



THE HALF WAY POINT

Variety is the spice of life. Trying new things keeps life interesting. In the depths of winter, as we mull over our seed list, we contemplate every variety we plan to grow in the coming season. We consider the previous year's results, we take into account what other farmers recommend and also keep in mind how we can keep things new and changing for our members.

This time of year, we start taking tomatoes to market and we have more varieties than your average garden. Especially this year, being we received hundreds of replacement plants from other farms back in May. Folks who are "tomato connoisseurs" always ask for information about each of the varieties and we heartily explain each one. They know that some are sweeter, some are less acidic, others have very few seeds, some are better for saucing, juicing, the list goes on. In all, there are about 45 different tomato varieties growing here today. Nearly every one is open-pollinated, which means we will save to seeds from our favorites for replanting next year.

Variety was also the hot topic between farmers during the field walk this past weekend. Sunday, we hosted an impromptu lunch and afternoon of socializing with three other local CSA farms. We spent time walking thru the fields and going over each section variety by variety. We shared our own experiences and tips for success or stories of failures all the while jotting down mental notes of variety names and conjuring up our spreadsheet of seeds and rattling off the seed's sources. The difficult part was getting eight CSA farmers to stop working and just relax!

As our share season marks the half way point, hopefully you have tried a few new varieties of vegetables from our farm. Asian greens? Arugula? Patty pan squash? Hopefully you have added some variety to your meals the past few months. More variety, means more nutrition and healthier you. Even after 12 years of cooking together, this week we discovered zucchini noodles and could not believe how tasty they were! There are always new things to learn and new things to try, the spice of life.

Heading downhill from here,

Eric & Rebecca

IN THE CRATE

Mixed Tomatoes

Celery

Herb - Basil or Parsley

Green or Yellow Wax Beans

Cucumbers

Mixed Carrots

Onions

Garlic Bulb

Broccoli Shoots or Squash

Kale or Chard - choice

Bell Pepper (*family shares*)

Life expectancy would grow by leaps and bounds if green vegetables smelled as good as bacon.

- Doug Larson

MARKET EVENT

Medford Farmer's Market Customer Appreciation Event will be held Saturday, August 20.

- FREE FOOD - samples of locally produced goods and recipes prepared by Marilyn's Catering
- Big zucchini weigh-in contest open to all home gardeners and farmer's alike
- Get the science behind canning with UW Extension Professor and Family Living agent Peggy Nordgren from 10 to noon
- Door prizes and gift certificates given away every 30 minutes from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm
- Vendor specials

Follow our Facebook page for more details and let your friends and neighbors know as well.

Every item on your list this week is an item you have already received at least once. So the descriptions are not necessary. There are only a couple of new notes.

CELERY

We are back to the regular green celery. Remember how overpowering homegrown can be and use less in a supporting role. I did a bit of internet browsing and copied down some suggestions for great ways to use celery if you are struggling.

Juiced

Celery juice adds bright, vibrant flavor without being too sweet. Try it in combination with cucumber, kale, and apple for a refreshing juice combination. Also try celery juice in cocktails; it plays nicely with tequila or gin.

Pickled

The tart pieces of pickled celery with remain crunchy and pick up the sour pickle brine nicely. This is a fun way to eat celery. I'm thinking this would be great in a tomato juice based cocktail.

Relish

You can make nearly anything into relish! Chop up celery and combine it with cooked cranberries and almonds for a fun twist on relish. Also try mixing it with blue cheese, herbs, and olive oil for a fun buffalo wing-inspired relish to serve with grilled or roasted chicken.

Braised

Braised celery takes on the flavor of the braising liquid nicely, turning it from crisp and refreshing into something warm and comforting. Whether you braise in tomato sauce or chicken stock, braised celery can be a great main dish when spooned over polenta or cous-cous.

Pre-Mix Recipe Starter

Celery is in the base of so many winter recipes, especially soups and stews. Precook the holy trinity (celery, onion, and green bell pepper), and then freeze it to get a jumpstart on recipes calling for the mix.

BEANS

The beans are winding down. Please enjoy what is left. We apologize for any quality concerns. As the beans start to decline, they aren't as nice as the first few pickings. When we have extra beans or any produce, we often turn to our refrigerator pickle recipe.

GARLIC BULB

The garlic bulb this week is simply called Amish Rocamboles. It is an heirloom variety that originates in

Wisconsin and produces nice bulbs with rosy pink and brown stripes on the bulb wrapper. This variety has a pungently hot and lingering flavor.

We like Amish rocamboles because there are so many cloves per bulb, an average of nine, but sometimes up to fifteen. We like lots of smaller cloves for pickling things this time of year. Not so good for roasting, but don't let that stop you.

BROCCOLI SHOOTS

Again, please utilize the stems and leaves. They are sweeter than the florets. Finely chopped with a bit of garlic or onion, add a small amount to your scrambled eggs in the morning for some variety!

Don't forget, you can blanch broccoli for two minutes, shock with cold water and store in the freezer for several months. It is one vegetable we enjoy all year long this way.

RECIPE: PICKLED VEGGIES

Can be used for your cucumbers alone or in a mixture with beans, peppers, peas, cauliflower, carrots, kohlrabi, broccoli and more.

Brine Ingredients

- 1 1/2 quarts water
- 2 cups distilled vinegar
- 1/2 cup canning salt
- dill seeds or dill heads
- mustard seed
- chopped garlic

Directions

Wash and chop veggies. Heat brine to boiling and set aside to cool slightly while you pack your veggies.

Pack a one gallon jar or food grade pail with fresh veggies. Add one large onion sliced into rings, four cloves of garlic coarsely chopped, 1/2 teaspoon mustard seed and 4 to 6 dill heads (4 tablespoons seeds).

Pour hot (not boiling) brine over veggies. Let stand for 3 days. Store in fridge. This makes a great party snack. Gets better in time.

Please feel free to share your recipe ideas with us.

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