

Four Friends' CSA News

The Bean Pole

October 6, 2009

2009 Season

Issue No. 57

Dear Shareholders and Friends,

In this week's harvest you'll find; Lettuce mix with arugula, beets, radishes, grape tomatoes, onions, fennel, culinary herbs.

Beets with Ginger

About a pound of cooked, sliced beets
3 tablespoons of Florida crystals
2 teaspoons of either corn starch or potato starch
1 teaspoon of peeled, finely chopped ginger
A pinch of salt
2 teaspoons of fresh lemon juice
¼ cup of raisins, (optional)
2 tablespoons of butter or pure grapeseed oil

Scrub the beets, and roast them for 45 minutes to one hour at 400 degrees. Allow them to cool, then peel and slice them. In a saucepan combine the sugar, corn or potato starch, salt, and ginger. Blend in ½ cup of boiling water with the lemon juice. Add the raisins if you like raisins. Whisk the mixture constantly over medium heat. Bring it to a boil, and let it boil for one minute while stirring. Fold in the butter or grapeseed oil, and the sliced, roasted beets. Simmer for 5 or 10 minutes.

FARM NEWS

- ❖ As mentioned earlier, next Tuesday, October 13th, the farmers will have a potluck for all members. The farmers will cook up some tasty snacks. It will be held at the farm, 35 Pippin Orchard Road, Cranston, from 4 to 7 pm.
- ❖ Blue Skys Flower Farm has a small, but good crop of sunflowers growing in the greenhouse.
- ❖ Pak Express has a good fall harvest and continues to provide over 50% of the veggies to the CSA.
- ❖ Scratch Farm reports that her work share program has worked out very well this year. The farm offers a vegetable share in exchange for a workday at the farm each week.

VEGGIE OF THE WEEK: BEETS

Description

Both beets and Swiss chard are different varieties within the same plant family (*Amaranthaceae-Chenopodiaceae*) and their edible leaves share a resemblance in both taste and texture. Attached to the beet's green leaves is a round or oblong root, the part conjured up in most people's minds by the word "beet." Although typically a beautiful reddish-purple hue, beets also come in varieties that feature white or golden roots. No matter what their color, however, beet roots aren't as hardy as they look; the smallest bruise or puncture will cause red beets' red-purple pigments, which contain beneficial flavonoids called *anthocyanins*, to bleed, especially during

cooking.

Beets' sweet taste reflects their high sugar content, which makes beets an important source for the production of refined sugar. Raw beet roots have a crunchy texture that turns soft and buttery when they are cooked. Beet leaves have a lively, bitter taste similar to chard. The main ingredient in the traditional eastern European soup, borscht, beets are delicious eaten raw, but are more typically cooked or pickled.

The greens attached to the beet roots are delicious and can be prepared like spinach or Swiss chard. They are incredibly rich in nutrients, concentrated in vitamins and minerals as well as carotenoids such as beta-carotene and lutein/zeaxanthin.

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.

ENJOY YOUR VEGGIES, FLOWERS and/or EGGS!!