



This Week's Word From the Farm

Week of 9/21/09

What's In Your Box ?

- Sweet Dumpling Winter Squash –cut in half, de-seed, cover with foil and bake at 375 for 45 min.
- Tomatoes
- Peppers, Peppers, Peppers!
- Husk Cherries
- Carrots
- Potatoes
- Cucumbers
- Peppers
- Tomatillos
- Summer Squash
- Onions

This is the week to enjoy your peppers in every way shape and form, as they are in their full glory. If you feel up to your eyeballs in tomatoes, peppers, eggplant and squash, don't despair! Your boxes will soon be shifting away from the summer crops and drifting back to cool weather veggies. This week's primer on peppers is from our employee, Kevin Hovey. Kevin comes to us from Michigan and is honing his skills here on Riverhill Farm, in hopes of starting his own farm in the future.

Peppers originated from South America where evidence suggests the area of Bolivia as the motherland of all peppers. It is believed that pepper fruits have been a part of the human diet as far back as 7500BC and have been domesticated for the last 6000 years. The Incas Aztecs and Mayans all consumed peppers and held them in high regard. Christopher Columbus related the flavor to black pepper and assumed they shared relation and dubbed Casicum as "pepper" causing much confusion from there on. Christopher's physician documented peppers for their medicinal value in 1494 and brought them to Spain where Portuguese traders quickly distributed the seeds. Within 50 years peppers were being cultivated in Africa, the Middle East, the Balkans, Italy and China. Today the Thai consume more peppers than any other peoples. Peppers are high in Vitamin C which allows for the easier absorption of non-heme iron when used with grains or beans. Chillies are high in potassium, magnesium and carotene. Capsaicinoids found in hot peppers have been found to inhibit chemical carcinogens, help regulate insulin levels in diabetics, and helps to reduce the oxidation of bad cholesterol which leads to cardiovascular disease.

Note from Alan: This year at Riverhill Farm we are growing more than fifteen varieties of peppers cultivated all over the world, from Central America to Poland, Italy to Romania. This is just a small percentage of the number commercially available from some of the better catalogs. Seed Savers Exchange, which specializes in saving exceptional heirloom varieties of vegetables, saves more than 840 varieties of peppers! Our selections this year range from candy sweet to spicy, and are a central element of our fall harvests. I have some favorites, such as the New Mexico green chilies, which are so good roasted on the grill, and Carmen, the long, pointy thick fleshed red pepper you've been getting regularly in your shares. For my tastes, Carmen has the thick flesh which makes it so good for sautéing in olive oil with a little garlic and onions, as well as complex full pepper flavor along with its sweetness. This week we're also featuring Ancho peppers, which are a great alternative to bell peppers for stuffed, baked peppers. They also make really good chile rellenos.

As temperatures cool in the coming weeks, the peppers will really come into their own, most turning red with more complex and full flavors. We'll be making ristras soon to dry peppers for the winter, especially with our Hungarian pepper called Boldog, a paprika pepper that makes great paprika powder and pepper flakes. Even after tomatoes succumb to cool nights, we can count on peppers to be our last taste of summer.

Recipes of the Week:

CHILE RELLENO CASSEROLE

1 Cup milk

4 eggs

10-12 New Mex. Anaheim chilies or other lg. chilies, roasted & peeled (see last week's flyer for directions on roasting)

4-6 Jalapeño chilies, roasted & peeled (optional)

1 1/2 tsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. salt

2 tbsps. flour

3/4 lb. Monterey Jack cheese, grated

3/4 lb. Cheddar cheese, grated

After greasing an 8 to 9 inch square pan, place half the chilies and cover with half the cheese. Add another layer of chilies, then another layer of cheese. Beat eggs, add milk, and baking powder, flour and salt. Pour on top. Bake 45 minutes in a 350 degree oven. Serves 6-8.

Vegetarian Stuffed Bell Peppers

4 bell peppers

1 tbsps. olive oil

1 sm. onion, chopped

1 clove garlic, minced

1 tsp. oregano

1 tsp. basil

2 to 3 c. tomato sauce (your favorite bottled or homemade)

2 carrots, julienned

1 c. diced zucchini

1 tomato, diced

1/2 c. finely chopped walnuts

1 1/2 c. cooked rice

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Wash and clean peppers. Cut off tops and remove seeds and membrane. Blanch prepared peppers in boiling water for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, heat oil in wok or large skillet, add onion and garlic. Saute 1 minute. Add herbs, carrots and zucchini. Continue to cook 3 to 5 minutes or until carrots are tender, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and add the tomato, walnuts, brown rice and 1/2 cup tomato sauce. Heat through. Stuff mixture into peppers. Spread 1/2 cup sauce in bottom of baking dish. Stand peppers upright. Pour remaining sauce over the tops of peppers. Bake in oven for 30 minutes.

Chili Verde

2 lb. lean pork - cut into cubes (leave some fat on for flavor)

2 cloves garlic, crushed

Salt and pepper to taste

1 lg. onion, chopped

6 fresh tomatillos (depending on size)

1/2 tsp. cumin seed, crushed

1/2 tsp. coriander seed

6 green chilies, roasted, peeled & chopped

6 fresh peppers (mild, medium or hot)

Place meat, onion, salt and pepper into pan and brown lightly. Transfer all (including juice) to slow cooker on high heat and add green roasted chilies. Crush seeds and garlic and soak in 1 tablespoon hot water for 1/2 hour, then place in cooker. Prepare tomatillos by removing husks, washing and cutting into quarters. Chop fresh chili peppers and place tomatillos and peppers into blender and reduce to a sauce. Put half of the sauce in the cooker and retain the rest for spreading over the burritos. Turn cooker to low heat and cook until meat is tender. To serve - use fresh flour tortillas and use as a filling, or serve as a stew.