



This Week's Word From the Farm

Week of 8/4/08

What's In Your Box?

- Pears
- Sweet Corn
- Cabbage
- Eggplant
- Summer Squash
- Carrots
- U-Pick Strawberries
- Yellow Wax Beans
- Cucumbers
- Salad Greens
- Garlic
- Red Onion

Dear Friends,

This week you're going to enjoy a few new things in your box: sweet corn, cabbage, and pears. The pears come from here, from the trees at the top of the land. The pear trees are old enough that nobody knows how old they are. I've spoken to a woman who used to live in the old farmhouse. She was a child and a young woman when she lived here from the 40's to the 60's, and the trees were fully grown then. They were, no doubt, planted by one or the other of the Italian families that lived on this land from the late 1800's to the 1940's, people who obviously cared for this place the way we do.

The Italians were also responsible for the stone mounds (we call them cairns) that are in the growing area. The one nearest the farmstand is the most intact, with a beautiful grapevine growing over the top of it. When they cleared the fieldstones from the fields in order to farm here, they created these igloo-like structures with the stones they cleared. They also created a pigpen by walling in between large outcroppings of stone with the fieldstones to create a circular enclosure. Some of the walls of the pigpen are extraordinarily thick, and reflect how hard they worked to establish a place that could sustain them.

Pears must be picked green, as they ripen from the inside out. If you wait for them to take on color or be ripe while they are still on the tree, they will be rotten inside. To ripen them, place them in a brown paper bag somewhere in your kitchen where you'll remember to check on them periodically. When the skin takes on color and yields slightly to the touch, chill them in the refrigerator and then enjoy them immediately. When you take your first bite, thank the Italians!

Recipes of the Week:

Eggplant Caponata

There are many ways to make delicious caponata. I like this one in the summer because it involves less cooking. It's not the kind of recipe that calls for precise quantities of ingredients, so, do this according to your taste. You can't go wrong. Caponata can be served warm with pasta, or at room temperature with bread and feta or asiago cheese.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Prick eggplant (one large Italian or four asian) with a knife in several places. Place in the oven on a baking sheet or in a baking dish for one hour or more (less for asian eggplant), until the eggplant is fully soft. Remove from the oven until it is cool enough to handle, then remove the skin and discard. Chop the remaining eggplant pulp and put it in a bowl. Add chopped pitted kalamata olives (about ½ pint), chopped sun-dried tomatoes (about ½ small jar), one jar capers, some fresh diced onion and garlic, and add salt to taste. Add fresh or dried oregano, a couple tablespoons of olive oil, one tablespoon of balsamic vinegar and freshly ground pepper.

Asian Coleslaw

1 head of cabbage, thinly sliced
½ cup red onion, finely diced
½ cup cilantro leaves
4 carrots, grated

Dressing

6 tbsp. rice vinegar
2 tbsp. sesame seed oil
1 tsp. pepper
4 tbsp. sugar
2 tsp. salt
4 tbsp. salad oil

Combine the vegetables in a salad bowl and mix well. Pour dressing over all and toss. Top with toasted sesame seeds, almonds or peanuts and serve. Variation: Grill chicken and add pieces for an Asian Chicken Salad.

