



BLOOMING GLEN FARM

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Newsletter

Issue #28

BloomingNow!

Features Fresh from the Farm

Community

Supported

Agriculture

From the field...

Sunday afternoon we received a phone call from a CSA member asking if we would mind if she brought a visitor to tour the farm. The visitor, it turns out, was Khenpo Tenzin Dargye, a high lama from Nepal. We learned how the nurturing, protecting, and gathering of medicinal herbs and plants is an essential aspect of Tibetan Medicine. At an altitude of 12,000 feet in the Himalayas in far western Nepal is Tashi Ge Gye Thaten Ling monastery, of the spiritual tradition, Bön, that predates even Buddhism. The Abbot of this monastery is Khenpo Dargye, who is responsible for the gathering of over 260 sacred plants for this Asian medicine system. We felt very honored to be able to meet this wise and down-to-earth man, who has such depth of knowledge in herbal healing. Khenpo Dargye will be teaching two classes this fall at Studio 116 in Quakertown. He gifted to us a prayer flag to hang at the farm—

where the wind would carry the blessings over the farm and our home. You can see it fluttering in the breeze at the far northwest corner of the farm, reminding us of the greater picture of growing and healing across the globe. We counted ourselves lucky to have avoided the severe weather that swept through our area a couple of Sundays ago. A few farms we know in both New Jersey and West Chester area were hit with a freak hail storm—ruining peaches, and shredding vegetables like lettuce. Despite the ongoing dry weather, it's been a bountiful August at the farm. A lot of the thanks for that goes to Farmer Tom's perseverance with continuing to irrigate around the clock, and setting that alarm for the middle of the night, when its most efficient to do so (for the plants, but maybe not for sleepy farmers!). Hopefully you've been enjoying the abundance of August, or finding time to preserve some of it for those long

winter months! The nights have been cool of late, slowing down our tomato harvest a bit, and reminding us that fall is just around the corner. We have begun to harvest our winter squash crop, it seems to be ready a little earlier each year. It's always strange to be harvesting watermelons the same time as delicata, butternut and acorn squash! The last rotations of fall carrots, beets, spinach, arugula and turnips have been seeded— and are sprouting. We are especially struggling now to keep transplants and the newly emerging seedlings irrigated, and are even finding working up new ground difficult because of the dry weather. As fast as we can water it just dries right out again. Despite our best efforts, you may feel the effects of this in the share later in the season. The garlic is coming out of the barns, and the rest of the potatoes have been mowed, and will soon be harvested and distributed. —Farmer Tricia

My love for tomatoes.....by Bridget Brier

My love for tomatoes precedes my earliest memories. As an adolescent, I would scamper about my grandparent's lake house on Sundays whiling away the hours before an elderly farmer would stop by the house, his wooden basket brimming with tomatoes and corn. He is remembered in my families' collective memory only as 'The Huckster.' I would run up to him, grandmother at my side and before she would buy the produce for dinner, she would buy me a tomato right on the spot.

"She eats them like apples," she would tell The Huckster and I would take a bite right in front of him to prove it. In lieu of an introduction, my grandmother would always offer this information about me as though this one little tidbit revealed more about me than anything else she could say. And perhaps it did. But I can't think of anything more it discloses than the fact that my personality began to reveal itself though my adoration of the summer's golden child.

Of course, when I say tomatoes, I'm speaking of the harbingers of summer, not the mealy, pink fleshed impostors lurking in produce sections around the country. Even as a young girl, without knowing why, I knew the difference. The tomatoes for sale at the grocery store were nothing more to me than an item on the shelf. They did not make my heart beat faster, they did not make me lunge face first, me and tomato, cheek to cheek.

