



SUNSHINE IN A BOX



Issue 9 Volume 3

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Celebration of Garlic

The Minnesota Garlic Festival will be held this Saturday at the McLeod County Fairgrounds

Garlic Growers Unite

The Minnesota Garlic Festival is upon us signaling that the garlic has had enough time to cure for planting in October or storage. Unfortunately I have not been able to find my planting map for the garlic, so I am blissfully unaware of any varieties save for a few guesses. Garlic grows well in Minnesota, especially hardneck varieties (which produce the scapes that were in the early CSA boxes), and the largest bulbs seem to be the Porcelain varieties. This can be further classified down to individual species—some of my favorite porcelains are Georgian Crystal, Music, and German Extra Hardy. Porcelain garlic has a smooth, tight, white, papery skin that makes it easy to store. I also love the beautiful red strip garlic varieties (pictured to the right). Many garlic varieties grown in Minnesota originate from Eastern Europe which has a similar harsh winter. Hardneck garlic tends to have fewer but larger bulbs compared to garlic available in grocery stores which is usually softneck garlic grown in California. Hardneck garlic is hot and earthy tasting, stores well, easy to grow,

and has potent medicinal qualities. I do grow one softneck called Inchelium Red originating from South Dakota and it seems to do well here and matures a little earlier. The smaller cloves are milder and good for pickling.

Thank You!

We are almost half way through the CSA season and I would like to extend a few mid-season thanks: To Plymouth CSA members who help me unload every week—a small gesture makes a big difference—thank you! To the host pick up locations—St. Philip, Minnetonka hosts (you know who you are), Able Beer, Lindblom Jewelers and Rosewood Eatery—I love these partnerships! Thanks to volunteers and anyone who has ever gotten their hands dirty at the farm. And a huge thanks to my family. Thanks for humoring me.

This has been the best season ever on the farm and I am excited to carry the momentum into the fall. As an appreciation for your support of my farming endeavors, please join us on Saturday August 19th for the always fun Solar Fresh Field Day!

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Week 9 Produce

Cabbage: This variety called Golden Acre is new to me this year and has a nice compact size to it making it efficient for a smaller planting space. Tuesday felt like Cabbage Fest at the farm while harvesting! Cut the head in half and remove the core. Shred layers for slaw or fried cabbage with onion. Add cabbage and basil to bone broth and simmer for a soup that will soothe stomach issues. Cabbage intact will store in the fridge for several weeks. Also pairs well with carrots and beets. Try with a pot roast or borscht soup.

Beans: Tricolor beans. Thanks to CSA member and volunteer Christine for helping with bean weeding early on and today's NE delivery!

Garlic: This is the first of the garlic! Seed stock is from the garlic festival and was planted back in October. It has been curing and is now ready for your use! Try roasting it whole in the oven wrapped in foil drizzled with olive oil to mellow out the spiciness. Spread the roasted garlic on bread or meat, toss with pasta, or use as a pizza topping.

Cucumber: Managing hoop house cucumbers has its own challenges—too little moisture and the cukes will be underdeveloped. Too much moisture and they will be overgrown and prone to mildew and disease. On the upside, I don't have to worry about too much rain, and the hoop house offers protection from insect pests. So far it has been a fun learning experience and working out better than I could have imagined. Cucumbers pair well with garlic for pickling or a quick cucumber salad.

Onion: Pink and red onions, because they are my niece's favorite colors.

Swiss Chard: Chard is standing in for beet greens. Leafy greens pair well with this week's garlic. Gently sauté chopped or sliced garlic in olive oil for 5-7 minutes. Add chard leaves and continue cooking until wilted. Season with salt and pepper and a squeeze of lemon juice to taste.

Beets: Baby beets can be roasted and served whole: leave stem end and root on the beet, toss in olive oil and roast in the oven at 375, covered, until fork tender. Let cool and peel.

