



The Pod

Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

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

Tuesday July 14, 2015

Closing the Gap - Improving access to fresh produce in Dorchester

Growers and eaters have a symbiotic relationship: when they support one another, everyone benefits. The World PEAS food hub helps nurture this connection by serving as the link between these two groups. Last year, World PEAS provided \$7,172 of produce to homebound seniors in the greater Boston area. Success stories such as this are made possible through strong partnerships with community organizations like Kit Clark Senior Services. A pillar of the Dorchester community since 1974, Kit Clark assists upwards of 4,000 seniors a year in living lives with grace, dignity, and a sense of independence. Dorchester is a vibrant community in south Boston, so diverse that many of Kit Clark's programs are offered in five different languages. While the community is rich in culture, many are poor in resources, and accessing nutritious foods does not come without barriers. By partnering with local organizations like Kit Clark, World PEAS helps bring fresh produce to those most in need.

World PEAS and Kit Clark have a unique and lasting relationship. In 2010, the collaboration began with a home delivery service to seniors. It has since expanded to also provide bulk produce orders to Kit Clark's kitchen, where local ingredients like collard greens, eggplant and sweet potatoes are used for congregate meals as well as for their Meals On Wheels program. Now in the partnership's 5th year, World PEAS continues to provide produce through the Senior Shares program. Funded by the USDA, the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs provides low-income seniors with \$25 coupons that can be exchanged for eligible, locally produced foods. For homebound seniors who cannot travel to a farmer's market, taking advantage of this program can be challenging. Kit Clark provides strategic administrative support and coordination to collect these coupons and redeem them for funding, which is then used to buy local, sustainably grown produce from World PEAS for final delivery to homebound seniors.

It seems simple, but this supply chain addresses far more issues than meet the eye. Not only does the Senior Shares program act as a vessel for good nutrition, but it overcomes the physical transportation barrier of accessing fresh foods. What's more, it benefits the growers too. While farmers markets and CSA's offer more avenues of getting fresh produce into homes, these are not accessible and affordable for everyone. World PEAS supports many beginning, immigrant and refugee farmers who are also low-income, and aims to increase farmer incomes by selling their produce through new and existing markets. By teaming up with Dorchester community leaders, food programs become more sustainable within the community, and more barriers to fresh food access are broken. As World PEAS deepens its roots with its community partners, it lives out its mission of ensuring that everyone has equal access to fresh and nutritious food.

Produce this week:

Swiss Chard • Lettuce • Broccoli
Summer Squash • New Potatoes
Fennel • Gooseberries

Also in Large Shares

Arugula

Crop Information:

Fennel



Fennel is composed of a white or pale green bulb from which closely superimposed stalks are arranged. Varieties bred for the bulb yield a crisp anise flavored vegetable that compliments meats and egg dishes. Fennel is related to cumin, dill, caraway and anise, all of which bear aromatic fruits that are commonly called seeds. It is native to southern Europe but is now naturalized in northern Europe, Australia and North America and is cultivated around the world. Enjoy fennel cooked or raw.

Health Benefits: Fennel contains a unique combination of phytonutrients, that give fennel strong antioxidant abilities. Certain phytonutrients have repeatedly proven to reduce inflammation and prevent cancer. Fennel is also an excellent source of Vitamin C, which can reduce cellular damage that may lead to osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis if left unchecked.

Handling: To prepare the fennel bulb, first remove the long stalks and trim the root end from the bottom of the bulb. The remaining bulb can be chopped into pieces of desired size. The fronds can also be finely chopped and used as seasoning.

Storing: Fennel can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks in a plastic bag in hydrator drawer of the fridge.

Crop Information

Gooseberries



Gooseberries, while not very common in markets in the United States, are popular in Europe. The berries may be smooth, fuzzy or spiny, opaque, translucent, or white. Different varieties of gooseberries are very inconsistent in size. The fruit may be as big as a cherry tomato or as tiny as a blueberry. Green gooseberries are often slightly sour tasting, but red gooseberries are fairly sweet. Crisp and highly acidic, these berries have a tight-fitting skin. In terms of nutritional value, gooseberries serve as a good source of Vitamin C and dietary fiber.

Known in the United Kingdom as the gooselog, gooseberries are a tasty treat that are delicious in jams, pies, crumbles and more, but can also be used in savory dishes. Cook berries until thickened then use as a sauce for game fowl like pheasants, quail, or duck. Alternatively, top fresh berry tarts, cheesecakes and cakes with gooseberries. Add berries to cordial or champagne glasses. This very versatile fruit can be a wonderful addition to almost any meal.

Handling: Wash gooseberries and remove stems [you can pinch off the stems or just use a pair of kitchen scissors].

Storing: Fresh gooseberries will keep up to 2 weeks in fridge. Or pop them in the freezer to enjoy later.

New Potato, Squash, & Goat Cheese Gratin

Adapted from The Kitchn

Ingredients:

- 2 medium yellow squash, about 1/2 pound
- 4 small to medium new potatoes potatoes, about 1 pound
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 ounces goat cheese [or other soft cheese]
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup whole milk
- 1/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon thinly sliced basil or thyme leaves

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 400°F. Lightly grease a 1 ½ to 2-quart casserole dish with a drizzle of olive oil. Slice squash and potatoes into very, very thin slices.. Toss the sliced vegetables with the 3 tablespoons olive oil in a large bowl. Place ⅓ of the squash and potato slices in the bottom of the dish then season with salt and pepper. Top with half of the goat cheese, scattered evenly in large chunks. Repeat with another ⅓ of the vegetables, seasoning again with salt and pepper and topping with the other ⅓ of the goat cheese. Finish by layering on the final ⅓ of the vegetables and seasoning with salt and pepper. Pour the milk over the entire dish. Top with parmesan cheese. Bake, covered, for 30 minutes, then uncover and bake 15 more minutes, until the top browns. Scatter on the fresh basil, if using.

Baked Fennel with Parmesan & Thyme

Adapted from marthastewart.com

Ingredients:

- 3 fennel bulbs
- 1 tablespoon softened butter
- Coarse salt and ground pepper
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan
- 4 sprigs thyme

Directions

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Boil 3 fennel bulbs, trimmed and split lengthwise, until tender, about 15 minutes. Drain fennel, cut side down, on paper towels, 5 minutes. Place fennel, cut side up, in a buttered 8-inch square baking dish and brush with 1 tablespoon softened butter. Season with coarse salt and ground pepper and top with 1/3 cup grated Parmesan and 4 sprigs thyme. Bake until cheese is golden brown, about 20 minutes.

Gooseberry Tart

Adapted from Foodnetwork.com

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup plus 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 pint gooseberries [about 3 cups], stems and tails removed
- Pre-made pie crusts
- Vanilla ice cream, for serving

Preparation:

Pre-heat oven to 400F. On a large sheet of parchment paper lightly dusted with flour, lay out the dough into a round about 14 inches in diameter. Use either a 14" frozen, pre-made pie dough or make one from scratch using a standard pie dough recipe. Preheat the oven to 400°. In a small bowl, mix together the sugar and cinnamon. Toss gooseberries with the sugar, cinnamon and flour mixture. Fold the edges of the pastry up over the berries to form a 9-inch free-form tart, making pleats and pressing them together lightly. Brush the pastry with water and sprinkle with the reserved cinnamon-sugar. Bake the tart for 40 to 50 minutes, or until the gooseberries are bubbling and lightly browned. Cut the tart into wedges with a sharp knife and serve with vanilla ice cream.