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News and Notes:

- ♦ **Pick-up on Friday Sept. 12 is switched to Thursday the 11th, one week only.** *If you would prefer to pick-up that Tuesday instead, let us know. Farmer Tom has been asked to officiate at his dear friend's wedding in California. Thanks for your understanding!*
- ♦ **We've got romas— "San Marzano" plum tomatoes— great for freezing or canning. \$20 for 20 pounds.** *Email to order a 1/2 bushel, or more, for your pick-up, while our supply lasts!*
- ♦ **REMINDER: Don't forget your required volunteer work times.**
- ♦ **We would like to hold our Harvest Celebration Saturday, October 11.** *If you are interested in being involved please let us know. It can be lots of fun, with kids crafts (scarecrow making and pumpkin decorating), games like potato sac races, a wagon ride, live music, a raffle and a potluck. Email the farm to get involved!*
- ♦ **Have some favorite recipes using farm fresh ingredients? Send them our way— so we can share them in future newsletters!**

Zucchini Tomatillo Bisque

2 tablespoons vegetable or olive oil
 2 tablespoons butter
 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 2 medium onions, coarsely chopped
 6 medium zucchini, chopped or coarsely
 grated
 2 Anaheim chiles, roasted, peeled, seeded
 and chopped
 1 jalapeno chili, stem removed, seeded and
 chopped
 6 tomatillos, husked and chopped
 6 cups chicken stock
 5 corn tortillas
 1 to 2 tablespoons lime juice
 1/3 cup cilantro leaves, chopped
 salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

OPTIONAL GARNISHES:

sour cream
 crumbled tortilla chips
 cilantro leaves

Summer Squash Casserole

1 onion -- chopped and sauteed in butter/oil
 a few cloves of garlic -- throw them in with
 the onions for the last minute or so

1/2 to 1 cup of cottage cheese or ricotta,
 whatever you have
 1/2 cup of plain yogurt (set in a coffee filter
 to drain some of the liquid) or sour cream
 2 Tablespoons of whole wheat flour
 2 Tablespoons of parmesan
 a few drops of tabasco or salsa
 1 egg

Whip up these "wet" ingredients in a food
 processor (or I use a Braun hand-held in a
 deep bowl)

Stir into the wet ingredients:

1/2 cup (or more if you like) of grated mon-
 terey jack or cheddar cheese

In a large saucepan, heat oil and butter,
 add garlic and onions and sauté until
 softened. Add zucchini, chiles and to-
 matillos, stirring until coated and heated
 through. Add chicken stock; bring to a
 boil, then cover and simmer for about 20
 minutes or until zucchini is tender. Tear
 or shred tortillas into pieces and add to
 soup mixture. Stir in lime juice and cilan-
 tro leaves. In a blender or food processor,
 blend soup in batches until pureed and
 smooth. Return to saucepan and heat
 through. Add salt and pepper to taste.
 Serve hot accompanied with a dollop of
 sour cream and a few crumbled tortilla
 chips and cilantro leaves. This is a very
 thick soup; if you prefer it thinner, stir in
 a little more chicken stock before serving.
 Makes about 10 cups.
 From *More Recipes from a Kitchen Garden*, by
 Renee Shephard and Fran Raboff

You can layer your ingredients...squash,
 onions, cheeses or just fill up your but-
 tered casserole dish with sliced yellow
 squash.
 Add the sauteed onions and garlic.
 Fold the cheese ingredients in and bake in
 350 degree oven until bubbly.

It's a very forgiving and adaptable recipe
 ...if you don't have cottage cheese, use
 more cheddar. You can add jalapenos and
 make it a tex-mex version. I mix in zuc-
 chini, if I have it, or add a layer of sliced
 tomatoes. The egg is optional too. Her
 kids love it with a bread/cracker crumb
 crust.

Contributed by Mare Kremser, CSA member

Highlight on Heirlooms

Cherokee Purple— Popular for both
 its flavor and unusual color. It has a
 deep purple-red hue, green shoulders,
 and a dense juicy texture with a dark
 interior color enhanced by the green gel
 surrounding the seeds. Listed on the
 Slow Food USA's Ark of Taste: "The
 Cherokee Purple was rediscovered by
 tomato grower Craig LeHoullier. Le-
 Houllier claimed that it was more than
 100 years old, and originated with the
 Cherokee people."

