



BLOOMING GLEN FARM

August 28

Newsletter

Issue #8

BloomingNow!

Features Fresh from the Farm

Community

Supported

Agriculture

From the field...

I've resigned myself to this issue of the newsletter being a little behind schedule. It's the end of August, and though we are just over half way through our distributions, this is the time of the season that we farmers start dragging our feet a bit... we've been go, go, go since early spring and now we have to make the final push to get all the fall crops in, keep harvesting, weeding, and now that we have a bit of a dry spell, remember what irrigating is all about (though this weekend's rainy weather seems to have brought the drought to an end). We are also trying to find time to can a few tomatoes, for how can we resist at the peak of tomato season daydreaming about salsa this winter, stews, and soups with a tomato base. And not just any

tomatoes, yummmmy homegrown tomatoes. So what if I can buy a can of tomatoes for \$1 at the grocery store. They don't have all the love and sunshine in a quart jar canned at midnite, blurry eyed, wondering "is it irresponsible to stay up so late on a night before harvest? Are we crazy? How did our grandparents *do it*?" Yesterday was one of those days I daydreamed about the 8 day week. Six days for working on the farm, one for doing house chores, and one day for just relaxing. So, as the cicadas sing away and the nights get a bit cooler, it feels like the last few weeks of summer, and I guess it is, at least for those of you on a school schedule. The autumn equinox is still a few weeks away, officially September 22. Say

goodbye to some of our summer crops— like eggplant, and soon our field and cherry tomatoes, which are winding down. Lots of heirlooms coming out of our greenhouse to enjoy still— see my blurb about them below, and the strawberries seem to be gearing up for another run. The potato's are all harvested thanks to some enthusiastic work crews. We planted over 400 pounds and harvested 3,241 pounds. Not bad! We are starting to give out our regular onions that have been drying down. We are finding more than we thought have a rotten layer— please bear with us if you find this... just use what you can. Another unfortunate result of all that rain we had in late June. Enjoy the misty moody weather, -Tricia and Tom

News and Notes:

- ♦ Mark your calendars— our Harvest Festival is planned for October 14. Stay tuned for more details. It's not too late to be on our planning committee.
- ♦ Sharing Table Etiquette: This is a place to put things from your share you may not want for other members to enjoy. It's also where we put crops we are trialing and don't have enough of to include in the share. For example okra. Please take some to try but keep in mind that we would like everyone who wants to try it to have that chance. A good idea is to look at the sign in sheet to see how many people have yet to pick-up their share. Or take a bunch one week and leave it the next. We will plant more next year as we are realizing many of you love this crop! We always have hot peppers left over so please help yourself with those... and be sure and ask us if you're curious about varieties.

Heirloom Tomatoes... what's all the hype about?

They're bumpy, lumpy, cracked, and misshapen, big and juicy, colorful and tasty, fragile and finicky. They're ripe and ready to eat: they are heirloom tomatoes. So what makes a tomato an heirloom? They have to have been grown for at least 50 years. Their seeds breed true. If you save the seeds from an open-pollinated tomato you'll get the same characteristics of the plant and fruit from which you saved the seed. Not that we have anything against hybrids— they are dependable, productive, disease resistant, uniform, storage and transport friendly—

but they're new, you can't save the seeds, and most are bred for reasons other than flavor. They just aren't as exciting or as full of history as an heirloom. When you plant an heirloom you have the feeling of being part of a long line of growers— farmers and gardeners stretching back over the last century, sharing a love for a certain tomato, saving seeds for taste and beauty. There are thousands of varieties of every vegetable— entire seed catalogs devoted to encouraging their growth. If we don't grow them, they'll slip into obscurity, outpaced by the new

sleeker, performance-guaranteed hybrids. It's important to remember that seeds have a limited life span, they must be planted and grown from time to time to remain viable. They can't just be alphabetized and tucked away on a shelf somewhere. Variety is nature's most persistent strategy for excellence and survival. While most people grasp the importance of preserving endangered animal species and protecting the diversity of the rainforest, few realize the importance of maintaining a vast agricultural seed bank. A farmer we

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Heirloom tomatoes

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know used to love to tell the story of staff members at the Russian seed bank in WWII who starved to death protecting the world's largest seed collection rather than eat the seeds to survive. These were his heroes. So here's a few stories about some of the tomatoes we grew this year. First, my favorite, the beautiful pink Brandywine, which began our love affair for growing and trellising unique tomatoes. This first appeared in the 1889 catalog of Johnson and Stokes of Philadelphia, named for the region in PA. By 1902 it was offered by 4 additional seed companies, but soon disappeared from all commercial catalogs. It has a sweet, rich, slightly spicy flavor and may be the tomato responsible for the resurgence of interest in heirloom varieties. Next, the green-shouldered, brown-russet burgundy tomato, the Black Krim. It's from the Crimean peninsula from the Black Sea of Russia. It is

