

Four Friends' CSA News

The Bean Pole

September 8, 2009

2009 Season

Issue No. 53

Dear Shareholders and Friends,

Here's the harvest list for this week; Potatoes, carrots, grape tomatoes, beets, lettuce mix, and garlic.

Today's recipe comes from the Mayo Clinic's collection of healthy recipes, www.mayoclinic.com. To your health!

Beet Walnut Salad

1 small bunch of beets, or enough canned beets (no salt added) to make 3 cups, drained
¼ cup red wine vinegar
¼ cup chopped apple
¼ cup chopped celery
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon water
8 cups fresh salad greens
Freshly ground pepper
3 tablespoons chopped walnuts
¼ cup gorgonzola cheese, crumbled

Steam raw beets in water in saucepan until tender. Slip off skins. Rinse to cool. Slice in ½ inch rounds. In a medium bowl, toss with red wine vinegar. Add apples and celery. Toss together. In a large bowl, combine balsamic vinegar, olive oil and water. Add salad greens and toss. Put greens onto individual salad plates. Top with sliced beet mixture. Sprinkle with pepper, walnuts and cheese. Serve immediately.

VEGGIE OF THE WEEK: BEETS

This week's beets are grown by Pak Express. When did she plant these? About 60 days ago or around July 6th. Beet roots take anywhere from 56 to 70 days to mature after sowing the seeds...of course, weather and variety of beet are factors also.

It is difficult to believe how the hardy, crunchy often rough looking exterior of raw beets can be transformed into something wonderfully soft and buttery once they are cooked. While beets are available throughout the year, their season runs

from June through October when the youngest, most tender beets are easiest to find.

Edible green leaves are attached to the tapered round or oblong root portions that we know as beets. While we often think of beets having a reddish-purple hue, some varieties are white, golden-yellow or even rainbow colored. The sweet taste of beets reflects their high sugar content making them an important raw material for the production of refined sugar; they have the highest sugar content of all vegetables, yet are very low in calories.

How to Select and Store

Choose small or medium-sized beets whose roots are firm, smooth-skinned and deep in color. Smaller, younger beets may be so tender that peeling won't be needed after they are cooked.

Avoid beets that have spots, bruises or soft, wet areas, all of which indicate spoilage. Shriveled or flabby should also be avoided as these are signs that the roots are aged, tough and fibrous.

While the quality of the greens does not reflect that of the roots, if you are going to consume this very nutritious part of the plant, look for greens that appear fresh, tender, and have a lively green color.

Store beets unwashed in the refrigerator crisper where they will keep for two to four weeks. Cut the majority of the greens and their stems from the roots, so they do not pull away moisture away from the root. Leave about two inches of the stem attached to prevent the roots from "bleeding."

Store the unwashed greens in a separate plastic bag where they will keep fresh for about four days.

Raw beets do not freeze well since they tend to become soft upon thawing. Freezing cooked beets is fine; they'll retain their flavor and texture.

A Few Quick Serving Ideas:

Simply grate raw beets for a delicious and colorful addition to salads or decorative garnish for soups.

Add chunks of beet when roasting vegetables in the oven.

Serving homemade vegetable juice? A quarter of a beet will turn any green drink into a sweet pink concoction, pleasing both the eyes and the taste buds.

Healthy sauté beet greens with other braising greens such as chard and mustard greens.

Marinate steamed beets in fresh lemon juice, olive oil, and fresh herbs.

Individual Concerns

Beeturia

If you start to see red when you increase your consumption of beets, don't be alarmed. You're just experiencing *beeturia*, or a red or pink color to your urine or stool. No need to panic; the condition is harmless.

FARM NEWS:

- ❖ Unfortunately, late blight has hit Scratch Farm's heirloom tomatoes. The tomatoes can look fine one day, and then, poof, the next day the plants are dead! That's farming.
- ❖ Deer have been eating Pak Express' sweet potatoes greens.
- ❖ Blue Skys Flower Farm gourd crop was not successful. Approximately 50 plants became diseased, only producing about 25 actual gourds. ☹

What is being planted now?

- Mixed lettuce, mixed cooking greens, spinach and peas. These are fairly quick crops to grow that really love the cooler nighttime temperatures.

Till next week...