

Johnson's Backyard Garden, Fall Session Week #7
November 19th, 2007

Table of Contents

- 1) In your box this week
- 2) Winter Session Sign-up Reminder
- 3) Volunteers Needed this Weekend to Help Pack CSA Boxes
- 4) Recent Plantings
- 5) Thanksgiving Thanks!
- 6) Home Delivery?
- 7) Sustainable Agriculture
- 8) Broccoli
- 9) Recipes
- 10) Subscribe/Unsubscribe To Newsletter
- 11) Johnson's Backyard Garden Contact Information



1) In your box this week:

Sweet Potatoes
Cabbage (Green or Red)
Broccoli
Cauliflower (a few boxes got double broccoli)
Bunch of Radishes
Bunch of Turnips
Mustard or Turnip Greens
Green Garlic
Tomato
Pepper
Tatsoi
Arugula
Basil

**next week we will harvest red butter head lettuce, 3 types of kale -dinosaur, red Russian and Siberian dwarf, red poblanos (spicy), various sweet peppers, a few kohlrabi, bok choy, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, last of the basil, tomatoes. Parsley will probably also be in the boxes.

How to store this week's bounty: all - except the sweet potatoes and tomatoes go in the fridge as soon as you arrive home. Fresh basil should be stored in the refrigerator wrapped in a slightly damp paper towel. It may also be frozen, either whole or chopped, in airtight containers. Alternatively, you can freeze the basil in ice cube trays covered with either water or stock that can be added when preparing soups or stews. Checkout our [storage tips](#) on our website.

2) Winter Session Sign-up Reminder

Now is the time to send in payment for Winter Session 10 week CSA membership (December 15 through February 23rd). To allow us time to process memberships before the start of the session, **please send in a [sign-up form](#) and payment for the winter session by December 1st**. Remember membership in a prior session guarantees your membership in the next session as long as your payment is received by the due date for the sign-up period.

For new or current members, each session please print out a sign up form from our web page and send it in with your payment. The form is located on our web page under the "[join tab](#)";. Once we receive your payment we will follow-up to confirm your membership and provide additional details regarding pickup.

For the winter session we will be limiting our membership and may have to start a waiting list. If you are a new member, please send in your membership ASAP to guarantee a membership slot.

Our Fall Session ends on December 8th, but we grow and sell vegetables year round through five separate 10 week CSA membership sessions. We take vacation for a week at Christmas and a week in August.

3) Volunteers Needed this Weekend to Help Pack CSA Boxes

No joking....Usually every Saturday we have a crew of 15 or so of CSA work shares members and volunteers that help harvest and make the weekly delivery of vegetables possible. This weekend we have a serious labor shortage due to the holidays and we need your help! Please email me if you would be willing to help work on the farm this Saturday from 8-12:30 and help pack the boxes. We really do need your help this weekend. This would be a good opportunity to come out and see what we do on the farm first hand.

Also if you will be out of town, please let us know if you will be unable to pick up your box this Saturday.



4) Recent Plantings

On Friday, Saturday and Sunday we planted arugula, salad mix, spinach, red onions, leeks, broccoli, and romaine lettuces. Lots of other stuff is growing in the green house.

5) Thanksgiving Thanks!

Thanksgiving is a holiday in which we give thanks for what we have and the bounty at the end of the harvest season. We have certainly had a bountiful year at the farm. After harvesting on Saturday and seeing the mountains of healthy and fresh produce, it is amazing to think back to a year ago when we were planting our first crops. I had just tilled a small patch of ground at the front of the farm and Matt and I were planting garlic. Texas was in a severe drought, and since the irrigation system was not installed yet, we had to run several connected hoses across the farm to irrigate the newly planted garlic. Our new irrigation system now waters 12 acres!

Over the past year, numerous volunteers and CSA work share members, Brad, Auli'i', Matt, Grit, Beth and I have all worked hard to make our CSA an educational, fun, and convenient way for you to support a local farm and enjoy top-quality produce. We thank you for your support and understanding as we continue to grow and improve.

A CSA is a unique opportunity for individuals and families to see how, where, and who is producing the food they eat. Almost all of our produce a member gets is harvested the morning before they pick it up. There simply is just no fresher way to get produce than the CSA,... other than growing it yourself.

We are aim to grow the highest quality vegetables possible and I am experimenting with new tasty heirloom varieties to help make the boxes as diverse and interesting as possible. Your feedback is valued; let us know what we can do to improve our service.

