



Down on the Farm Notes: July 8, 10, &12

Hi everyone,

Hope you had a wonderful 4th of July weekend. The 4th landing on a Friday extended the holiday for 3 wonderful days. Now...back to work.

Well, we made it through our first stressful week. This really is a challenge to coordinate 300 people and if there are any logistical changes along the way, (as in the West Street Market opening 1 week later) it causes that much more confusion. Thanks for your understanding and patience.

I want to answer some big questions, so please keep reading and hear me out. I know what some of you are thinking, especially our new members. Is this all we get for what we paid? I cannot stress enough, or lecture enough, or discuss enough how you need to hang on and know that the good stuff is coming. The crazy spring weather was hard on everyone, including the California farmers. They are even experiencing a lull in their harvests, so we know we aren't the only ones. And as Pauline reminded me today, at least we do not have to deal with thick smoke and our fields haven't burned up!

Each year Mother Nature hands us different challenges and we have to roll with the

punches. We have become remarkably dependent and out of touch with growing our own food. If central California loses their tomatoes, it's no big deal for us consumers because we just get them from somewhere else. For example, the frost and hail hurt many of the local farmers in the northern California area this spring. You, as a consumer, won't really know how keenly it will be felt by the farmers because you will still have peaches and other fruit available from some other source, but the picture changes when you are depending on vegetables that are grown only in your area. Ah-ha! Now you can understand the shortcomings. If we're only buying local, we can only have what is locally available at the time. Still, though, you get to enjoy the abundance of what does make it and is in season. That is what eating seasonally in Nevada is going to be all about.

Some of our spring members didn't sign up for the summer basket because they put in their own gardens. I have spoken with them over the last few weeks and I absolutely enjoyed listening to all of the problems they are having...wait! I mean I am sorry they are having the problems, but misery likes company. And they too are realizing the challenges of growing in Nevada. Since

most of you are depending on us to provide for you, and you are not learning firsthand how difficult farming can be, please try to understand and believe that we are trying the best we can. Each year brings us new challenges. What may do well this year may not do well the next, but it seems to even out in the end. You learn to enjoy what is available. So thank you so much, to all of you who are trying to understand, and for those of you who continue to support us. You are troopers.

Here is a quick tease of some of the things that will be coming—that way you can dream instead of being disappointed. We decided from last year's comments that we are going to beef up the good things like the melons, watermelon and tomatoes. A vine ripened tomato just can't be beat. The peppers are growing, the eggplants are setting, the beans are reaching for the sun, and the raspberry plants are beautiful. The cucumbers are slow in joining the party, but they are beginning to come around, and Rick planted LOTS! Lettuce doesn't grow well in the heat, so we change gears to sliced tomato and cucumber salads in the summer. The corn is beginning to silk; the ears are forming and it won't be long before we can eat fresh corn. When the Nevada produce is ready, feasting begins. I feel just as you do and I wish we could draw out the eating pleasure just a little longer on both ends of the calendar, but we are always thankful for what we do get to enjoy!

So what is in the box this week? A small amount, but yummy!! The squash is producing full force now and you have a beautiful variety of them. You have an "Eight Ball", "One Ball", "Magda", "Roly Poly", "Sunburst" and a plain ol' green zucchini. How is that for variety? You will love them. You have fresh garlic, onion, a teaser of fresh basil along with a pretty variety of cherry tomatoes. And it gets better with fresh organic strawberries and organic peaches and nectarines. Thursday's and Saturday's delivery may not have cherry tomatoes but regular tomatoes instead—Early Girls and 4th of Julys. They are just beginning to come on, so we will take turns so that everyone gets tomatoes. Yum!

The round squash are great sliced, marinated in olive oil and vinegar, some garlic and cooked on the BBQ. They are also great to stuff. If you cut just the top off and scoop out the seeds, you can stuff it with whatever you have available. Our favorite is sausage and veggies. Cook the filling first, then stuff the squash, put in a baking dish, cover and bake until tender. You can top with cheese. Our family loves to have a treat once in awhile and fry squash. A thin slice of zucchini or round squash, dipped in flour and then egg, and fry in oil. Mmmm, a summer treat we always look forward to. They usually don't make it to the table, though. The Magda is an Italian type squash. They are generally used to stuff. You cut them lengthwise, scoop out the center and then fill with your favorite

filling. The Patty Pan varieties are great sliced thin and sautéed or put on the BBQ whole, or quartered and put on a skewer with other vegetables to BBQ. The sky's the limit and I will have plenty of recipes for this prolific, versatile vegetable!! Also, a little note. If you don't eat all the garlic right away, it is great to store and keep for later use. Keep in a dry, dark location and it will last you all summer. You can never have too much garlic on hand!

During the heat of the day on Saturday, a friend shared a great refreshing recipe. They blended strawberries and watermelon with a little touch of basil to make a cool refreshing drink. Doesn't that sound good?

We are in the heart of the summer season and now is the time to enjoy cooking outside with company, family, and friends. Enjoy!

Recipes

Sage-Roasted Squash

4 medium summer squash (a variety)
2 tbl. olive oil
2 tbl. sage (can use other herbs such as oregano or thyme)
1tbl. minced garlic
salt and pepper to taste

Heat oven to 350. Cut squash and zucchini into 1" dice, toss with other ingredients, and roast until tender, 15-20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Quick Sautéed Zucchini

Any variety of summer squash (sliced thin)
minced garlic
salt and pepper to taste

Sauté on low heat in olive oil or butter until tender. Last few minutes of cooking, add some fresh basil. At the very end, sprinkle with parmesan cheese and serve right away.

Stuffed Zucchini Boats

1 lb. ground beef (or favorite sausage)
1 chopped onion
1 1/2c. bread crumbs
1 1/2c. chopped fresh or frozen spinach
1/2c. minced parsley (optional..only if you like parsley)
1/2c. tomato sauce
1/4c. Parmesan
1 beaten egg
1 tsp. salt
1/2tsp. dried thyme
4 or so medium zucchini (or any stuffable squash)
1c. water

In a large skillet, cook beef and onion until meat is browned. Stir in bread crumbs, spinach, parsley, tomato sauce, parmesan, egg, salt and thyme. Set aside.

Cut each zucchini in half lengthwise. Scoop out seeds, leaving 1/4 inch shells. Spoon beef mixture into each zucchini half. Place in ungreased baking dish. Pour 1/2c. water into each dish. Cover and bake at 350 for 30 minutes. Uncover; bake 10 minutes longer or until zucchini is tender. Top with cheese, if you wish.

Zucchini Dollar Cakes

1/2 lb. squash (approximately 1 1/2c.)
3 egg yolks only (save the whites)
1/2c. cottage cheese
1 clove garlic, minced
3 tbl. wheat or rye or white flour
1/2 tsp. salt and 1/8 tsp. pepper
1/8 tsp. marjoram or oregano
3 egg whites
butter

Grate zucchini. Add to egg yolks, along with rest of ingredients except egg whites and butter. Mix well. Beat egg whites stiff and fold gently into zucchini mixture. Melt butter in a skillet and drop batter by tablespoons into it. Turn each cake when the surface is a bit dry and looks "set". Sauté until they are golden brown on both sides. Serve immediately.