



The Pod

Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

World PEAS is a program of the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project

Tuesday October 13, 2015

Meet Your Farmer: Eric Silva

Many farmers can attest to the steep learning curve associated with starting your own farm enterprise. Eric Silva, a first year farmer with New Entry, is no different. Eric happened upon our program offerings after surfing the web last year. His sedentary cubicle job was getting old and he wanted to get back outside working with his hands, where he feels most at peace. However, he needed a bridge to go from his full time office job, to full time farmer, and New Entry had just what he needed. The space, equipment, and training to get his hands in the soil and a safety net to help him along the way just in case things didn't go as planned.

But when do things really go as planned? When asked his biggest challenge in this first year he replied with a smile "everything was a challenge." First, a late start due to some drainage issues in his plot, next, most of his seedlings fell victim to a wind squall that blew over his mini-greenhouse, and lastly a pre-planned (and well-deserved) family trip allowed just enough time for the weeds to really make themselves at home in his fields.

Due to all of the unforeseen challenges, Eric decided to forgo his World PEAS bid and instead use the rest of the season to soak up as much knowledge as he could. He utilized the technical assistance provided by New Entry staff to his full advantage. "Having [New Entry Staff] to give realistic expectations was really important ... Sometimes I thought I had a plan and then after an hour conversation my plan completely changed for the better," Eric says.

All New Entry Farmers are offered Technical Assistance services in order to further their farm business. As beginning farmers, this is assistance is critical. Our staff helps farmers with everything from applying for USDA grants for wells and hoopouses, creating farm business plans and crop production schedules, and in the field advice on anything from harvesting protocol to pest detection.

Eric is looking forward to keeping his space on New Entry's Smith Farm Incubator Site to continue his operation next season. He is aiming to sell many of his beautiful squash, kale, lettuce, and carrots to World PEAS for customers to enjoy.

Eric's jovial personality comes through in his final remarks on life in general, "It is better when you're having fun." And for us at New Entry and World PEAS, farming is always fun.



Eric in front of his field planted in cover crop.

Produce this week:

Mustard Greens or Bok Choy
Winter Squash • Beets • Purple Top Turnips • Sweet Potatoes
Leeks • Apples • Pears Braising Mix [Small Shares only]

Also in Large Shares

Ground Cherries • Hot Pepper
Apple Cider

Crop Information:

Sweet Potatoes



Sweet potatoes are in the morning glory family and native to North America. Sweet potatoes are grown in many parts and likely date back to prehistoric times, likely originating in Peru and Ecuador. In many parts of the world, sweet potatoes are grown for their edible leaves, as opposed to the sweet tubers with which we are more familiar in the U.S. Known as the "vegetable indispensable," sweet potatoes were a main source of nutrition for early homesteaders and revolutionary soldiers. Sweet potatoes (*Ipomoea batatas*) are often confused for yams (*Dioscorea batatas*) which are tubers of tropical vines more closely related to lilies and grasses than to sweet potatoes.

Handling: Handle sweet potatoes carefully to prevent bruising. Wash before using. Cut off any brown spots before using.

Storing: Storage in a dry, unrefrigerated bin kept at 55-60 degrees F. is best. Do not refrigerate, because temperatures below 55 degrees F will chill this tropical vegetable giving it a hard core and an undesirable taste when cooked.

Savory Sweet Potatoes with Garlic, Asiago Cheese and fresh Thyme

Adapted from "Organic Gardening Magazine," February.March 2009

Ingredients:

- 1.5-2 lbs. sweet potatoes (approx. 4 medium sized potatoes)
- 1/2 cup softened butter
- 16 cloves roasted garlic
- 1/4 cup fresh thyme, minced
- 1 cup fresh grated Asiago cheese

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Poke the sweet potatoes all over with a fork, slather them with a few tablespoons of butter, and roast until fork tender, about 40 minutes (cooking time varies with the size of the potato). Remove the potatoes from the oven, allow them to cool, and then peel and mash. Stir in the remaining butter and add the garlic, thyme, and cheese to your taste. Place the sweet potato mixture in an ovenproof dish, grate a bit more cheese over the top, and bake until warmed through, about 30 minutes. Leftovers freeze well.

Apple & Pear Crumble

Adapted from allrecipes.com

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups rolled oats
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds
- 3/4 cup brown sugar (x2)
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 cups peeled and diced apples
- 2 cups peeled and diced pears



Preparation:

Preheat oven to 350 degree Fahrenheit. Mix oats, flour, 3/4 cups brown sugar, and butter together until crumbly. The mixture should stick slightly when pressed in your palm, but still crumble easily.

Mix apples, pears, 3/4 cups brown sugar, and cinnamon together in a separate bowl; spread into the bottom of a 9x9-inch glass pan. Sprinkle oat mixture on top of apples and pears. Top with sliced almonds.

Bake until the top is golden brown, about 40-45 minutes.

Curried Turnips

Adapted from Vegetarian Times

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 medium-sized onion, thinly sliced
- 3/4 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon garam masala
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt
- 2 pounds turnips, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes



Preparation:

In large skillet, heat butter over medium heat. When hot, sauté onion until golden, 5 to 8 minutes. Stir in turmeric, ginger, coriander, cayenne, salt, pepper and garam masala, and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add yogurt and cook 1 minute more. Stir in turnips, turning to coat evenly with yogurt mixture. Cover skillet, reduce heat to medium-low, and cook turnips until tender, about 30 minutes. Add 1 tablespoon water, if necessary, to keep them moist.