6) Home Delivery?

I thought I would take this opportunity to poll customers regarding their interest in home delivery. A number of large CSA's around the country offer members the option of home delivery at a small additional cost. Would you be interested in this service if we were to offer it for an additional cost of \$6? Please e-mail us and let us know.

Interest in our CSA has really been growing rapidly and we have added a lot of new customers. I am now starting to dream of purchasing a refrigerated truck to help with delivering our produce.

7) Sustainable Agriculture

Sustainable agriculture integrates three main goals: environmental stewardship, farm profitability and the community aspects of farming. I think of sustainable agriculture as the ability of a farm to produce food indefinitely, with minimal disruption to the environment or ecosystem. Farming sustainably (both ecologically and economically) on a small property is more challenging than it may seem.

For those who have been out here and seen the farm, 20 acres looks like a fair amount of property. Actually when I first came out here it looked huge!....but after you spend time

here for a while your perspective changes. We only farm about 5.5 acres of the farm in vegetables at any one time. If you are wondering how I came up with 5.5 acres....9 of the 20 acres of the farm property is unavailable for vegetable production due to pecan orchards, housing and access roads. Additionally, when trying to farm the land in a responsible manner, we can only use at most 1/2 of our remaining 11 cultivatable acres for cash crops at one time. This is due to the need for land to be in soil building cover crops and green manures alternated with cash crops.

There is a limit to the number of vegetables that can be produced on 5.5 acres of vegetables, however we plan to work hard to provide a varied and diverse selection of fresh vegetables, fruits, nuts and berries from our farm. We are dedicated to this business and we are just beginning to realize the dream of owning and operating a small farm. This is what I have dreamed of doing since the middle of my college career (over 10 years ago) and we plan to be here for many years to come. We are working in the short term to get the equipment, people and systems in place to improve our efficiency and expand our customer base. Our goal is to provide the highest quality vegetables we can and be the best organic farm in the Region. We are lucky to have a good location, good land and a good market.... now it just takes innovation, hard work and luck....and hopefully in the future, more land!



8) Broccoli

Broccoli's name is derived from the Latin word *brachium*, which means branch or arm, a reflection of its tree-like shape that features a compact head of florets attached by small stems to a larger stalk. Broccoli has its roots in Italy. In ancient Roman times, it was developed from wild cabbage, a plant that more resembles collards than broccoli. It spread through out the Near East where it was appreciated for its edible flower heads and was subsequently brought back to Italy where it was further cultivated. Broccoli was introduced to the United States in colonial times, popularized by Italian immigrants who brought this prized vegetable with them to the New World.

Washing Broccoli

The cabbage butterfly is a common garden pest and often found as an unintended garnish on organic broccoli. The green worms hide so well in the broccoli heads that you rarely see them until they are cooked, at which point they turn white. Soaking the broccoli heads in a sink full of heavily salted water for 10 minutes or so before cooking will remove any worms.

How to Store

Broccoli is very perishable and should be stored in open plastic bag in the refrigerator crisper where it will keep for a week. Since water on the surface will encourage its degradation, do not wash the broccoli before refrigerating. Broccoli that has been blanched and then frozen can stay up to a year. Leftover cooked broccoli should be placed in tightly covered container and stored in the refrigerator where it will keep for a few days.

9) Recipes

Recipes each week are provided by CSA member and cookbook author, Elaine DiRico.

Thanksgiving is a time for memories and traditions. This may not make culinary sense or nutritional sense either for that matter, but this is my family's Thanksgiving Broccoli casserole, and the table wouldn't be the same without it.

Thanksgiving Broccoli Casserole

serves eight

1/2 cup mayonnaise

1/2 cup plain yogurt

1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese

1 cup blue cheese crumbles

2 eggs

salt and pepper to taste remember there is a lot of salt in the soup pack)

Flavor pack from Ramen noodles

6 cups peeled broccoli stems and heads, chopped, and
blanched in salted water

12 ounces sliced mushrooms, sauteed in

1 tablespoon butter

1 package chicken flavored Ramennoodles, broken up

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a bowl combine mayonnaise, yogurt, cheddar cheese, blue cheese dressing, eggs, salt, pepper, and flavor pack from noodles. In a separate bowl combine broccoli, mushrooms, and broken noodles then toss together wet mixture and vegetables to evenly coat. Place in an 8- by 8-inch baking dish that has been sprayed with non- stick cooking spray and cook for 45 minutes covered. Then remove cover and bake for additional 15 minutes to brown. Cool for 15 minutes before serving.

