

TOMATO SOUP WITH FRESH TOMATOES

Adapted from brooklynfarmgirl.com

3 lb slicing tomatoes (romas are best) salt and pepper
2 Tbsp olive oil 4 c chicken or vegetable broth
2 medium onions, thinly sliced ½ c heavy cream
2 cloves garlic, minced

1. Boil large pot of water. Cut a small X in the stem end of each tomato. Drop tomatoes into boiling water and blanch for about 1 minute. Transfer to pot of cold water with a slotted spoon. When cool enough to handle, remove and discard skin from tomatoes, remove core, and coarsely chop flesh.
2. Warm olive oil in large soup pot over medium high heat. Add onions and garlic and cook 5 minutes until onions are translucent and garlic is fragrant.
3. Add chopped tomatoes to soup pot with onions, season with salt and pepper, and cook for 5 minutes. Turn heat to high, add broth, and bring to a boil. Turn heat to low and simmer 30 minutes.
4. Puree the soup with an immersion blender or regular blender until smooth. Return soup to pot, add heavy cream, and simmer over low heat for 15 minutes, or longer to reach a thicker consistency.
5. Serve into bowls with croutons, parmesan cheese, and/or fresh basil on top.

HONEYNUT SQUASH WITH SWEETCORN AND HERBS

Adapted from jacsfoodlove.com

2-3 honeynut squash 4 Tbsp lime juice
2 ears of corn 5 Tbsp olive oil
1 red chili, deseeded, finely diced ¼ c fall squash seeds, toasted
handful cilantro leaves 3-4 oz feta cheese, crumbled
small handful mint leaves extra olive oil for drizzling
1 tsp lime zest

1. Preheat oven to 425F.
2. Cut squashes in half, scoop out seeds, and cut into large chunks. Place in bowl and mix with 2 Tbsp oil, salt and pepper to taste.
3. Line baking pan with parchment and spread squash onto pan skin side down. Roast 25-30 minutes until cooked through and golden brown. Remove from oven and let cool.
4. Add corn cobs to a pan over high heat, turning regularly to char all over. Remove from heat and when cool, slice kernels off the cob.
5. Place corn kernels in a bowl, add chili, lime zest, lime juice, remaining olive oil, salt to taste, and chopped herbs. Mix well and set aside.
6. Arrange squash on large serving platter. Spoon corn salsa on top, sprinkle toasted squash seeds and feta on top, and drizzle with extra olive oil.



Summer CSA News



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Pears: There is no “right” time to eat a pear but you can tell ripeness by lightly squeezing. If you don’t know what ripeness you like, experiment and eat them at all stages of green to yellow! To speed up ripening, put pears in a closed paper bag with an already-ripe apple or banana. Check daily. To slow down ripening, refrigerate.

Sweet Corn: Eat your corn soon after you receive it. As time elapses after harvest, the sugars turn to starches, and the corn loses sweetness. Refrigerate as soon as possible and keep husks on.

Fall Squash (honeynut and spaghetti): Store in a cool, dry, dark place, but ensure they do not freeze. They can keep up to 3-4 months, but once cut, you can wrap them in plastic and refrigerate 5-7 days.

Peppers: Wrap unwashed in a paper towel to absorb any moisture, and keep in the veggie drawer of your refrigerator. In order from mild to spicy, we expect to see red or yellow bell peppers, green bell peppers, jalapenos, serrano peppers, and cayenne peppers.

Leafy greens: Store unwashed in its plastic bag. Or chop, wash, and dry with a salad spinner, and return to plastic bag with a dry paper towel to absorb moisture. Always refrigerate.

Cold and Hot, Wet and Dry

As students settle into their back-to-school routines and football season starts up, we find ourselves in quite the dry spell here in the Central Bluegrass. Add in the (up until recently) hottest few weeks of the year, and it's been a double whammy. The cooler weather has been a breath of fresh air for everyone, from the production team, to the pack shed team, the farmers market team, and of course the livestock. But now the lack of rain is starting to become a concern. Weather extremes raise the bar on what it means to be a food farmer in tough conditions that used to be rare, and are worthy of a little discussion.

