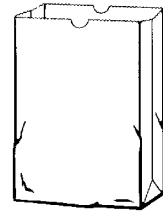


IN THE BAG
Potomac Vegetable Farms
August 10 - 12, 2004



Tomatoes (pink, yellow, red) Sweet Onions Tomatillos Thyme
Mint Potatoes Peppers Cherry Tomatoes Lettuce!

At the Vienna farm, Hiu Newcomb is dogged and persistent about trying to grow lettuce all summer long. Sometimes she succeeds, and it is a treat to have some summer Romaine this week. We only had to water it once, and then it rained just the right amount to help it to thrive. The lesson is: you never know when it will be 51 degrees in the morning in August, so you should not dismiss the possibility that lettuce will survive. She's planting more this week, just in case.

The bad news is that our beans are basically over. We make eight plantings a year, starting in early May. This season the bean beetles have been voracious. We are generally known for our consistent, great beans, from early July to the end of September, so this is a humbling loss. In Loudoun, the deer have eaten all the bean fields on the western end of the farm. Each farm has a small amount of pole beans growing -- these seem to be more resistant to beetles and deer -- but we will not have the quantities that we have come to expect.

If you don't manage to eat a whole bunch of thyme in its fresh state, it is extremely easy to dry. You could just leave it on the counter for a couple of days, and then you have a dry version of thyme, to store in a clean bottle and use for months. Experiment with it.

Oven Dried Tomatoes

Adapted from Nina Planck's The Farmers' Market Cookbook

2 pounds ripe tomatoes (any color, any size, including cherries)
2 tablespoons olive oil
salt

Set the oven at 250 degrees.

Leave cherry tomatoes whole. Halve or quarter regular tomatoes. Put tomatoes of equal size in each baking dish. Roll the tomatoes in oil and salt and put them in a baking dish -- just one layer. Bake for 3 -- 8 hours and remove when they are ready. After 3 hours, smaller tomatoes are ready for a mozzarella sandwich. After 8 hours they are leathery and intensely flavored.

Packed in oil, they keep for a week to 10 days in the refrigerator or a cool pantry.

Add to minestrone soup, bean soups, salads. They are good in sandwiches spread with soft cheese, or on pasta, pizza, crostini, or bruschetta. When cherry tomatoes are still juicy and hot, toss them with pasta, olive oil, and basil. The longer the tomatoes sit in the oil, the tastier they get. Strained, the reddish oil is wonderful on bread and salads.

You could blend one or two tomatoes with their oil for a more intense flavor, or you could add a clove of garlic or an anchovy for every 3 tablespoons of oil.

Uncooked Tomato Sauce

6 good tomatoes, diced
2 cloves garlic, smashed, peeled, and finely chopped
1 small sweet onion, diced
20 basil leaves, chopped
2 T. olive oil

Mix together all the ingredients and let the sauce sit for 4 – 8 hours in a cool place. Toss with hot spaghetti and season to taste.

Tabbouleh

adapted from Madison's [Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone](#)

1 cup fine or medium bulgur
½ cup fresh lemon juice
1 bunch scallions, including some of the greens, sliced
4 cups flat leaf parsley, chopped
½ cup chopped mint
3 ripe tomatoes, seeded and chopped
6 T. olive oil
salt
Romaine lettuce leaves

Put the bulgur in a bowl, cover it with water, and let it stand until water is absorbed (half an hour). Press out excess liquid, and toss with half of the lemon juice, the scallions, tomatoes, parsley and mint. Let stand for another half hour to allow the bulgur to get really soft.

While you're waiting, whisk the remaining lemon juice, the oil, and ½ tsp. salt together. Pour the dressing over the bulgur and toss well. Taste and make sure you like it, adjust seasoning. Serve in a shallow serving bowl, surrounding the tabbouleh with lettuce leaves.

While you are baking sometime, make some Whole Roasted Garlic: one head garlic per person, olive oil or butter.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Rub off the outer papery skins, leaving the cloves encased in the last layer. Set the heads upright in an oiled baking dish, spoon a little olive oil or place a knob of butter on each, add a few tablespoons of water to the dish. Cover tightly with foil. Bake for 45 minutes, then remove the foil and bake 30 minutes more, until the garlic is completely soft inside. Long cooking sweetens pungent garlic. Squeezed out of each clove, the soft garlic is delicious with potatoes or on toast.