, boiled until tender and
diced
1 bunch of swiss chard, chopped
1 cup crumbled goat cheese
½ onion, sliced
2 tbs. olive oil
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 tbs. finely chopped fresh oregano
1 egg, yolk and white separated and lightly
whisked
Salt to taste
Serve with: Spicy mint crème fraiche sauce—
see recipe to the right

Preparation:

Heat the oil and sauté the onions and garlic
for 3 minutes. Add the chopped swiss chard
and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring occa-
sionally.
Remove from the heat, cool down and mix
with the diced beets, crumbled goat cheese
and chopped oregano.
To assemble the empanadas spoon the
stuffing on to the center of each empanada
disc. Brush the inside edges of the empa-
nada discs with the egg whites, this is will
help them seal better and keep the filling
from leaking while baking. Fold the empa-
nada discs and seal the edges, use a fork to
help seal the empanadas. Lightly brush the
top of the empanadas with the egg yolk; this
will give a nice golden glow when they bake.
Chill the empanadas for at least 30 min-
utes, this will help them seal better and

prevent leaks.
Pre-heat the oven to 400 F and bake for
20-25 minutes or until golden. Serve
warm.

*Making empanada dough is not as hard as
it sounds, especially if you have a food
processor, and even if you don't it is still
pretty easy because the dough should not
be overworked and requires minimal
kneading. You can also customize the
homemade dough by adding spices, herbs,
etc that will complement or contrast with
the fillings. However, it is very easy to find
the empanada discs already made (frozen)
in Latin grocery store.*

Ingredients for 15 medium size or 25
small empanada discs:
3 cups all purpose flour
¼ teaspoon salt
6 oz unsalted butter (1 ½ sticks), cold and
cut into 12 pieces
1 egg
4-5 tbs water

Preparation:
Mix the flour and salt in a food processor.
Add the butter, egg and water until a
clumpy dough forms. Form a ball and chill
in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes.
Roll out the dough into a thin sheet and
cut out round disc shapes for empanadas
(use round molds or a small plate).
Use immediately or store in the refrigerator
or freezer to use later.

Contributed by CSA member Susan Roseman,
from [http://laylita.com/recipes/2008/05/07/
swiss-chard-beet-goat-cheese-empanadas/](http://laylita.com/recipes/2008/05/07/swiss-chard-beet-goat-cheese-empanadas/)

Spicy Mint Crème Fraiche

8 oz crème fraiche
1 medium sized bunch of mint, about ½
cup coarsely chopped
¼ cup coarsely chopped cilantro
¼ cup coarsely chopped parsley leaves
2 garlic cloves
1-2 serrano or other hot peppers, seeded
3 tbs lemon juice, about ½ lemon
Salt to taste

Place all of the ingredients in the
blender and blend well, the sauce will
be very liquid after you blend it, but if
you return it to the refrigerator it will
thicken.

*You can buy crème fraiche at the store,
or make it yourself, using 1 Tablespoon
buttermilk and 1 cup heavy whipping
cream, preferably not ultra-pasteurized.*

In a medium saucepan over low heat,
warm the cream to 105 degrees F (40
degrees C). Remove from heat and stir
in the buttermilk. Transfer the cream to
a large bowl and allow this mixture to
stand in a warm place, loosely covered
with plastic wrap, until thickened but
still of pouring consistency. Stir and
taste every 6 - 8 hours. This process
takes anywhere from 24 to 36 hours,
depending on your room temperature.
The crème fraiche is ready when it is
thick with a slightly nutty sour taste.
Chill cream, in the refrigerator, for sev-
eral hours before using. Crème fraiche
may be made and stored in the refrig-
erator for up to 10 days.

The Journey of the Sunflower, continued from page 1

“Happy Hunting Grounds.” They also valued
it as a food source in there day to day lives—
grinding the seed into flour for cakes, mush
or bread, or squeezing out the oil to be used
on skin or hair, or in bread. They utilized
the plant to make a purple dye for textiles
and body paint, and medicinally for snake-
bite and other body ointments.

One of the few cultivated plants native to
North America, it is believed that wild sun-
flowers covered thousands of square miles
of land that is now the western United
States. The center of origin for wild sunflow-
ers is considered to be the Western Plains of
North America, but the ancestors of the
cultivated type have been traced to the
Southwest or the Missouri-Mississippi River
valley areas. The first breeders of sunflowers
appear to be the Ozark Bluff dwellers who
selected plants and seed for cultivation.

The path of the domestication of the sun-
flower has been in dispute since the recent
findings in a study by David Lentz of the
Univ. of Cincinnati, funded in part by the
Nat'l Geographic Society. In this study, U.S.
and Mexican scientists have determined
ancient farmers were growing sunflowers in

Mexico more than 4,000 years before the
Spaniards arrived.

Florida State University scientist Mary
Pohl and David Lentz said their evidence
confirms farmers began growing sunflow-
ers in Mexico by 2600 B.C. That contra-
dicts the belief of some scientists that sun-
flowers were first domesticated as an agri-
cultural crop in eastern North
America, with the Spaniards
introducing the sunflower to
Mexico from further north.

11 of 14 indige-
nous groups in
Mexico, according to
Lentz's study, had
unique words for “sunflower”, bearing no
resemblance to the Spanish word for the
same species. Since Spaniards did not
arrive in Mexico until the 1500s, this lin-
guistic evidence along with distinctive tra-
ditions associated with the plant, suggests
a long history of indigenous Mexican use of



the sunflower, not a more recent cultural
borrowing.

As for its re-introduction in more modern
times, the Russian Orthodox Church in-
creased the sunflowers popularity there
immensely when it forbade most oil foods
from being consumed during Lent. How-
ever, the sunflower was not on the pro-
hibited list. Russia soon became the fore-
most producer of sunflower seed, a title
they still hold. In the late 19th century,
Russian sunflower seed found its way
into the U.S. By 1880, seed companies
were advertising the “Mammoth Russian”
sunflower seed. Canada started the first
official government sunflower breeding
program in 1930, utilizing plant material
from the gardens of the Russian immi-
grants, the Mennonites. With recent im-
provements and hybridization, the sun-
flower now ranks second among all seed
crops in the world as an important source
of edible vegetable oil.

*Some info. excerpted from National Geographic
4/28/08 “Ancient Seeds Sow Debate Over Sun-
flower-Farming Origins”, by Scott Norris*