



In the Share

Delicata Squash, 1 lg and 2 small
Carrots, 1 bag
Summer Squash, 3 pieces
Eggplant, 1 piece
Sweet Peppers, follow signs
Lettuce, 1 head
Salad Mix, 1 bag
Salsa basket, 1 bag
Beans: Dragon Tongue,
Green or Romano, 1 bag
Onions, 2 bulbs
Garlic, 1 head
Tomatoes, TBD

Here's the truth about what I have for dinner sometimes: I microwave a bowl of grits (yes, I have a microwave, I use it, and although not from the south, I am fond of grits) and then sauté whatever vegetables I have on hand. The vegetables top the grits and then I fry an egg over-easy and put it on as a crown. Of course, the grits have plenty of butter, salt and pepper, and sometimes even cheese. Last night, it was a combo of eggplant, pepper, and tomato without the cheese but the yolk from the egg made up for it in richness. It's easy, it's quick, and I can make a single serving. Incorporating these vegetables into your diet doesn't need to involve a change in repertoire, it means being (continued on the back)

From the Farmer

Color Blind

Like many of you, my household's week has been marked by going back to school on Tuesday. My wife, Kat, is a first grade reading teacher, so she (somewhat reluctantly) said goodbye to summer vacation and returned to her classroom. The more significant event for us, though, was walking Oliver to school for his very first day of kindergarten. Let's just say that the big day was fraught with excitement and trepidation for each member of the family, and I am pretty sure that in the end, Ollie's was not the most anxious day of the bunch.

As I worked through my farm day on Tuesday, my mind was full of a string of fleeting images of my own kindergarten experience so many years ago. One of my most prominent memories is sitting in a circle on the carpet with my classmates and practicing our color recognition. Miss Sue would hold up big flashcards with a simple object on them and call on us one by one. It was our job to respond with the color: Red firetruck. Yellow banana. Green leaf. As I remember it, most of the other required kindergarten duties came fairly easily to me (letters, numbers, playing in the sandbox, picking my nose,...), but I can still remember the sense of dread I felt during that color exercise. I simply did not know the answers and was relegated to blindly guessing.

Many years later, an optometrist confirmed what we had come to suspect: I have a fairly acute case of color blindness. I remember him chuckling and telling me that I would probably never be a successful interior designer or a fighter pilot (why those airplane guys need to see colors well, I still don't know). He was right on with his predictions about my career path, but he forgot to tell me that my lack of conventional color vision would present challenges as an organic vegetable farmer too. My handicap generally surfaces during harvest time. Most crops' maturity is determined by shape and size, but there are a few where it is all about the color. My first years of farming saw me pick a few hard, green tomatoes, before I learned to feel the fruits for the telltale softening, and to understand where on the plant ripe fruit would most likely hang. Another trick is to have other people harvest the peppers as much as possible. When I do find myself picking peppers, I joke that I am just using "the force" to determine whether or not they have gone from green to red. While I feel like my pepper intuition has gotten pretty good, I have been known to make mistakes.

The crop that confounds me the most every year, though, is winter squash. These large fruits size up on the vine, and then one must keep tabs on them for subtle color changes to know when to harvest. Each fall, I fret about that timing, and this one is no different. On Tuesday afternoon, while all of the kids were adjusting to their new school years, we started picking the delicata squash that you see in your shares this week. When mature, their skin turns creamy or even yellow and their stripes change to deeper green. Though I'm pretty sure that her original cards didn't have obscure squashes on them, I felt like Miss Sue was holding up a series of her flashcards with delicatas on them. I had to say "ripe" or "unripe". Fortunately for you all, I had lots of help from the crew determining their readiness, and I feel very confident in the results. Delicata squashes are among my favorite, and I highly recommend the baking treatment Julie suggests on the back. Look for lots more winter squash over the upcoming weeks...I promise to continue getting help from those that have color vision!

