

Newsletter

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

Week Seven

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Storms

Weather Radar is a mixed blessing. I am quite addicted to watching the approaching storms. Saturday night's was a doozy. It was post Garlic Harvest and I was relaxed, satisfied with good food, wonderful people, lots of work accomplished and the Becerra's Sangria. The phone rang. It was my neighbor. "Have you checked out the radar?" she asked. It did look bad. A fast moving collage of green with areas of yellow, red and even pink. Wunderground Weather lets you add storm tracks. These flashed across our area, then shifted first South, then North. As they moved along, a purple vortex symbol showed up. Yikes!

As these storms come rolling in, I hoped for the best and knew that I couldn't do anything to change what would happen. The weather radio is not a comfort. Reports of large hail crackled in with the stilted accent of the computer voice. I battened down the hatches, closing the barn doors and adding a few strings to the shade cloth. Remnants of the Garlic Harvest I swept into a basket and stashed it inside. As the storm advanced it rumbled and crashed. This one really had a lot of energy. Molly, my dog forced her way in the house and wouldn't leave. It began to rain and I retreated to the basement. I wasn't so worried about a tornado, but I didn't want to hear the water pouring down in torrents. In the end, no hail arrived and all was well. Five inches of rain in 10 days is enough thank you.

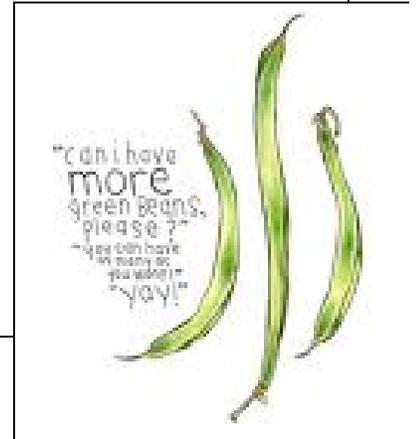
Broccoli

You wouldn't think that broccoli would be hard to grow but it is sensitive to the heat. This is the last of the broccoli until fall rolls around. Soak the broccoli well to remove any worms that are hiding in the heads. The brown spots or bumpy appearance are from the warm muggy weather. The fall broccoli needs to be planted about the end of June and it has been successfully planted. I also am trying some orange cauliflower called "Cheddar". I haven't done well with this in the past but time will tell.

I love broccoli best in a stir-fry. The permutation I like best is with beef and almonds. Fermented bean paste, found in ethnic food stores gives it a really hearty flavor. Broccoli is also good blanched and chilled in a salad with mayo, almonds and green onions

In the bag:

Green beans
Summer squash
Green onions
Cucumbers
Broccoli
Kale
Potatoes - Caribe
Cilantro
Basil
Cabbage



Vegetables in the bag:

I made a wonderful salad with cold steamed new potatoes, cooked green beans, basil, green onions and roasted garlic aioli (garlic mayonnaise). The last of the Brie and some French bread made a grand meal. I like green beans cooked so that they are not squeaky. **Garlic** can be roasted once it has dried for about a week. Cut the top off the bulbs so that the tips of the cloves show. Drizzle with a little olive oil. Bake at 350° until it is soft. Squeeze from the bottom onto bread or potatoes. One of my favorite ways to fix **summer squash** is to make matchstick pieces with a mandolin or by hand. Sauté very briefly until just tender. Dot with butter and eat immediately. **Kale**, ah, kale. Remove the ribs and roughly chop. Sauté with garlic. Be sure not to burn the garlic then sprinkle with salt and some good quality balsamic vinegar. Google "sausage and kale" soup and you are in for a treat. There is always African Peanut Stew. I like **cabbage** also sautéed with sausage and onions. If you are vegetarian, leave out the sausage. Don't over cook the cabbage.

Membership Balances Due

If you owe a balance on your membership, please send it in soon. If you are unsure of the amount you owe, please email and I can check for you.

Garlic Harvest a Success

About 30 people showed up on Saturday for the harvest and almost all of the heads were gathered in spite of the heat. The garlic this year is really large. All of the moisture suited it well. I was gifted with a hat and a nice cutting board so if you are missing them, let me know.

Chilled Zucchini Soup with Lemon-Cumin Shrimp and Cilantro Cream

This velvety soup has no cream except for the little bit of sour cream that's spooned on top. It's perfect for summer entertaining: All of the components can be prepared a day ahead.

Yield: 6 first-course or 4 main-course servings

ingredients

Cilantro cream:

1/2 cup sour cream
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
1 small garlic clove, pressed

Shrimp:

1 pound peeled cooked medium shrimp
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon peel

Soup:

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 medium onion, sliced (about 2 cups)
2 garlic cloves, sliced
6 medium zucchini (about 1 3/4 pounds), cut into 1/4-inch-thick rounds
4 cups low-salt chicken broth
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro plus sprigs for garnish

preparation

For cilantro cream:

Whisk sour cream, cilantro, and garlic in small bowl to blend. Season with salt and pepper. *DO AHEAD: Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill.*

For shrimp:

Combine all ingredients in medium bowl. Cover and chill at least 4 hours or overnight. *DO AHEAD: Can be made 1 day ahead. Keep chilled.*

For soup:

Heat oil in heavy large pot over medium heat. Add onion; sauté until tender, about 8 minutes. Add garlic; stir 1 minute. Add zucchini; stir to coat. Stir in broth; bring to boil. Cover, reduce heat to medium low, and simmer until zucchini is tender, about 10 minutes. Cool to lukewarm. Add chopped cilantro. Working in batches, puree soup in blender until smooth. Transfer soup to large bowl. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and chill until cold, about 4 hours. *DO AHEAD: Can be made 1 day ahead. Keep chilled.* Divide soup among bowls. Top each with shrimp, dividing equally. Spoon dollop of cilantro cream over each, garnish with cilantro sprigs, and serve.