



# Big Leaf Farm Newsletter Week #8 July 19– July 25, 2009

## Farm News

Summer is definitely in full swing, as evidenced by our lineup in the last few weeks. Look for this kind of diversity to continue in your boxes in the weeks to come, with a few additions like sweet corn, melons, and peppers. It's hard to believe that we are already 1/3 of the way into our season.

Realizing how far we are into the season made us think that we need to plan a get-together for CSA members before it gets too late. We'd like to give everyone a chance to meet fellow members and check out the farm at its peak of productivity. We're planning on holding a work party/potluck lunch on Sunday August 23<sup>rd</sup>. We'll be digging potatoes in the morning from 10:00 – 12:00 (assuming the timing is right) then sharing a potluck lunch from 12:00 – 2:00. Attendance at the work party is not mandatory if you want to come to the potluck! We'll supply more details and reminders later, we just wanted to make sure those that want to come could save the date now.

With all this abundance of produce we are finding that we have more vegetable than we can give to all of you in our shares. Therefore, we are selling small amounts of certain items to a few chefs and small markets in our area. If any of you would like to buy larger quantities of any item for special events or preserving, please let us know. We are happy to bring extra items as they are available to the pick-up point to sell for a discount to our members. As always, whatever we can't sell we donate to the Estacada Food Bank.

As you can tell from your share we've been spending a lot of time harvesting lately, but we are also busy preparing the ground and starting seedlings for fall, winter and spring harvests. We started this process over a month ago, with plantings of long season crops such as celery root and Brussels sprouts, and are now in the process of starting and planting shorter season crops, such as carrots, parsnips, broccoli, cauliflower, beets, rutabagas, kohlrabi and kale. This push of seedlings is more intense for us than the spring one (as evidenced by the picture to the right), mostly because we need to get everything started at once – if we wait too long vegetables will not mature because their growth

will be checked by the shorter days and lower temperatures of fall. However, we are feeling far better about where we are right now than in the spring. Many of our systems are more refined due to the trials and errors of the past several months.



## Cast of characters

- **Summer squash:** Right now we are focusing on yellow squash. We have succession plantings of patty-pan (very soon!) and zucchini (4 weeks or so). All summer squash can be prepared basically the same ways, and are great in stir fries, casseroles, sauces, and even raw on salads.
- **Scallions:** For the salad bowl or cooking pot.
- **Sweet onion:** Our Walla Walla sweets are still going strong. The tops fall over when they reach final maturity, which is what they are doing now. We still have enough for another week or two.
- **Cucumbers:** Two varieties for you this week: Marketmore (green) and Boothby's Blonde (yellow). Not sure what to do with this abundance of cukes? Try refrigerator pickles! We didn't have room for recipes here, but you can find them on our website under "recipes."
- **Lettuce:** More "speckled trout's back" for your salad bowl.
- **Beans:** Our green beans are ramping up in production. Next week you should receive more, as we reach peak production in our bush beans. Later in August you'll see traditional colored green beans as our pole bean plants come into production.
- **Broccoli (rotation):** This broccoli is best cooked, as we've noticed it can have a 'bite' to it if eaten raw. It's great in stir-fry.
- **Cabbage (rotation):** Like the broccoli, this is for those who didn't get any last week. It's great in cole-slaw. Want an alternative to mayonnaise-laden slaw? Try dressing with a

peanut sauce instead for an interesting alternative.

- **Potatoes:** These are the last of our “All Red” potatoes for now. You’ll see potatoes again in mid to late August.

- **Tomatoes:** Tomatoes are continuing to produce an abundance of fruit. Our main-season varieties



are ripening now, in time for inclusion in this week’s share. Along with our “Glacier” early season tomatoes, you will see one of the following: “Big Beef”, “Momotaro”, and “Red Zebra” as well as a mystery yellow tomato. We didn’t order any seeds for yellow tomatoes; however, one of our plants is bearing tasty yellow fruit. Go figure.

- **Eggplant** (rotation): Last week half of you got globe eggplant. This week the other half will get an Asian variety that is perfect for stir fries and in pasta sauce. We promise that those that got globe fruits will get some of these soon, hopefully next week..
- **Cherry tomatoes** (rotation): A taste of cherry tomatoes for those who didn’t see them last week. Full-out production should come in a couple of weeks.
- **Tomatillos:** Finally, a less-known vegetable for you to try out. You might be unfamiliar with this small tomato-relative that is borne in a papery husk. These are great in home-made salsa (or spice up a prepared salsa with them). We’re including them in this week’s share so we can encourage you to try a recipe that is much-loved in our household. Tomatillos have an odd sticky resin underneath the paper husk. Just wash this off before you use them.
- **Jalapeño:** Try this in a dressing or stir fry. If you don’t use it right away, these freeze well for later use. We freeze several large zip-lock bags each fall for use through the winter and spring until peppers come into season again. Just wash, pat dry, and freeze.

## Recipes

### Refrigerator pickles.

We ran out of room! Check out refrigerator pickle recipes on our website. Go to [www.bigleafaffarm.com](http://www.bigleafaffarm.com) and navigate to the news/recipes page.

## Avocado-Tomatillo Dressing

*The tartness of tomatillos offsets the richness of avocado wonderfully!*

- 1/4 cup lime or lemon juice (fresh squeezed is best)
- 1 small avocado, peeled and seeded.
- 4 tomatillos, husked.
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 jalapeno chili, seeded and diced (optional)
- 3 scallions, both white and green parts, roughly chopped.
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro.
- 1/2 cup plus 2 tsp olive oil.

Simmer the tomatillos in water for 5-7 minutes. Chill them in some ice water before you add to the dressing. Add the citrus juice, avocado, garlic, chili, scallions, cilantro, and cooked tomatillos in a blender and puree until smooth, then pour in the oil with the machine running. Enjoy!

## Mexican baked tofu with molé sauce

*A staple meal in our household, we love this recipe. The tofu is dressed with a very simple molé sauce before baking. We've always paired this with tofu, but don't be afraid to try the molé as a marinade or barbecue sauce for meat.*

- 2 cakes of tofu, pressed to remove water.
- 1 t whole cumin seeds, 1 t whole coriander seeds.
- 2 dried Mexican peppers, seeded
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 4-5 tomatillos, husks removed.
- 1/4 cup shelled raw pumpkin seeds
- 1/4 tsp dried thyme
- 2 tsp salt, 2 Tbsp sugar, 2 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup water, 1/4 tsp powdered cayenne (optional)

In a large dry skillet or toaster oven toast the cumin and coriander for 1-2 minutes, until brown and fragrant. Stem and coarsely chop the dried peppers in a spice grinder or food processor, and then grind with the toasted spices into a powder. In a food processor, whirl the ground spices, garlic, onions, tomatillos, pumpkin seeds, thyme, salt, sugar, oil, water, and cayenne until smooth.

Slice tofu into thirds horizontally, then stack the slices and cut through all three layers on the 2 diagonals, making an X. In an unoiled 9x13 baking dish, gently toss the tofu with the mole sauce. Bake, uncovered, for 45 minutes, stirring gently at 15 minute intervals. Serve on warm corn tortillas with shredded cheese, lettuce and tomato. Yum!