

August 26, 2003

Food for Thought

From the Fields:

Sitting here, watching the rain come down, thunder rumbling not too far away, somehow I'd rather curl up on the couch than go out and pick today's sweet corn. Instead, I'll put on the raingear and walk out that door. Such is farm life: critters need food and water whether you're having a good day or not, and crops need to be harvested, rain or not. I was lucky enough to get half the beans picked between showers today, so that actually made me pretty happy! The rain was needed however, and the lettuce seedlings have really perked up today, ready to be harvested in a week or so.

On this rather dreary August day I wanted to share a bright light with you (and some reading material for the couch!).

The organization we want to share with you, the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, or PASA for short, has been a constant source of inspiration, friends, and encouragement to us through the years of farming, and even long before we had our own farm. I first heard about the CSA concept at a PASA Conference many years ago, while still a student at Penn State, and tucked it away in the back of my mind for some day, when I'd be lucky enough to find a farm...Every year I attend the PASA conference at the Penn Stater in February, and come back inspired and motivated to try something new. Our two recently added calves, the pastured poultry, turkeys, row covers over the eggplant and so much more are all inspired by workshops and folks we have met through PASA.

The enclosed PASA newsletter, *Passages*, will show you the wide variety of issues that PASA stands and fights for here in Pennsylvania.

And since we know many of you share our hopes and concerns for the future, we invite you to consider joining PASA as a member to experience some of the same camaraderie and reassurance that we have, and to support the important work they do.

Our recommendation that you join PASA is given to you as simply and sincerely as a basket of beans or a dozen eggs, with your health and wellbeing in mind! We would be honored to have you standing with us in this important cause!

Sabine and Tom

Organic Inspection This Week!

As part of our organic certification through a USDA accredited certifier, our farm gets inspected annually. An inspector will be at our farm this Friday, spending hours going over our whole farm "system", including soil fertility, disease and pest management, and whether we are following all the requirements. Besides the actual farm inspection, all our records, including production & harvest records, and so much more will be closely inspected. What this basically means for us is that we spend some time straightening up and gathering all our records in one place for easy access, and through the inspection taking the time out to identify the strengths and weaknesses of our farm system.

Goodies this Week:

- Sweet Corn!-

Nothing else tastes like summer like sweet corn! This variety is called Tuxedo, because it's so nicely "dressed". We enjoy not only the great taste of this variety, but also the fact that it's tight Tuxedo fit of husks actually prevents those pesky corn ear worms from getting into the ear. Now how's that for variety selection?

Enjoy this corn asap, always tastes best the day it's picked. Store in fridge otherwise. Left over corn can be added to omelets, soups, salsa, and even cut from the ear and frozen.

- Tomatoes -

The plants are hanging in there, stressed as they were by the cold, wet weather. We've got all shapes, sizes and flavors. To showcase the diversity of them all, I love to cut them into slices on a platter, with fresh mozzarella cheese, fresh shredded basil, a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of sea salt. This whole combination is also great tossed with some roasted sourdough bread cube "croutons".

And then there's always the tomato sandwich, with some onions, basil and salt on top. Tom likes his tomato sandwiches with peanut butter, so if you're willing to try the central pennsylvania thing, go for it - I personally won't recommend it too highly...

- Last Eggplants-

those little plants are plum tuckered out! Our first year growing these little asian eggplants, I was quite impressed with their determination in pumping out these little tasty beauties. Each plant produced about 7 or so fruits, which was amazing! Now that they're winding down, I'll

quickly have to overcome my eggplant aversion and try some last ones on the grill, as many of you have recommended.

- Pepper -

one of the best kitchen smells , peppers fried up with onions...

- Onions-

Freshly harvested so they're not dry enough for long-term storage.
Wonderful flavor.

- Parsley-

because you always need some around...

- Green Beans-

The lemon green bean recipe that was in the newsletter a while ago was a big hit at our farm Potluck, and easy to make too. Here's a repeat in case you didn't save it!

Green Beans with Lemon Butter

1 tablespoon coarse salt, plus more for seasoning
1 pound green bean
2 tablespoon unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
1 tablespoon finely grated lemon zest (about 1 lemon)
freshly ground pepper

Fill medium saucepan three quarters full of cold water. Bring to a boil. Add salt and beans. Cook until water returns to a boil and beans are tender, 4-5 minutes. Remove from heat and drain. Immediately return beans to saucepan. Add butter and zest. Toss, season with salt and pepper. Transfer to serving bowl and serve.
Serves 4

- Martha Stewart Living, July 2003

Sabine Carey

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