



# From Far Afield

A newsletter of the Tolstoy Farms CSA - August 19 & 22, 2015

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**O**H, THE BOXES ARE full this week. So full are they that some of their contents are not contained at all, and will instead be given to you with your boxes at the market. The biggest single space-hog is **corn**. Twelve ears this week. There will probably be a slight lull in corn next week due to our third planting not running smoothly into our second. One reason for this is that we did not plant Spring Treat, the earliest corn variety, in our third planting due to germination issues in our first two plantings. Also early June was so hot that I think the early plantings grew

faster than the third, which was planted in mid June.

This week is probably the apex for corn this season. It is early for corn to peak; many years we are just starting to pick corn in mid-August. So enjoy your corn. If you find you have more corn than you will readily use, it is easy to freeze. Husk and de-silk it, then steam or boil on the cob for a few minutes, until the corn is very hot. Remove from heat, allow to cool a few minutes, stand on its end with tip upward in a wide shallow bowl, then cut with a sharp knife just above the cob to remove kernels (don't cut into the cob or your corn will have a poor texture and flavor). Spoon desired amount into quart freezer bags and freeze. For me, the corn from two to three ears is a good amount for a quart bag.

In addition to raccoons, our corn has a new nemesis: Corn Earworm. This moth larva, *Helicoverpa zea*, is known by many other monikers: Tomato Fruitworm, Cotton Bollworm, Sorghum Headworm, and Vetchworm. The diversity of names only hints at the wide range of crops this insect feeds on, but its crop of choice is corn. Eggs are laid by the adult moth on the ear's silks, and hatch after a couple of days. The larva move down into the ear and feast on the developing kernels, making a mess of the tip of the ear. Several young larva may initially enter an ear, but as they grow the larva become aggressively territorial and will attack and cannibalize weaker larva. Because of this, one seldom finds more than one worm in an ear. Earworms cannot overwinter

in freezing climes, but disperse from southern areas on winds. This is the first time we have had these pests, so I guess the wind lottery hit our number this year. Tyler and I tried, as we were harvesting, to remove any damaged ears, but you might find an occasional ear with a bad looking tip and perhaps a worm inside. If you have an ear like this, you can usually cut the tip off and still have most of the ear usable (in fact, the prevalence of corn earworms is why you see corn in supermarkets sold so often with the tip cut off); but if the damage is too bad, please ask for a replacement at the stand.

Okay, enough about that bug, but to say that were I in a metal band, said band name would be **Vetchworm**.

Sweet corn is actually very good for you. It is high in protein and has many antioxidants, such as the mineral manganese and beta-carotene. It has many b-complex vitamins and is high fiber. Corn has been shown to increase friendly bacteria in the intestine. These bacteria help convert the corn fiber into short-chain fatty acids, which enrich and nourish intestinal cells. Though thought of as a very sugary food, the protein and fiber in sweet corn actually help regulate the absorption of sugar, managing the bloodstreams glycemic load.

More tomatoes this week plus some cilantro and a Serrano pepper make it salsa time! I like to make roasted salsa and here is how to do it:

Put a pound of tomatoes on a roasting pan or on a baking sheet

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## In Your Box

- 2 pound Red Norland potato
- 12 ears corn
- 2 pounds tomatoes
- 1 cabbage
- 1 bunch carrots
- 1 lb. beans
- 1 bunch beets
- 2 sweet onions
- 1 head garlic
- 1 lettuce
- 4 cucumber
- 2 pounds zucchini
- 1 crookneck squash
- 1 patty pan squash
- 1 bunch chard
- 1 bunch basil
- 1 bunch cilantro
- 1 sweet pepper
- 1 Serrano pepper

with an onion (prick onion several times with a fork first), a head of garlic, and the Serrano. Turn oven to broil and put veggies in the broiler of your oven or on the floor of the oven itself. Turn veggies with tongs and remove when lightly charred on the outside and soft. Remove very badly charred skin and stem of the pepper and tomato (don't worry about it too much, though) and pit in a blender or food processor with the roughly chopped onion and peeled garlic. Process add salt and lime juice if desired and process to desired consistency. Mince cilantro and stir in. You can also chop and mix by hand if desired, though this usually requires it to sit for longer so the flavors meld.

