

FIELD *notes*

UCSC Farm
Community Supported Agriculture
Twelfth Harvest: 8/31/10 & 9/3/10

What's in the box?

Butter Lettuce, *Pirat*
Arugula, *Astro*
Kale, *Red Russian*
Basil, *Aroma2*
Carrots, *Nelson*
Cabbage, *Farao*
Beans, *Gold Rush & Bronco*
Sweet Corn, *XTender 270A*
Potatoes, *Yukon Gold*
Apples, *mix of Molly's Delicious, Ginger Gold, Chehalis, Fuji or Valstar!*

Upcoming Event: Fall Plant Sale

Friday, Sept 9 from noon to 6 pm and
Saturday, Sept 10 from 10 am to 2pm.

Location: Barn Theatre Parking Lot, UCSC
(corner of Bay and High Streets)

Description: Fall is a wonderful time to plant vegetable crops that will extend your gardening season and to give perennials a good head start for next spring's blossoms. The region's best-suited varieties of organically grown winter vegetables and landscape plants will be available. Proceeds support the Apprenticeship program.

Friends/CSA members receive 10% off all purchases. Questions? Call 459-3240 or send email to casfs@ucsc.edu

Words from the Field

On Sweet Corn and Corn Earworm

The variety of sweet corn we are picking this week is called "*Extra Tender 270A*" – perhaps more enticing of a name than a cabbage we used to grow called "Late Storage #4," but distinctly a breeder's name. Sweet corn has been grown in North America since at least the 1700's by Native Americans, occurring as a natural mutation in field corn—the starchier corn we think of as dry corn, harvested for cornmeal or hominy. Sweet corn breeding advanced in the 20th century with the identification of specific genes responsible for sweetness: the "su" sugary gene, the "se" sugary enhanced gene, and "sh2" shrunken gene. XTender 270A is a "super sweet" type with the "sh2" gene. The seed we purchase is truly shriveled, indicating lack of starch in the kernels. The super sweets were first bred at the University of Illinois in the 1950's, but were not grown widely until the 1980's. They stay tender and sweet for a very long time after harvested, making it possible to mass pick and ship the sweet corn in supermarkets, and doing away with the necessity to "Get it in the pot of boiling water as soon as possible!"

I'm wondering how it will work to offer the old-fashioned, less-sweet, must-cook-right-away varieties again? We think about this because the seed for XTender 270A isn't available organic, and we also can't save our own seed from this hybrid. . . However, these questions took a backseat this year in the scramble just to get the corn planted late May when the rains ended! Next year, old fashioned sweet corn coupled with a solar oven demo?

We aim to plant the first corn by April 15th. Since it was late this year. . . it hosts a healthy population of *corn earworm*. (Thus the trimmed ears this week.) Corn earworm, *Helicoverpa zea*, is a widespread pest of many crops throughout North America including tomato, beans, cabbage, lettuce, cotton and tobacco. It overwinters in the soil as pupae, where the weather is mild enough--as far north as southern Washington on this coast. In the Northeast, sweet corn is damaged by a migrating population that flies up from the South, usually in late August. Adult moths hatch in early spring, and the females are attracted to the scent of corn silk, and lay eggs on the corn leaves or on



Words from the Field (continued)

on the tips of corn ears. Hatching larvae crawl down the silk into the ears, where they feed.

Organic control for corn earworm is primarily planting early. Choosing a variety with a tight husk is also helpful. Additionally, growers treat individual ears of corn just after silking with an application of mineral or vegetable oil containing *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), poison to the earworm larvae. The oil acts as a carrier bringing the Bt down the silk, and also acts as a barrier to the larvae. Another tactic is release of *Trichogramma* parasitic wasps timed with egg laying. We'll be experimenting this year with the oil/Bt application.

-- Liz Milazzo, Field Manager

Green Beans Vinaigrette

Serves 4 to 6

From: *The Vegetarian Epicure* by Anna Thomas

- | 1 lb. fresh green beans
- | 1/2 medium onion
- | 1 small clove garlic
- | 1/3 cup fresh-grated Parmesan cheese
- | 6 Tablespoons of olive oil
- | 2 Tablespoons white wine vinegar
- | 1/2 teaspoon salt and fresh ground black pepper

| Garnish: Tomatoes, olives

| Wash the beans, snip off the ends, and cut them length-wise. Drop them into boiling, salted water and cook until just tender. Drain.

| Finely chop half of an onion and mince a clove of garlic. Combine the beans with the other ingredients and mix well. Chill and serve with tomatoes, olives, and other fresh or marinated garnishes of your choice.

Cream of Corn Soup with Basil

Serves 6 to 8

Adapted from: *Vegetarian Soups for All Seasons*
by Nava Atlas

- 6 medium ears of fresh sweet corn
- 2 Tablespoons olive or canola oil
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 medium potatoes, diced
- 4 cups cooking liquid from the corn
- 1 cup chopped basil
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 2 cups low-fat milk or soy milk, or as needed
- salt and freshly ground pepper

Cook the corn in plenty of rapidly simmering water until kernels are just tender, then remove the corn and reserve the water. When the corn is cool enough to handle, scrape the kernels off the cobs with a sharp knife. Set the kernels aside.

Heat the oil in a soup pot. Add the onion and garlic and sauté over medium heat until golden. Add the potatoes and cooking liquid from the corn and bring to a simmer. Simmer gently, covered, for 10 minutes. Add half of the basil along with the herb mix. Simmer until the potatoes are tender, about 10 to 15 minutes more, then remove from the heat.

Set aside 1 cup of corn kernels and puree the remainder in a food processor or blender until fairly smooth. Transfer to a bowl. With a slotted spoon, transfer the solid ingredients from the soup to the food processor or blender and puree until smooth. Return the puree to the soup pot, along with the corn puree, the reserved corn kernels, and the reserved basil.

Return to low heat and stir in enough milk to achieve a slightly thick consistency. Season to taste with salt and pepper, then cover and simmer over low heat for another 10 to 15 minutes. Serve.