Heirloom Tomato Salad

- 5 heirloom tomatoes, assorted varieties
- 1/4 C olive oil
- 1 T sherry vinegar
- 1 T balsamic vinegar
- 1 clove garlic, smashed and minced
- Salt and black pepper
- 4 handfuls arugula (or chopped head lettuce)
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
- 2 T shredded fresh basil
- 2 T minced fresh chives
- 1 1/4 C crumbled goat cheese

Slice the tomatoes in rounds over a bowl, to collect any liquid. Place the tomatoes in a separate bowl and let sit for 30 min. Set aside the liquid.

Combine the olive oil, vinegars, garlic, tomato liquid, salt and pepper to make a dressing.

Divide the arugula equally among serving plates. Place the tomatoes on top of the arugula and sprinkle with the herbs. Drizzle with the dressing. Crumble goat cheese over all and serve immediately.

From AARP Magazine

slightly flattened with a full flavor. The Striped German is a beefsteak type, average weight between 1-2 pounds. It is a golden yellow with pink to red flame like stripes that extend into the tomatoes core. This is an old German heirloom that appeared in a Mennonite community in Virginia during the 19th century. Persimmon, of which we only have a few plants, is a solid yellowish orange tomato, smooth and meaty, with a fruity flavor that dates back to the mid 1800's. The giant red tomato, a Sicilian Plum, came from our farmer friends at Branch Creek Farm, who brought this heirloom tomato back from Sicily 15 years ago, and have been saving the seeds for the largest ever since. So there's a bit of history for you! We look forward to trialing and exploring more heirloom varieties in the coming years. Enjoy!

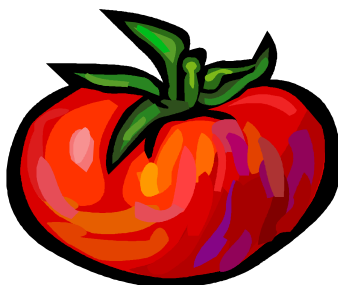
Grilled Peach Salsa

- 5 large local peaches (washed and halved, pits removed)
- Brush grill grate with vegetable oil and grill peaches face down for several minutes. With tongs, flip peaches until skin begins to darken. (I did mine on aluminum foil) Remove peaches from the grill when they can be pierced easily with a fork. Allow to cool, remove skins. Chop.

- 5 tomatoes (chopped)
- Hot pepper(s) of your choice (minced, seeds removed)
- Add to peaches.

- 1/2 C honey
- 2 T fresh basil or cilantro
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Stir in.

From Simply in Season



Roasted Peppers

Roasted peppers can be expensive to buy but are very easy to make. When peppers are in abundance, roast some and freeze for later use. One way to do this is in freezer boxes, separating the layers with wax paper.

Peppers (sweet or hot, any color)

Roast whole peppers under broiler or over a gas flame. Turn frequently, until the skin blackens. Remove from heat and put in a bag or covered pot to allow the pepper to steam and cool. Then rub or wash off the blackened skin. Remove the stem and seeds. Use in any recipe calling for roasted peppers.

From Simply in Season

Sweet Peppers Soup

- 2 C chopped onions
- 1 T butter or vegetable oil
- 6 C chopped peppers- all colors
- 2 C vegetable stock
- 1 C yogurt or sour cream
- 1/3 C chopped fresh dill
- 2 T fresh lemon juice
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- seasoned croutons- optional

In a covered soup pot, sauté the onions on med. Heat in the butter or oil for about 3 min., until barely softened. Add the peppers and cook, covered, until just soft, stirring occasionally. In a blender or food processor, whirl the cooked onions and peppers with the stock, sour cream, dill and lemon juice. Don't over process; small pieces should remain. Return the soup to the pot and gently reheat, adding salt and pepper to taste. Serve topped with croutons, if you wish.

Mexican variation: Omit the dill and croutons. Saute 1 teaspoon of ground cumin, 1 tsp. of ground coriander, and 1/4 tsp. of cayenne with the onions and peppers. Serve topped with chopped fresh cilantro and crumbled tortilla chips.

From The Moosewood Collective