



SWALLOWTAIL FARM

All the Food that's Fit to Eat

Week of May 19th, 2010

THIS WEEKS BASKET

Lettuce (last call!)
Arugula
Cucumbers
Crookneck Squash
Zucchini
Green Beans
Red Pontiac Potatoes
Basil
Dill
Cilantro
Anise Hyssop
Lemon Balm
Flowers



RECIPES:

Fresh Basil Pesto

2 cups fresh basil leaves
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan or Romano cheese
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
1/3 cup pine nuts walnuts, or pecans
3 garlic cloves, minced
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Combine the basil in with nuts, pulse a few times in a food processor. Add the garlic, pulse a few times more.

Slowly add the olive oil in a constant stream while the food processor is on. Add the grated cheese and pulse again until blended. Add a pinch of salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Serve with anything to add fresh flavor.

Savory Squash and Basil

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 1/2 pound medium yellow squash -- halved lengthwise and cut crosswise into 1/8 inch thick slices
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1/2 cup water
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh basil
1 sprig dill finely chopped
1 cucumber, cut into thin slices

Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet, then add half of squash and saute, stirring occasionally, until browned, about 5 minutes. Transfer browned squash to a bowl, then heat remaining tablespoon oil and saute remaining squash in same manner.

Add garlic and saute, stirring occasionally, 1 minute. Add water, salt and pepper and simmer, until squash is tender and most of liquid is evaporated, 6 to 7 minutes. Stir in basil. top finished on plates with fresh cucumber slices.

All appears to change when we change —Henri Frederic-Amiel



Finally took the time to count our market days, from way back at the beginning – November 11, 2009 – to the end – June 16. I had it somewhere in my inexact head that 32 weeks would carry us through to the end of June, but here we are, 28 weeks into the season, with 4 to go after today.

It's been a truly miraculous stretch of time, these seven months, marked with an Indian summer, a flash of fall, a long cold winter, and a generously wet spring. And now we're coming up on the first true-blue harbingers of summer's return: The high arcing sun is in full fiery bloom overhead. The monarch caterpillars are munching dill and fennel in preparation for chrysalis craft. The compost pile has been reduced to a potent shadow of its former voluminous self – utterly successful in its decomposition. The pole beans, having conquered the full glorious heights of their trellises, are reaching intrepidly higher into the blue abyss, tendrils full of hope. The corn is beginning to tassle. The lettuce is done. It is swimming weather, when water redeems the cruelty of midday shadowlessness. Only total submersion will truly suffice on a hot dry day in May. The sweet potato slips are sprouting, the eggplant blossoms heavy with gravity before their fruit even. The cowpeas will soon be sown, and the last pole beans and Seminole pumpkins given a green home among the cornstalks.

At the end of a long day of harvesting cucumbers, squash, zucchini and flowers; trellising tomatoes with bamboo and sisal twine; weeding tomatoes, eggplants and basil; top-dressing these same beds with the delightfully mellowed compost of fall & winter, and mulching with a sun-calming layer of rotting oak leaves – the world is a hazy and disoriented amalgam of fatigue, thirst, utter and sublime satisfaction, and sweet and potent comraderie among the six of us here today.

In the neighbor's fields across the road, there must be 15 acres of yellow squash. For the past week, we've seen a double-decker packing truck making its way through the rows, with a good 30 migrant (Guatemalan? Mexican?) farm workers picking and packing 2-bushel boxes full of the stuff. There's a school bus that brings them each morning from who-knows where to the fields, and away again in the afternoon. I can't imagine they're getting paid much, either farmer or laborer, with squash at 70 cents a pound retail. Just a small reminder of the artificial deflation of food costs, with subsidization at the front end (oil-based – read 'defense budget' – fertilizers) and at harvest (illegal, exploited and underpaid migrant labor). The sad part of this story is that it's the same story for tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, lettuce, cabbage, blueberries, watermelons and the rest. The fallacy is that we're paying twice or thrice for a cheap end price, rather than a fair price once.

That said, I want to offer thanks to all of the people of the farm, from Rick and Jane, Zach and Katy, Jack and Bethany, Timothy, Gretchen and Wes and Katy, Morgan, Chris and Annie, Alissa and Wade, Ryan, Em, and the rest of folks who have come out and made it possible to feel good in our work. Who have given and labored without any pay but the food we've grown and the experience of community in the dirt. And just as importantly, to all of you who support these efforts through your participation in the CSA. Together we have established something true.

It's been so much on my mind this season how to accomplish something worlds different than the story of the squash across the street; to be fair to the giving soil, fair to ourselves as farmers, fair to the community that we serve, and to create an experience for all of us that actually uplifts us all – head, heart and hands, from farm to table and in the health of our bodies and our community. If we can accomplish this through a realm of our society that embodies so much of our disconnection with the earth and with one another – simply put: food – then truly we can say grace.

In supplication to the squash goddess, with a green and gold chrysalis as emblem of our metamorphic powers,

Noah Shitama
Swallowtail Farmer