-Jake

Recipe

I know I said in the column that the best delicata flavor comes from baking, and this is true, but this recipe is an excellent and unique deviation. It is a salad, which is kind of funny to think of putting a winter squash into a salad, but it works. It is by Elizabeth Schneider and she is one of those cooks that I trust completely.

Steamed Delicata Rings with Tomato-Onion-Cilantro Dressing

2 Delicata squash (about 1 pound each)

About ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

½ C cilantro leaves

2 Tablespoons olive oil

1 medium red onion, diced

¼ teaspoon ground cumin

Pinch of ground hot pepper

Pinch of ground cloves or allspice

2 Tablespoons cider vinegar

½ teaspoon honey

2 medium tomatoes, chopped small

1. With vegetable peeler, zip skin from squash, leaving what remains naturally in the indentations. Cut off ends and hollow out the inside with a knife or teaspoon.
2. Set rings on rack of large steamer over boiling water. Sprinkle with ¼ teaspoon salt. Cover and steam until tender, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a serving dish.
3. Meanwhile, chop cilantro. Warm 1 Tablespoon oil in skillet over moderate heat. Add onion and cook to soften slightly. Add cumin, hot pepper, and cloves; toss briefly. Reduce heat, add vinegar, honey, and tomatoes, and toss until juicy- a few minutes at most.
4. Remove from heat. Stir in remaining tablespoon of oil and half the cilantro. Adjust seasoning. Spoon over the squash. Top with remaining cilantro. Serve warm or room temperature.

Roasted Green beans with Carrots and Red Onion

These roasted vegetables can be served hot from the oven, warm or at room temperature.

¾ lb. green beans, trimmed

½ lb. carrots, peeled and cut diagonally
about ¼ inch thick

1 red onion, sliced

2 large garlic cloves, very thinly sliced

1 ½ Tbs. olive oil

1 tsp. ground cumin

Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Preheat an oven to 350°F. Place an 8-by-11-inch heavy roasting pan or a very large, ovenproof fry pan on the rack. Bring a large saucepan three-fourths full of water to a boil over high heat. Add a pinch of salt and the green beans. Cook the beans until they turn bright green and are just tender, 1 to 2 minutes. The timing will depend on the age and size of the beans. Drain the beans and plunge them into a bowl of ice-cold water to stop the cooking and drain again. In a large bowl, toss together the beans, carrots, onion, garlic and olive oil. Sprinkle with the cumin, season with salt and pepper, and toss again to thoroughly combine. Transfer the vegetables to the preheated pan and spread them evenly. Roast, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are tender and lightly browned, 45 to 55 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasonings with salt and pepper. Serves 4.
Leslie Revsin, Chef and Cookbook Author, New York City.

(continued from "In the Share")

creative with what you have and incorporating those things into your favorite dishes. Like Jake said last week, at this time of year, it's easy because most of the veggies can shine on their own but pair together well, too. Experiment!

We've been promising the change in season for weeks now and here is its manifestation: delicata squash. It is indeed delicate; its skin is thinner than most winter squashes and therefore may be eaten. And since it's so delicious, I'm sure you will eat them all up right away, which is a good thing, as it does not store well, another result of having thin skin. The best taste comes from baking. Split and place split side up on a baking sheet, cover with foil, bake at 350°F until tender when pierced with a fork. Pair with maple syrup, balsamic vinegar, or spices such as fennel, cinnamon or nutmeg.

We are offering a new type of bean this week; it is green, flat and known as an Italian green bean, or Romano. They are quite large but don't let that fool you, they are still tender and delicious. Treat as you would string green beans by chopping, steaming and serving simply laced with butter. Or incorporate into other favorite green bean dishes.

The onions are storage onions and you may treat them as such. Our onion crop this year is out of this world. They look magnificent all curing in the heat of the greenhouse. This seals the neck closed and traps all the goodness inside the papery skins that flake off so easily when handled. Handle them gently, as they will bruise, but keep them in your cupboard at room temperature. They will last several weeks and probably months. But they are so good, I'm sure they won't make it that long!

Coming next week... more winter squash, maybe broccoli and bok choy and the first of the leeks

Troy Community Farm

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