



News
from

Harmony Valley Farm

An Update for Our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

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Richard Remembers, Act II

When Richard's mom and dad visited in June, we asked for some of their memories of life on the farm in South Dakota. Dad didn't remember the voluminous oat crop that led him to put his 7 year old son behind the wheel of the grain truck (see newsletter from June 13, 2003), but he did remember the visit from the Chicago cousins a few years later. The city boys were hefty athletes and were going to show their skinny farm cousins how to throw hay bales. (Now, my brother Dennis and I knew something about stacking bales because we had been haying for quite a few years by this time and baled and stacked as many as 20,000 bales one year. We had a huge stack of 10,000 bales stashed inside a bunk feeder where our 100 head of black Angus cows fed all winter. We brought in as many as 1,000 bales a day from the fields.)

Dennis and I thought it great to have help and were ready to hang back and let them do most of the work. But after the first 100 bales, our city cousins were exhausted. Dennis and I smiled knowingly to each other and took over. We had seen this before! We had long ago learned that yanking and jerking at 70 pound hay bales was very tiring. We would describe it as "fighting the bales." At 120 pounds of body weight, we had been forced to learn how to use the least possible effort to get the bale moving in the direction it needed to go and to just guide it into its place in the stack -- one smooth motion. We used our whole bodies, especially our knees. Our mom made us leather bale aprons to save the knees of our blue jeans. We were quite proud of the fact that we had learned how to do a tremendous amount of physical work in a day and get up early and do it again the next day. We were well aware that it required smooth, graceful move-

ments to conserve energy and make it to the last day of haying season.

However, it wasn't really the hay that made this visit from the city cousins so controversial. It was Auntie Pat announcing that, "We were worked too hard and needed time to play!" That did not go down well with our father. In fact, it precipitated a heated discussion that went on for several days, until the visit ended.

Dennis and I knew enough to keep quiet about it, but we were all for some play time. We were acutely aware that our classmates who lived in town had hours on end to sit in the air conditioned cafe and talk and play cards. We thought that it would be just fine, but knew better than to say so. We didn't get any special time off during her visit -- there was hay to make -- and when Auntie Pat went back to Chicago, the subject was dropped.

Our two boys, Ari and Adrian, have helped us each summer here on the farm. No relatives have ever accused us of working them too hard, perhaps quite the opposite. However, they have been big help and have learned a lot of life's lessons in the process. With a fairly large and very competent crew we have never been as reliant on our boys as Richard's parents were on him and his siblings. Our boys have always been able to be a part of the local ball team or been able to get away for sports camps. We could afford to give them some time off. Still, each summer, when school ends and they return to work, we become quite aware that somehow, over time, they have picked up some pretty good skills. This year Ari is learning to drive the pick-up, keeps putting in time operating the tractors, and has been an important part of the current irrigation team. (The picture shows him in front of

This Week's Box
Basil Broccoli or Cauliflower Carrots Cipollini Onions Cucumbers Fresh Garlic Green Beans Salad Mix Summer Squash and/or Zucchini
Choice: Arugula and Cilantro

the truck he's been driving and the irrigation line he helped Dan set up.) To hear it from him, he'd probably say summer is filled with meaningless, tiring farm work, but we know better. To work alongside adults as part of the crew is a valuable experience in and of itself; something hard for a teenager to find these days. Each of our boys will take from the farm work something different, but something that will serve them all their lives. Richard and brother Dennis learned grace and stamina. We wonder what Ari and Adrian will remember learning from the hours spent alongside their parents and the farm crew. Time will tell.



The only "rain" in the last two weeks has come from sprinklers.

Roasting, a Summer Pastime?

We all know the problem with zucchini, there's always too much of it. I, and many others, think that the other problem with zucchini (all summer squash for that matter) is that it doesn't have all that much flavor. So what to do with a lot of something that tastes much like nothing? We can only eat so much zucchini bread right? One secret is the way you choose to cook the squash. I tend to trust Cook's Illustrated magazine in such situations because they try EVERYTHING. So if you don't feel like grilling or roasting for an easy summer pasta dinner, they recommend salting your zucchini before sautéing it. Squash contain up to 95 percent water and by cutting the squash into ½ inch slices and salting them 30 minutes before you plan on cooking it, you can eliminate some of this extra moisture. This allows the squash to brown instead of steaming and becoming mushy when sautéed.

Although Cook's Illustrated thinks roasting is too much work for an easy summer meal, it remains one of my favorite cooking methods. Think of it this way, it may heat up your kitchen more than sautéing, but it requires less attention from you so you can slip out to the porch with a cool drink and a book and come back to dinner!

It wasn't until I tried to encourage people to roast cauliflower at the farmer's market last Saturday that I realized there is a lot of resistance out there to roasting vegetables. Sure, we've all roasted potatoes. You may have even tried beets or asparagus: but, cauliflower? YES! *Everything* is better roasted. When you boil or steam things you are adding water to the vegetable which dilutes flavor. In the oven, moisture from the vegetables evaporates which concentrates flavors and as a bonus, your vegetables may even caramelize (the natural sugars begin to brown). Mmm..

