



The Pod

Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

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

Wednesday September 23, 2015

Produce Spotlight: Apples

It's almost officially fall, which means it's time for all things apple! This sweet and tangy fruit is a New England classic, used in many colonial recipes that are still popular today. The apple was introduced to North America in the 1630's by early settlers, then carried westward by missionaries, traders, and Native Americans. One man alone, John Chapman (a.k.a. Johnny Appleseed), was responsible for extensive plantings of apple trees in the Midwestern United States.



Surprisingly, apples were not usually consumed raw when first introduced to North America. The original apple tree varieties cultivated in New England often produced small, tart fruits. Many colonists grew their own apples, but preferred using the fruits in cooking or baking. Alternatively, fermented cider drinks were [obviously] the hottest item.

The genetic history of the apple is equally as fascinating as the fruit is refreshing. Apples are heterozygous, a fancy term that means an apple blossom must be cross pollinated to reproduce and yield an apple fruit. This heterozygosity also means that a seed from one apple tree will not produce a fruit tree identical to its parent when planted. Rather, it will yield a new variety. Prior to the 1900s, there were thousands of apple varieties grown and consumed throughout the US due to this unique characteristic. However, because of commercial pressures related to uniform aesthetics, durability, and taste, only about 100 varieties are still cultivated for consumption today. Instead of planting an apple seed, apple farmers will graft a branch from a pre-existing tree onto rootstock from another tree. This allows the farmer to keep producing very specific apple varieties, and to select for specific traits relating to hardiness and pest resistance.

The popular saying "An apple a day keeps the doctor away" may have some validity. With just 80 calories, this healthy snack packs a big punch of fiber, disease-fighting anti-oxidants and a variety of vitamins and minerals including potassium, folate, niacin and vitamins A, B, C, E and K. Consuming apples on a regular basis has also been associated with lower risk of a variety of cancers, stroke and diabetes.

World PEAS purchases apples from family orchards in the surrounding area that use sustainable growing practices. Apple orchards are a particularly difficult farming venture to sustain in New England due to capital investments, land available, and pest pressures. We are proud to support the family orchards producing such high quality fruit for you this fall!

Produce this week:

Collard Greens • Sugar Pumpkin • Hakurei Turnip Leeks • Celery • Tomatillo Parsley • Cortland Apples

Also in Large Shares

Garlic • Green Onion

Crop Information:

Sugar Pumpkins



The round orange squash usually carved at Halloween, pumpkins also make wonderful soups, breads, and pie. In our CSA shares, we provide sugar pumpkins, which are much better for cooking and baking than their carving counterparts. Try baking it filled halfway with milk and a few spoonfuls of sugar for an instant pudding. Native Americans dried strips of pumpkin and wove them into mats. They also roasted long strips of pumpkin on the open fire and ate them. The origin of pumpkin pie occurred when the colonists sliced off the pumpkin top, removed the seeds, and filled the insides with milk, spices and honey. The pumpkin was then baked in hot ashes.

Handling: Use a cleaver or a very large knife to split the pumpkin in half or wedges. Scoop out the seeds and strings and discard.

Storing: Pumpkins should be stored in a cool, dry place. It will last at room temp for weeks and at 40-50 degrees for several months. If cut open, put in fridge.

Cathy's Pumpkin Ginger Bread

Adapted from "The New American Cooking" by Joan Nathan, 2005

Ingredients:

*2 1/2 cups sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
4 large eggs
grated zest of 1 lemon
2 1/2 cups fresh-cooked pureed pumpkin
3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon ginger
1 teaspoon cloves
1/2 cup chopped candied ginger
1 1/2 cup walnut, dried cranberries, or raisins [optional]*

Preparation:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and grease two 8 1/2-inch loaf pans.

Mix the sugar and oil in the bowl of a standing mixer, using the paddle. Beat in the eggs one at a time, then add the lemon zest and pumpkin. Stir to combine thoroughly.

Add the flour, salt, baking soda, nutmeg, cinnamon, ground ginger, and cloves and beat on low speed until well mixed. Add the candied ginger and the walnuts, cranberries, and or/raisins.

Gradually add the dry ingredients to the pumpkin mixture, blending thoroughly. Pour the batter into the loaf pans and bake for about 70 minutes. Allow the breads to cool on a rack before removing them from their pans.

Braised Leeks

Adapted from marthastewart.com

Ingredients:

*4 leeks, [2 1/2 to 3 pounds]
4 cups reduced-sodium canned chicken broth
2 tablespoons cold butter
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
Coarse salt and ground pepper*

Preparation:

Remove outer leaves; cut dark-green ends from leeks. Trim roots, keeping leaves attached. Halve lengthwise; rinse to remove grit.

Bring broth to a boil in a large skillet. Add leeks; cover, and cook over medium-low heat, turning once, until easily pierced with the tip of a paring knife, 15 to 25 minutes. Using tongs, transfer leeks to a platter.

Boil broth until reduced to 1/2 cup, 10 minutes. Remove from heat. Add butter; swirl to melt. Add parsley; season with salt and pepper. Spoon over leeks.

Salsa Verde

Adapted from marthastewart.com

Ingredients:

*1 pint tomatillos, husks removed
1/2 cup diced white onion
1 garlic clove
1/2 jalapeno, quartered [seeded if desired]
1 cup water
Coarse salt and ground pepper
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
1 teaspoon white vinegar
Pinch of sugar*

Preparation:

In a medium pot of boiling salted water, cook tomatillos until tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Drain tomatillos and transfer to a blender; add onion, clove, jalapeno, and water. Puree until smooth. [Use caution when blending hot liquids: Remove cap from lid and cover opening with a dish towel.] Season with salt and pepper. In pot, heat oil over high until shimmering. Add tomatillo mixture and simmer, stirring occasionally, until thickened, 5 to 10 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in cilantro, vinegar, and sugar. Season to taste with salt and pepper.