Valencia— Also listed on Slow Foods
 Ark of Taste with the following descrip-
 tion: "This round, smooth fruit with a
 brilliant orange uniform color weighs
 around 8-10 oz. It is a family heirloom
 from Maine. Some say it is called
 "Valencia" because it looks like a Valen-
 cia orange, while others suspect it came
 from Valencia, Spain. It is not one of the
 famous heirlooms. This may be because
 it doesn't have an unusual color or
 shape – the qualities that make other
 heirlooms so attractive and photograph-
 able. Yet it is hard to find and is a
 threatened variety. The tomato has an
 excellent, full, complex tomato taste,
 with a great balance of acidic and sweet.
 It is meaty and rich with few seeds. It
 has been described as bursting with
 flavor, rich and buttery as well as pine-
 apple-like, sweet and refreshing, like a
 really ripe ground cherry."

Brandywine— the pink potato leaf vari-
 ety with a muddled history going back
 to the late 1800s, and a rich succulent
 tomato flavor. Originating from the fam-
 ily of Ohio gardener Dorris Sudduth
 Hill. My favorite to eat and to grow!

My love for tomatoes, continued from page 1

But over time the man with the wooden
 basket disappeared and my teenage years
 were filled with more standard and superfi-
 cial dramas. My family gave me a great
 many things but one of them was not a pas-
 sion for food, so I ate the tomatoes that
 traveled the continent to reach me and I
 went about my day. It's sad but I forgot
 about everything the tomato meant to me
 and for many years I ate food that had little
 meaning beyond taste.

It's a cliché to say, but all that changed
 drastically for me when I had a child. As my
 little one began his foray into solid foods, I
 began to feel that food bought off the gro-
 cery store shelf was largely insupportable. It
 all began to feel so cold and distant. If I
 wanted him to be clothed and raised in a
 sustainable way, then shouldn't this de-
 mand also be placed on what he was actu-
 ally consuming?

During that time I heard Alice Waters tout
 the maxim, "Know your farmer," and I real-

ized right there I didn't know a thing about
 this food I was holding to my son's lips. I
 didn't know where it came from, how it
 was grown, or one darn thing about the
 farmer. I got that queasy feeling that, for
 me, precedes epiphanies, "this was not
 right."

So I began to research why the standard
 American plate was so devoid of meaning.
 Of all the sad and maddening facts, what
 particularly broke my heart was learning
 how close our country has come to losing
 all of its glorious biodiversity.

Who knows which kind of tomato I ate so
 fervently from the Huckster so many years
 ago but I know for sure that I never en-
 countered that same fruit on the store
 shelves through the years. Instead, I ate
 the same type of tomato that people all
 over the country were eating: probably
 grown on some massive farm in California
 and grown to withstand the long, bumpy
 journey. Even the most numbed palate,

when forced to taste a supermarket to-
 mato in comparison to its warm local
 brethren could not deny the similarities
 are hard to come by.

I knew I had forgotten what a Pennsyl-
 vania tomato tasted like. The terroir, or
 the taste of a place, so prized around the
 world as an essential aspect of mealtime
 had been stripped from mine and I hadn't
 even put up a fuss. And so the time had
 come for a change. Abandoning super-
 markets feels very odd at first but eating
 locally is its own reward. I've discovered
 the gorgeous heirloom breeds of this area,
 coming to know Bucks County in an au-
 thentic and genuine way. It's a oft heard
 remark that you have to be the change
 you want to see, which in this case
 means eating as the season dictates and
 waiting, waiting, waiting for those perfect,
 red tomatoes.

Bridget Brier is a CSA member, and holistic
 mother of one with another on the way.