



PRAIRIE SUN FARM

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Tour de Tomatoes

We had some friends come to the farm on Sunday to process tomatoes. Bill loves tomatoes almost as much as he likes biking. He makes gazpacho, salsa, tomato jam. He uses tomatoes on bruschetta, in sauces and blt's. He set up his food mill on the porch and went to town. There were a lot of good tomato juices flowing. That is after he went for a bicycle ride through the countryside around the farm. There are a lot of things you can do with tomatoes if you have extras this time of year. Besides processing them with a food mill, you can freeze them whole, roast them, can them and of course make salsa with them. Here's a "tour" of tomato processing we thought you'd enjoy. To freeze them wash, cut out the core, put them in a plastic bag and freeze. When ready to use boil in a large pot until the sauce is a desired consistency. Fish out the skins, leave them in or run the sauce through a food mill. If you have time to puree them beforehand put them through a food mill and place in zip top bags then freeze. It's a good idea to label them too. For roasting, wash, core and halve the tomatoes, place in a single layer in a roasting pan and drizzle with olive oil. Roast at 325 degrees for 90 minutes to two hours, until they are very soft. Bag and freeze, or cover with cooking oil and refrigerate for a week. If you like sun dried tomatoes, line a baking sheet with nonstick foil, core the tomatoes and cut into slices. Place in a 250 degree oven for eight hours, until they are shriveled and dry. Store in bags with the air pressed out. A dehydrator can be used also. Check out the following link from the University of MN extension office for more information on preserving the harvest: <http://www1.extension.umn.edu/food-safety/preserving/>

WEEK 13 BOX CONTENTS

- Napa Cabbage:** Sometimes called Chinese cabbage. An excellent stir fry vegetable and a main ingredient in egg rolls. Substitute napa cabbage for common cabbage.
- Cilantro:** Annual herb that can be added to many Mexican and Chinese dishes. Make cilantro lime rice to go with fajitas.
- Beets:** Sweet red beets that can be roasted for about 45 minutes on the grill or oven.
- Cherry Tomatoes:** Mix of mostly sungold with some red and purple cherry tomatoes.
- Tomatoes:** Mix of heirloom and round red. Some are ready to eat now and others will continue to ripen on your counter. Extra tomatoes can be blanched and frozen for winter use.
- White Onions:** More onions for your salsa or whatever. These have been cured and can be stored in a cool dry place.
- Kohlrabi:** This is the big Kossak variety. It's supposed to be this big. Very good storage variety.
- Sweet Peppers:** Bell peppers or red 'Carmen' peppers. Carmen peppers look like big chili peppers but are sweet and delicious.
- Hot Peppers:** Yellow wax are medium hot and Serrano are very hot. Serrano peppers are small green or red.
- Broccoli:** Broccoli freezes well. Cut into florets and slice stems. Blanch for 3-4 minutes, rinse in cold water, let dry, and place in an airtight container before putting in the freezer.
- Carrots:** Scrub carrots with a vegetable brush under running water to remove dirt or peel.

Farm News

Lots of picking still going on, winter squash and tomatoes are plentiful. All the potatoes got picked last week. They will go in the boxes next week. There's still some sweet corn left but it's near the end. Despite the heavy rain last week we were watering. The heat has been drying the crops out and we've got fall lettuce and spinach which needs moisture. The tomatoes in the greenhouse and the garden are abundant. The cucumbers and summer squash are done. They really produced a lot this year. Winter squash is being cured for boxes later. We did get some plowing done this weekend with the new plow. We hope to have our fall cover crop planted soon. With the moisture there was a lot of mowing to do. We try to keep the weeds mowed so they don't go to seed. The prairie looks great. There are a lot of good grasses and wildflowers going to seed there. No maintenance required. The cover crop in next year's garden is starting to grow. It will be interesting to see how the oats, peas, tillage radish cover crop works. It's a new one for us.

From the Kitchen

BELL PEPPER AND TOMATO BISQUE From Star Tribune Taste section

Note: If you cut the tomatoes in half and let them dissolve into the onions, it's easy to fish out the tomato peels, which will float to the top after the broth is added. Adapted from "Organic Marin: Recipes From Land to Table," by Tim Porter and Farina Wong Kingsley.

- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 large bell peppers
- 1 large onion
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 tsp. sweet paprika
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 c. carrots or potatoes, diced
- 1 1/2 lb. tomatoes, including romas, halved
- 4 c. stock
- 2 tbsp. fresh basil
- 1 tbsp. dried parsley
- Cracked black pepper to taste
- 1/4 c. half-and-half

Directions:

Heat a large stockpot over high heat. Add the oil and sauté the bell peppers and onions for 3 to 4 minutes, until translucent. Add the garlic, paprika, salt and carrots and sauté for 15 minutes or until the carrots become tender. If mixture sticks, add in a tomato half.

Decrease the heat to medium, stir in the tomatoes and cook until they dissolve. Stir in the stock, basil and parsley. Simmer for 30 minutes. Puree the soup in a blender. Return the soup to a clean pot and reheat. Adjust seasoning with cracked pepper. To serve, spoon the soup into a bowl and garnish with a bit of half-and-half.