First, the year at a glance. For us it was worrisome wet like through winter and spring, where it was a challenge to find windows of time to plow and plant in dry ground. We missed some key planting schedules and some timely cultivations in early/mid summer. Midsummer was hot like it is supposed to be, but by June, we had met our average rainfall quota for the entire year. Besides wet weather causing disruptions in our fieldwork, it also exacerbates fungal and disease problems in the vegetables. The more moderate temperatures lately have been a welcome change, and we've put up a lot of hay which is great for the winter, but we're at the point where we could use some more rain because the crops could use a drink.

Those of you picking up your share at the farm witness in times like this when the pastures ease from verdant green to somewhat blue to brown and yellow. As the soil dries out in these conditions, each species of plant (and bacteria, fungi, insect, and mammal) goes into pre-programmed dormancy mode as a survival mechanism. Respiration slows, sugars are retained, cell walls hold on tight to their contents, as each species hits its limit of desiccation. The forage essentially becomes standing hay. Annuals, which include most of our vegetable crops, will actually speed up their maturation process in their seasonal sprint to procreate before the first frost.

Cattle and sheep don't really care about the moisture content of the daily rations, it just affects how much water they drink. For a point of reference, the average beef cow needs 12 gallons of water per day. Access to shade and water is critical for the livestock. The concern we have, still, is whether we will get the traditional flush of forage in the fall that comes with cooler weather. If the pastures can green up nicely, and if the forecast is favorable for October to have relatively moderate temperatures, it will hopefully give pastures time to recover going into the throes of whatever winter brings. Otherwise we will have to start feeding hay earlier, and for who knows how long, until spring.

Those picking up their share on the farm may also have noticed the green

patches of bright green in the landscape. Our irrigation systems are running daily to keep the produce hydrated. The crop fields are laid out in grids or zones that can be watered with our systems. But the pump only has so much capacity, so we turn valves and reconfigure hoses daily to deliver an inch or so of water as indicated to the zones that need it most. With extreme conditions, the plants still thirst for more, especially the cool season veggies we equate with fall. We sometimes have to irrigate just to till the soil for seeding, then irrigate again just to get the seeds to germinate, then irrigate again to cultivate weeds. The plants do truly seem confused what with the shorter days, and the mornings feeling a bit cooler, only to return to the heat in the afternoon.

With a hint of rain in the forecast this week, we hope we are coming out the other side of the dry spell. Some rain would make us feel better about how we will fare this fall, and winter for that matter. The honey nut squash have had enough water to fill out nicely, yet have a firm skin for a little longer shelf life, thanks to the hot dry conditions. The sweet potatoes would have liked more water, and therefore are smaller than normal, so we are holding off on digging them to get all the size we can, patience is a virtue. Our leafy vegetables like lettuce were quite unhappy with the blazing heat, so with more moderate temperatures now, and with irrigation, they are mostly back to flourishing, or on their way. For now, the high tunnel plantings of greens are still on schedule for late fall and winter.

Will Rogers said, "The farmer has to be an optimist or he wouldn't still be a farmer." Well, optimism reigns supreme out here on the banks of the Elkhorn, having been subjected to unprecedented living conditions more and more frequently. We will know more in the coming weeks how our fall season might shape up. We're hoping the cattle and sheep can graze more freely, and that the soil food web can awaken from its slumber to enrich the plants that enrich us. And we're hoping to smell the smell of wet leaves. We appreciate even more than before, the importance of our work as food farmers, to rear animals and tend crops, to feed people that depend on us for nourishment. Thanks for your support and kind words. - Mac Stone

Last farm tour of the season!
Saturday, September 13, 9:00 AM
To learn how to attend for free, visit:
<https://elmwoodstockfarm.com/farmtoursandevents/>