Tomato: Heirloom tomatoes are slowly coming. Farm fresh tomatoes are soft and bruise easily. Try and maintain the box upright to prevent damage to the fruit. Try slicing tomato, sprinkle with chopped raw garlic or garlic infused oil, salt and pepper to taste, and a sprinkle of sugar to offset acidity.

Garlic Growers Cont... Garlic grows completely underground (unlike onions that grow half above ground) so it is always exciting to see what the harvest brings. While it isn't too difficult to grow garlic, it is subject to pest and disease issues that could taint an entire crop. One clove is planted in October to yield an entire bulb in July making Garlic a nice investment. The largest cloves are saved for re-planting. Fertility is important, and I have used chopped leaf mulch the last two years with good success

This weekend at the Garlic Fest, growers from all over the Midwest will join together in Hutchinson to celebrate and sell their harvest for both eating and growing. You can of course sample some of this garlic and other local products at the Great Scape Café, shop the many diverse vendors, listen to some live music and cooking demos, partake in kite

making and a medallion hunt, and escape to bucolic McLeod County. I don't sell any garlic at the festival but love to support this opportunity for farmers and foodies to cross paths for the day and raise funds and awareness for the Sustainable Farming Association. The SFA is a farmer to farmer networking organization made of several regional chapters that organizes a yearly farming conference, networking events, festivals like the Garlic Fest and Salsa Fest, and farmer socials. As a beginning young female farmer who does not come from a farming background, the SFA is important to me for training, encouragement, and staying connected to the local food web. I hope you will venture to the Garlic Fest this weekend and I will see you there!

Garlic in the Medicine Cabinet

Garlic's key constituent called Alliin might be the secret to its variety of uses medicinally. Alliin converts to allicin when the bulbs are crushed or chopped which takes around 10 minutes, so if you chop garlic first when preparing a meal you will be gleaning most of its benefits. Garlic can be used to treat the cold, flu, and sore throat, it improves immune function, its Sulphur compounds and essential oils have antiseptic, antibacterial, and antifungal properties, and it is known for its benefits to the circulatory system. Garlic has also been shown to lower blood sugar levels.

To enjoy both the culinary and medicinal benefits of garlic, it can be thin sliced or finely chopped, or even ground or grated. When cooking, use a low heat to avoid damaging medicinal constituents, or eat raw if tolerated. Garlic pairs well with herbs, tomatoes, cucumbers, leafy greens, and beans. Try adding it to pickles or infusing honey with garlic. Although garlic is a safe herb, it's "heat" can provoke issues in some individuals like heartburn or stomach discomfort and has even said to provoke anger. To minimize the fire of garlic and still enjoy its flavor and benefits, try the infused oil recipe below. (Gladstar, 2012)

Recipes

Garlic Infused Oil

A few large cloves garlic, chopped
Several teaspoons chopped fresh herbs (rosemary, thyme and oregano or an herb blend of your choice)
Olive Oil

Combine the garlic and several teaspoons of herbs in a small pan. Add just enough olive oil to cover them by an inch or two. Warm over very low heat for 30 minutes, or until the oil tastes strongly of herbs. You can strain the herbs out if you want or leave them in for a crunchy texture and stronger flavor.

Pour the oil into a glass jar with a tight fitting lid. Store in a cool, dark location where it will keep for several weeks, or in the refrigerator, where it will keep for months.

To Use: Garlic oil can be used in many ways: a spread for bread or crackers, added to soups, or tossed over pasta or rice. (Gladstar, 2012)

Vendee Cabbage Pie

Pastry for 2 8 inch pie crusts
3 tablespoons butter
1 medium cabbage, shredded

2 hard cooked eggs, chopped
Salt and Pepper

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Line glass pie plate with rolled-out pastry. Melt butter in a heavy skillet and sauté cabbage until all moisture is absorbed and cabbage is tender.

Spread cabbage evenly in pie shell. Top with eggs, cover with pastry, and bake until done, 30 to 40 minutes. Serve with bratwurst or other quality sausage for a main course. Serves 6. (Heriteau, 1970)