Monday morning I was coming out of my cellar and saw the rear end of a mountain lion going around the corner of my house about 14 feet away. I went into my

house and looked out the back window and there it was walking through my back yard to the creek, where it disappeared into the brush. I saw a bear just behind the house about a month ago (I keep meaning to post photos of the bear on facebook, but keep forgetting.) I think drought, fire, and habitat encroachment are causing these animals to come closer into our living zones. The creek, though mostly dry, has pools of water for drinking; the surrounding bushes are greener so provide more potential for roots and berries and rodents and birds for a bear; and the watered green zones around our domains attracts browsers, which then attracts cougars. While I very much believe in the necessity of large predators for ecological balance, I prefer cougars not think of my front yard as hunting territory....

Enjoy your produce.

### Roasted Corn & Basil Soup

When corn is abundant and you want a new way to enjoy it, try this delicious soup. If you don't have a grill, place the corn under a broiler, about six inches from the heat, and cook as directed in the recipe. Serves four main dish servings.

1 med. bulb garlic  
6 ears corn with husks intact  
3 cups homemade vegetable stock (see note)  
1 potato, cubed  
2/3 c. rice milk  
1/4 tsp. salt  
several grinds black pepper  
1/2 c. basil leaves, chiffonade (see note)

Preheat a coal or gas grill to med. high. Lightly oil the unpeeled garlic bulb and place it on the grill. Cook for about 45 min, until soft.

Meanwhile, soak the corn, husks and all, in cold water for 15 min. Remove from water, pat dry, then place on grill with garlic. Grill for 30 min., turning occasionally, until husks are slightly charred. Remove garlic and corn from grill, set aside.

When cool enough to handle, shuck corn, discard husks and silks. Cut kernels from the cob, reserving the cobs. In a stockpot, combine the broth, potato, and reserved corn cobs. Bring to boil over high, reduce heat to med., cover and simmer for 20 min. until potatoes are tender. Remove from heat and discard cobs.

Meanwhile, squeeze garlic from its papery skin into the bowl of a food processor, discarding skin. Add corn kernels. With a slotted spoon, lift the potatoes from the cooking broth, and add to the food processor. Process, adding the cooking broth as needed to create a smooth but thick puree. (Pureeing may need to be done in 2 batches.) Return to pan and stir in rice milk, basil, salt, and pepper, then gently reheat. Garnish with basil or mint sprigs, if desired.

NOTE: If you don't have homemade veggie stock, dissolve 1 1/2 large vegetable broth cubes in 3 cups hot water.

NOTE: To cut fresh herbs chiffonade style, stack several clean & dried leaves, roll tightly from one long side to the other, & slice crosswise as thinly as possible with a sharp knife.

### Parmesan Squash Bake

Thanks to CSA Jennifer West for sharing this recipe with us. Please email if you have a recipe you would like to share.

2 medium zucchini  
2-3 medium other summer squash  
1 medium sweet onion, diced  
1/2-1 c. grated Parmesan cheese  
1/4c. extra virgin olive oil, divided  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
sea salt to taste

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

In a small pan, heat about 1 tbsp of olive oil. Pan fry the diced onion until soft and translucent, about 7 minutes. Add in the garlic and fry for another minute or so. Pour the onion mixture into the bottom of a 9x9 baking dish. Slice the zucchini and squash into thin slices. Layer them into 4 rows across in the dish, over the onions. Slowly drizzle the olive oil over the pieces until they are evenly coated. Sprinkle with sea salt.

Bake for 30 minutes, uncovered. Sprinkle the Parmesan over the top of the dish. Bake for another 15-20 minutes, or until the veggies are soft and slightly golden brown.