One of the fastest and easiest pasta recipes uses broccoli and anchovies. While I adore anchovies, not everyone does. You can leave them out, for vegetarians, and maybe increase the garlic a bit and add some salt, but assuming no ethical or health restraints with the little fishies, I would just not mention them. They melt away and disappear, leaving just a mild brininess. Use a flat noodle with this to hold on to the sauce better.

Broccoli with Fettuccini

serves 4 as a main course

6 cups blanched broccoli florets*
1/4 cup olive oil
3 or more anchovy filets
2 or more garlic cloves, minced**
red pepper flakes

1 pound fettuccini, cooked
grated Parmesan to top

In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium high heat, add the anchovies and garlic and stir into the oil. As soon as you can smell the garlic, it is cooked, so add the broccoli and toss well to coat. Add the red pepper flakes if you like, and toss with the fettuccini in the skillet, then serve.

* I like to clean and store my vegetables when I bring them home. With broccoli, I usually blanch the florets in boiling salted water, then plunge them into an ice bath. This holds the green color and tenderizes them enough that it reduces cooking time for fast meals later in the week. I prefer them blanched for about 2 minutes- still crisp, but slightly tender.

**The rule with garlic is this: the smaller it is cut, the stronger it gets. For just a trace of garlic, I put two or three whole cloves on a toothpick, and fish them out before serving a dish.

Marinated vegetables are all you need for an instant salad or side antipasti. Broccoli takes especially well to this- just toss the blanched florets with your favorite vinaigrette and let marinate for at least two hours. Toss with some chopped fresh herbs, like basil.

Soup time for me is right about now, when the weather is just cooling off. This is a great recipe, fabulously easy and worth the expense of saffron for the gorgeousness.

Golden Cauliflower soup

1 head cauliflower
1 1/2 quart stock (I use chicken, but a well-flavored vegetable stock is just as good.)
good pinch of saffron threads

Heat the stock, just to a boil. Break or cut the cauliflower into pieces the size of a ping pong ball, discarding the stem bits if they are tough. Add to the stock, and boil very gently, uncovered, until the cauliflower is quite tender. Puree in a food processor, or use an immersion blender if you have one. (If you don't, add it immediately to your Christmas wish list- and make sure they know you want one with the food processor attachment and whisk as well. You won't regret it, and whoever does the dishes will appreciate it too.) When the soup is velvety smooth, add the saffron, drop the heat to very low and let the saffron bloom- five minutes later, stir, and you have an amazing soup and deceptively rich in flavor. I like about a teaspoon of very green olive oil for flavor swirled across the top. It looks pretty spectacular, too.

Cauliflower and broccoli are crucifers also called *Brassic*as, along with collards, cabbage, brussel sprouts and even horseradish is a distant relative. They are high in Vitamin C and fiber and considered to have a number of anti-cancer properties. Traditionally, nursing mothers avoid these vegetables as they are thought to cause colic. All are relatively low in carbohydrates, especially cauliflower, and are a good option to bread for a fondue.

Good for you Fondue

2 cloves of garlic, sliced in half
1 1/2 cups dry white wine, beer or broth
1 Tablespoon cornstarch
1 pound cheese* grated
1 teaspoon Kirschwasser (optional)

Rub the inside of a heavy pot with the garlic, then discard. Stir the cornstarch into a Tablespoon of the wine or broth, and heat the rest over low heat just until it simmers then begin adding the grated cheese, a bit at a time and stir, in a zig-zag motion so you don't create big wads of cheese. When it is all creamy and melted, add the remaining ingredients, and cook over low heat (don't let it boil!!) until it is thick- about 5 minutes.

Serve with blanched cauliflower, broccoli florets, and bread if you like- fennel is nice as well.

*If you have access to Costco, they have a wonderful cave aged Gruyere that is amazing for this, and at a good price. You need a medium hard cheese, which is lower in fat and

calories than the wonderful soft gooey ones. A cheddar is good, and makes a grand queso dip with the same recipe, and a can of green chilies. I think I might use tequila rather than the Kirsch, though.

10) Subscribe/Unsubscribe To Newsletter

If you would like to subscribe or unsubscribe to our email newsletter click [here](#).

11) Johnson's Backyard Garden Contact Information

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