



PRAIRIE SUN FARM

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State Fair Heat

It's unusual to have a string of 90's late in August with night time temperatures above 70. We heard today that it's going to be the warmest state fair in 65 years. That was 1948 if you're counting. We broke the 1948 temperature records Sunday and Monday this year. It's hot! Dry too. Last year was worse though. It was much warmer and drier. We thought we might get some heat this week. It always seems like it's warm during the State Fair. But the annual report for the 1948 State Fair stated "ideal weather prevailed" for the ten days. They must have liked it hot back then. There is a great website with lots of archive data for the Minnesota State Fair including annual reports for each year. In 1948 attendance was 855,011. In 2012 it was 1,788,512. The Future Farmers of America were recognized at the State Fair for the first time in 1948. There were 2,600 animals shown that year and 2,100 4-H members were "housed in the 4-H club building". I'm thinking it was a little crowded and there was a lot of animal poop to clean up. There were "four afternoons of automobile racing, four of horse racing and two of thrill shows". Night time offered the "State Fair Revue with fireworks". Ooooh! Aaaaah! We still find a thrill going to the State Fair and enjoying all it has to offer. We wander through the horse and livestock barns to look at the unique breeds of chickens and rabbits, the beautiful horses with their owners camped out in the pens with them and of course the large swine or big pig as we like to call it. We'll endure the heat one day and go eat some bad food, watch some entertainment and immerse ourselves in the great Minnesota get together. After all it wouldn't be summer without heat and the fair. Enjoy it before it ends!

WEEK 11 BOX CONTENTS

Sweet Corn: A sweet taste of summer! Not sure how much will be ready until we pick tomorrow. Should be plenty.

Cantaloupe: Sweet and juicy. Great for breakfast, dessert or snacking. Next week watermelons will be in the box.

Potatoes: Yukon Gold's waxy moist flesh and sweet flavor make it ideal for boiling, baking, frying, roasting and grilling.

Tomatoes: Cherry tomatoes are a mix of gold, yellow, red and purple varieties. Slicers are a mix of heirloom and hybrid varieties. Some are ripe and ready to eat and others can sit on your counter a few days.

Beans: Yellow wax beans are an excellent source of fiber, vitamin A, and iron. Also a good source of protein and calcium.

Cucumbers: Cool as a cucumber.

Summer Squash/Zucchini: Chop and add to your salad or sauté with tomatoes and onions for a side dish.

Sweet Peppers: Ivory, Green, red, yellow or orange. The red peppers look like hot peppers but are really sweet Carmen's.

Hot Peppers: Mix of Yellow Wax, Anaheim, Fresno (red), and Jalapeno. Easy to freeze if you don't use them all - just put in a freezer safe container.

Onions: Sweet Walla Walla or Ailsa Craig variety. These need to be stored in the frig.

Eggplant: We grow 4 varieties of eggplant: Orient Express - dark long skinny, Fairy Tale - small light purple stripe, Beatrice - large light purple and Traviata - large dark purple.

Cilantro: Perfect addition to chopped tomatoes, peppers and onions for a fresh salsa.

Farm News

We went to the squash patch tonight and I was horrified. The squash bugs invaded the Delicata squash. Luckily the vegetables were still firm and at their peak for picking. We quickly picked all 120 of them filling 3 buckets with 80 pounds of squash. Then we mowed the row going over the remaining bugs repeatedly hoping to squish as many squash bugs as possible. Done with that row. We also picked most of the watermelons too, 350 pounds of them. It was time. It takes some practice to know exactly when the squash and melons are perfect for picking. Even one of the local farmers was explaining his mother picked a watermelon too soon and didn't know how to tell when they were ready. Melons have a small tendril at the "Y" of the vine and when it turns brown they are ready. A good "hollow" thump usually provides the answer also. It's fun picking these pounds of produce and practicing perfect picking patterns. Say that ten times fast. The final weeks are going to fly by with all the picking that needs to be done. We have a lot of potatoes still in the ground. We had our first sweet corn tonight too. Finally it's ready. The heat makes it a little challenging to get all these heavy vegetables picked but we'll keep plugging along, weighing and counting, putting beautiful boxes together for your table each week. Enjoy!

From the Kitchen

Fresh Tomato Soup The Northern Heartland Kitchen

Ingredients

½ pound onions, chopped
¼ cup unsalted butter
2 pounds tomatoes, cored and roughly chopped
½ cup white wine or to taste
1 tablespoon sugar or to taste
3 to 4 tablespoons torn basil, plus a few leaves for garnish
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Vegetable stock (check out recipes on the web) or water as needed
Heavy Cream (optional)

Instructions

In a large, deep pot, cook the onions in the butter over low heat until they're tender, about 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes, wine, and sugar and cook until the tomatoes are softened, about 10 minutes. Stir in the torn basil leaves. Working in batches, puree the soup in a blender or use an immersion blender, and put it back into the pot, adding vegetable stock or water if the soup seems too thick. Swirl in a little cream and serve warm, at room temperature, or chilled.