



PRAIRIE SUN FARM

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JULIE AND DAN GEIGER WWW.PRAIRIESUNFARM.COM

10330 Highway 25, Watertown, MN 55388

Ja_geiger@msn.com 952-955-3570

Ducks in Flight

Seeing the waterfowl migration every fall is a sure sign that the seasons are changing. Our farm is on a slough lake, no deeper than 3 feet, so it doesn't provide any fishing opportunities but it does provide a great resting place for birds as they come through the area. Geese fly in low honking as they go over the field. Ducks collect by the dozens quacking away in the warm shallow waters. At least until hunting season starts. It's a popular lake for duck hunting every year and the season opener always sounds like Armageddon around sunrise. This year the hunters were shooting until noon so the ducks must have kept coming for a while. There were still plenty that got away and the shots tapered off to only a few this past weekend. Besides waterfowl the birds have been flocking also. There is a roar out the window in the morning as the surrounding trees come to life with hundreds of birds. The sky is filled as these flocks fly overhead. The cover crop fields have been covered in doves eating the leftover seeds especially around sunset. The pheasants have been making a lot of noise lately too. A big, fat rooster flew out of the tall grass yesterday going just far enough to be out of reach of Izzy, our Springer puppy. The pheasants will go quiet soon when their season starts. How do they know the difference between duck season and pheasant season? With all the gunfire you'd think they'd be hiding too. The trumpeter swans will start gathering also. These large birds really have a distinctive honk and you can hear their wings as they fly overhead. We're lucky to see this spectacle every fall while we're out in the fields picking the last vegetables of the season. It provides a moment to pause and reflect on the past season knowing it will soon be over.

WEEK 16 BOX CONTENTS

Winter Squash: Butternut squash can be roasted or mashed or pureed into soup. Use a sharp knife to cut off the skin before chopping. Or cut in half, scoop out the seeds and roast whole.

Potatoes: French fingerling. Their pinkish red skin doesn't need peeling. Try roasted with a splash of olive oil and herbs.

Tomatoes: Slicers are a mix of heirloom and hybrid varieties mostly from the greenhouse. We are still picking a few each week.

Sweet Peppers: Ivory, Green, red, yellow or orange. The red peppers look like hot peppers but are really sweet Carmen's. Slice and freeze any that you don't use.

Hot Peppers: Red fresno or green jalapeno to with the attached recipe.

Onions: Red storage onions. These should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place.

Spinach: Super good for you raw or cooked! Add to sandwiches, eggs, lasagna, or make a salad.

Carrots: Slice, grate, chop or juice. Eat raw or cooked. Perfect for soup!

Romanesco: This crazy green vegetable is an Italian creation and it is a cross between broccoli and cauliflower. Use it as you would cauliflower - raw or cooked.

Parsley: Flat leaf Italian. Not just a garnish. 10 sprigs contain 205 percent of your daily vitamin K requirement.

Green Top Beets: An amazing source of healthy nutrients and minerals. Roast or steam and eat cold on a salad or hot with your burger.

Farm News

Some more rain and the shorter, cooler days have eliminated any watering outside. The greens are growing nicely, perfect weather for spinach. It's amazing how many tomatoes are still ripening too. And since we haven't had a frost we're still picking peppers. Then there's the Romanesco we've been waiting all year for. It looks great and tastes good too. We've started picking a few Brussel sprouts. Getting to be that time for a good vegetable bake with carrots, squash, potatoes, beets and onions. We continue to keep the electric fence going around the greens because the deer and rabbits would mow these tasty vegetables down given the chance. We open and close the greenhouse each morning and night so it doesn't get too hot during the day and keeps the heat in at night. Our evening chores now get done in the dark most nights since the sunset is before 7:00 now. And the days aren't quite as busy so we're not in the fields early in the morning. But there're still boxes to pack for 3 more weeks including this one so we're not done yet. The mild weather has definitely helped. We hope you're enjoying the great harvest this year!

Butternut & Parsley Penne

Rachael Ray Magazine

Ingredients

1 1/2 pounds pre-cut butternut squash cubes or 1 small butternut squash, peeled and cut into bite-size pieces

1/4 cup EVOO, plus more for drizzling

Salt and pepper

Freshly grated or ground nutmeg

1 pound whole-wheat or whole-grain penne rigate

1 bunch flat-leaf parsley, stems and leaves separated, each finely chopped

4 large cloves garlic, minced

1 piece (1 inch) fresh ginger, peeled, then grated or finely chopped

1 chile pepper, such as Fresno or jalapeno, finely chopped, or 1 tsp. crush red pepper

1 bunch scallions, whites and greens separated, each finely chopped

1 cup chicken or vegetable stock

A handful grated grana padano or parmigiano-reggiano cheese, plus more for garnish

Directions

Preheat the oven to 475 degrees . On a baking sheet, drizzle the squash with some of the EVOO; season with salt, pepper and nutmeg. Roast until just tender and brown at the edges, about 17 to 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, bring a large pot of water to a boil, salt it, add the penne and cook until al dente. Drain the pasta; reserve 1 cup of starchy cooking water.

While the pasta is cooking, heat 1/4 cup EVOO in a large skillet , four turns of the pan, over medium-high. Add the parsley stems, garlic, ginger, chile and scallion whites; swirl 2 to 3 minutes. Add the stock and reduce heat to simmer. Add half a ladleful of the pasta cooking water to the sauce. Add the pasta, parsley leaves, scallion greens, squash and cheese to the skillet. Stir to combine. Adjust the seasonings.