



Covered Bridge Gardens

CSA Newsletter

Week 10 of 15

The Nibbler

Back to School with Local Lunches

How to connect schools with local produce has been the discussion of several meetings over the past few months. Local school food service personnel are trying to learn how they can bring some of our local harvest into their cafeterias. Covered Bridge Gardens hosted a group of food service supervisors, teachers and school groups to learn what is growing in their area. We were one of several farms they visited as they toured Ashtabula County.

- There are some obstacles for both farmers and schools to make this happen. Every small step is a step in the right direction. Here are some of the concerns.
- A. Fresh harvesting is mainly in the summer when schools are out. There is small window in September and October when late season vegetables are available.
 - B. Do schools have the budget for the cost of local produce?
 - C. What is the quickest way to communicate what we have and get orders? Calling each school or farm will take a lot of time each week.
 - D. Will farmers be required to deliver the orders or will schools pool resources for a pick-up service?
 - E. Will kids want to eat new things and not waste it?
 - F. Can schools add more meal prep time to the payroll budget?

Most schools are trying to get local with apples and fruit available over the school year. But something as simple as fresh eggs has some people balking when they can get them powdered and don't have to worry about storage and messy preps.

Let's approach this from a different angle. Let's help parents learn how to put local in their kids' lunch bags. I hope I'm not too far off base but this is what I hear adults taking for lunches during our CSA season and think kids can follow with the same. For example, add local lettuce, tomatoes, cheeses and breads for their sandwiches. Have the kids involved by helping to make pickled vegetables, homemade soups or jams.

If you have any suggestions how parents and schools can bring local and school lunches together, please share them on our Facebook page.



Kay is sharing what we grow at Covered Bridge Gardens in our large packing and prep barn with local school personnel interested in putting more local in their schools. The group walked back to our greenhouses and saw the impact the weather has had on crops this season. Ashtabula County Extension Agent David Marrison promoted the idea of popcorn for fundraisers.



FYI: Yellow and Red fingerling potatoes not shown in earlier newsletter.

You never know when a memory will be made. I took this photo of a swallowtail butterfly landing on a sunflower right in front of me while picking this week. It spread its wings like it was saying look at me, take my picture. Then a few minutes later while I was holding a large group of flowers in my hand a humming bird flew up, hovered in front of me, and admired the flowers while I admired it. That photo is on my mind's eye.

I hope this summer is full of happy memories for all of you.



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August 23-25, 2013
Historic Ashtabula Harbor
Bridge Street



Garlic fever returns
to Shaker Square
September 7-8, 2013

Year 5 will be bigger and better with continuous live music, chef contests and demos, and the finest local food featuring one of our favorite alliums...garlic!

Tickets on sale now at www.clevelandgarlicfestival.org

Buy Out the Farm

Watch our home page on the website for each week's offer and any price updates.

Eggplant



Until comparatively recently, the eggplant was considered exotic in many Western countries. It was cultivated from a wild variety that was similar to a hen's egg in shape and color, which explains its name.

Regardless of the skin color the fruit is always white inside. Eggplant is made up of 92% water. To draw out some of the water and reduce the bitter taste before cooking, cut into slices and sprinkle with salt. Let sit for 30 minutes. Rinse off and pat dry. While drying, lightly squeeze each piece to remove the most water. This will reduce the amount of oil they will absorb during frying.

Among the varieties we grow are the traditional black (dark purple) Italian (white band under the cap and more round shape), bright neon purple colored and white. The white eggplant is sweeter and has the most tender skin of the group.

Storage/Preparation

Eggplant has a very short shelf life. Store eggplant in the refrigerator for three to four days. You will notice the skin wrinkle and dark marks appear on the skin as it gets old. See tips on our website for preparation and freezing.

Stuffed Eggplant

Cut a medium eggplant lengthwise; remove flesh and lay shell aside. Cut the flesh into cubes. Cook in small amount of boiling salt water for 10 minutes.

While eggplant is cooking, brown $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sliced mushrooms, 2 tbsp. chopped onion, 1 clove garlic, chopped, in 2 tbsp. butter. When partially browned, add drained eggplant. Then add salt and pepper to taste and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cream. Simmer 10 to 15 minutes until soft.

Fill eggplant shell with mixture and top with 1 slice bacon, chopped. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

4 servings.

Simple Eggplant

- Try frying your eggplant in the same mixture used for green fried tomatoes. After dipping in egg wash coat in 50% breadcrumbs and 50% Parmesan cheese. Fry until tender in oil or butter.

- Eggplant is also good grilled. Brush with olive oil on both sides while getting one more outdoor grilled meal in for the season.