



The Pod

Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

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

Wednesday October 21, 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 summer. 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 help him transition from his full-time office job into full-time farming. New Entry had just what he needed- 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 do things ever really go as planned? When asked about his biggest challenge his first year, he replied with a smile, "everything was a challenge." First, he got a late start due to some drainage issues in his plot. Then, 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 growing commitments to World PEAS and instead used 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 businesses. As beginning farmers, this assistance is critical to their success. Our staff helps farmers with everything from creating farm business plans and crop production schedules, to applying for USDA grants that help cover costs for infrastructure like wells and hoopouses. Our staff also make in-person visits to their plots in order to provide continued mentorship and immediate field advice on anything from harvesting protocol to pest detection.

Next year, 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



Eric in front of his field planted in cover crop.

Produce this week:

Mustard Greens • Winter Squash
Carrots • Radish • Celeriac
Sunchokes (Small Shares only)
Cranberries • Apples • Honey
Mixed herbs

Also in Large Shares

Eggplant • Sweet potatoes
Thyme • Pears

Crop Information: Cranberries



Cranberries are vine-like plants of the Heath family, closely related to the wintergreen and blueberry. Their fruit is used in making sauce, juice, jelly, and pies. The fruit grows in wet peat bogs from North Carolina to Minnesota and northeastward. Its oval leaves are evergreen. Cranberries were first used by Native Americans, who discovered the wild berry's versatility as a food, fabric dye and healing agent. Today, cranberries are commercially grown throughout the northern part of the United States and are available in both fresh and processed forms. By 1871, the first association of cranberry growers in the United States had formed, and now, U.S. farmers harvest approximately 40,000 acres of cranberries each year.

Handling: Wash and remove their stems.

Storing: Refrigerate and use within 3 days.

Freezing: Pack cranberries into containers, leaving headspace. Cranberries can also be frozen first on a tray and then packed into containers as soon as they are frozen. Seal containers and freeze for up to 2 years.

Roasted Butternut Squash with Fresh Cranberries & Toasted Seeds

From EdiblyRhody.com

Ingredients:

1 medium-large butternut squash, peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes
1 tablespoon safflower oil
2 teaspoons kosher or sea salt
1 cup fresh cranberries
¼ cup sunflower seeds, hulled
¼ cup sesame seeds
¼ cup poppy seeds
¼ cup pepita seeds
¼ cup maple syrup

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 400°. Toss squash cubes with oil and salt. Place on a baking sheet in a single layer. Bake for 25–30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until squash is soft and lightly browned. Remove from oven, add cranberries and let cool. Once cool, place squash into a baking dish for reheating the next day. To reheat, preheat oven to 425°. Mix seeds together in a medium bowl. Sprinkle the seed mix evenly over the squash. Drizzle dish with ¼ cup maple syrup or to taste. Bake for 20 minutes, or until seeds are toasted.

Jerusalem Artichoke, aka “Sunchokes”, Soup

From SimplyRecipes.com

Ingredients:

2 tbsp unsalted butter
1 cup chopped onion
2 celery stalks, chopped
2 large garlic cloves, chopped
2 pounds [jerusalem artichokes](#), peeled and cut into chunks
1 quart chicken stock (use [vegetable stock](#) for vegetarian option)
Salt and black pepper to taste

Preparation:

Heat the butter in a soup pot over medium-high heat and cook the onions and celery until soft, about 5 minutes. Do not brown them. Add the garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Sprinkle with salt. Add the Jerusalem artichokes, aka sunchokes, and the stock to the pot. Bring to a simmer. Reduce the heat to low, and simmer, covered, until the Jerusalem artichokes begin to break down, 45 minutes to an hour. Using an immersion blender or upright blender, purée the soup. If using an upright blender, fill the blender bowl up only to a third of capacity at a time, if the soup is hot, and hold down the lid while blending. Alternately, you can push the soup through the finest grate on a food mill, or push it through a sturdy sieve. Add salt to taste. Sprinkle with freshly grated black pepper to serve.

Maple-Bacon Roasted Apples & Celeriac

Adapted from BlueApron.com

Ingredients:

1 large celery root (celeriac), about 1 1/2 pounds, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 apples, cut into 1-inch pieces
2 slices bacon, chopped
1/4 cup pure maple syrup
1 teaspoon chopped fresh [thyme](#) or rosemary

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 450°F. Toss celery root with oil, pepper and salt and spread on a rimmed baking sheet. Roast until starting to brown, 10 to 12 minutes. Add apples, toss gently and continue roasting until the apples and celery root are tender, 6 to 10 minutes more. Meanwhile, cook bacon in a medium skillet over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until just crispy. Remove to a paper-towel-lined plate with a slotted spoon; discard all but 2 teaspoons of the bacon fat. Add maple syrup to the fat in the pan and bring to a boil, scraping up the browned bits. Add the cooked bacon and thyme (or rosemary). When the celery root and apples are tender, gently toss them with the maple-bacon glaze and roast for about 5 minutes more.