So many people ask, "How do you roast this or how do you roast that?" Since we put such a variety of things in your boxes, I can't help you with all of them. All I'm going to say is that roasting is very forgiving. If you don't roast over 350 degrees and you check it frequently, it's hard to overcook most things. Just wash the chosen vegetable, cut it into the desired size, toss with salt, pepper and olive oil and roast until it's done to your liking. Use a pan that allows you to lay out the vegetables in one uncrowded layer. Generally, you don't need to cover the pan. With cauliflower, the ends will get a little crispy. I prefer them that way but if you don't, try covering loosely with tinfoil. To test for doneness, try eating a morsel or sticking a fork in a bigger piece to see how much give is left. It couldn't be easier.

Most roasted veggies benefit from addi-

tional spicing or a sauce. Sprinkle them with a little curry powder or just some rosemary when you add the salt and pepper or make some pesto and add it to the cooked veggies. Another thing to keep in mind is that due to the evaporation of moisture in the veggies, there is a bit of shrinkage so always roast more than you think you'll need. The leftovers can be incorporated into pastas, stews or frittatas. You'll be amazed at how easy and infinite the possibilities are. Next issue, I'll give you plans for that outdoor oven you've been meaning to build. Just kidding!

Lee Davenport, Summer Farm Chef

COOK'S ILLUSTRATED PASTA AND SQUASH WITH BASIL AND PINE NUTS

This is even better with cherry tomatoes which will be in the box next week, I think, or you can add some feta and olives.

4 medium zucchini or summer squash, cut into 1/2 inch pieces
kosher salt

1 lb. farfelle or other chunky pasta
5 Tbsp. olive oil
3 garlic cloves, minced
½ tsp. red pepper flakes
½ c. basil leaves, chopped
2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
¼ c. pine nuts, toasted

Toss zucchini or summer squash with one Tbsp. salt. Transfer to a colander and place over a bowl for 30 minutes. Spread squash evenly over a double layer of paper towels. Pat dry with additional paper towels and wipe off residual salt. Cook pasta.

While the pasta cooks, heat one Tbsp. oil in a 12 inch nonstick skillet. Add ½ the squash and cook, stirring occasionally until golden brown. Transfer to a plate and repeat with the other half of the squash. (They explained that if you over-fill the skillet then the squash is piled and tends to steam itself, instead of browning.) Return empty skillet to medium-high heat and add a 1 Tbsp. of oil to coat the pan. Add the garlic and hot pepper flakes. Cook until fragrant, about ten seconds. Return the squash to the skillet and stir well to combine and heat through. Add the squash mixture, remaining 2 Tbsp. olive oil, basil, pine nuts and balsamic vinegar to the drained pasta in the stockpot; toss to combine. Adjust seasoning and serve.

Money Reminder:

Those members paying for their share in two installments -- your second payment is due by Aug. 1 - before your next box. You should have received an invoice earlier this month, enclose it with your payment, please.

KOOSA- LEBANESE STUFFED ZUCCHINI

This recipe uses the trick of getting rid of the extra moisture in the squash by cooking the rice inside!

6 medium zucchini or patty pan
½ c. long-grain rice
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 lg. onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
¾ lb. ground beef
1 tsp. ground allspice
2 tsp. salt
¾ tsp. ground pepper
2 c. diced tomatoes
1 c. chicken stock or vegetable broth
½ lemon

Hollow out each zucchini, working from both ends with a small melon baller or a spoon, removing all seeds and leaving shells 1/3 inch thick. If using a patty pan, remove a circle of the top to create a lid. Scoop out some of the center, leaving 1/3 inch shells. Wash rice in several changes of cold water until water runs almost clear, then drain in a sieve.

Heat oil in a skillet and sauté the onion until golden, 6-8 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, 1 minute. Transfer ¼ c. of the onion mixture to a bowl and cool slightly. Add rice, meat, allspice, 1 ½ tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper and mix well with your hands. Stuff the zucchini shells with the meat mixture, being careful no to pack too tightly because the rice will expand as it cooks.

Add tomatoes, stock, ½ tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper to the onion mixture in the skillet and bring to a simmer. Put the stuffed zucchini in tomato sauce and simmer, covered, until rice is cooked through, 1 to 1 ¼ hours. Cut 1 zucchini crosswise, at an angle, to check. If sauce is watery, transfer zucchini to a plate and boil sauce, stirring until it reaches the desired consistency. Serve the zucchini with the sauce on top and a squeeze of lemon.

PRODUCE PLUS

This is a service that we offer to allow members to put up or preserve quantities of produce for use out of season. You order by calling or e-mailing member-volunteer Cheryl Thompson **by Tuesday evening:**

249-1970

OR thompck@hotmail.com

We bring the produce order to our market stand and ask that you pick it up there by 12 noon. You can pay for it at that time. We are sorry, we can not deliver it to your site.

This Week: Basil - 3 # for \$18.00, or 1 pound for \$6.50.

(Beans coming soon.)