



BOANN'S BANKS

Sustainable Agriculture Along the Broad River

July 26, 2003

This Week at Market

- Summer Squash “Yellow Crookneck”
- Zucchini “Cocozella di Napoli”
- Basil “Lemon”, “Red Rubin”, “Cinnamon”, “Thai”, & “Genovese Sweet”
- New Potatoes “Peruvian Blue”
- Sumac Berries

On the horizon: Rutabagas, Winter Squash, Cucumbers, Edamame, Beans, many varieties of Heirloom Tomatoes, Peppers, and more!

Potatoes and Cream

- 1 ½ pounds all-purpose potatoes
- Scant 1 T sea salt
- 1 cup Crème Fraîche
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper
- ½ cup loosely packed flat-leaf parsley leaves

Place the potatoes in a large saucepan, add the salt, and pour in enough water to cover. Bring to a boil and cook until the potatoes are tender through but not mushy, 15 to 20 minutes. Drain. While the potatoes are cooking, bring the Crème Fraîche to a simmer in a medium-size saucepan over medium heat. Season it to taste with salt and pepper, and cook just until it is slightly thickened, by about one third, 5 to 8 minutes. OPTIONAL: You can infuse the crème while it is simmering with bay leaves, fresh thyme or other herbs, or a garlic clove cut in half. Finely mince the parsley leaves. Place the potatoes in a warmed serving dish and sprinkle them with parsley. Serve the cream sauce separately, removing any hers you may have added.



Crème Fraîche

- 2 cups heavy cream
- 3 T cultured buttermilk

Whisk together in medium bowl. Cover with cotton towel and let stand until it thickens (8 to 12 hours). Cover and refrigerate for several more hours.

Hello! This week has been pretty typical for the year – we had rain five of the last seven days, and everywhere the ground is soggy. It’s great to get the water in the ground – we’ll need it later – but getting all of it at once is hard to deal with. For example, our tomatoes and peppers are planted on a terraced slope designed to catch and hold water. It’s a great system, for average or less rainfall, but this year there has been standing water there on many occasions. Hasn’t killed anything, but it’s slowed them down considerably.

We do have many tomatoes now on the vine, especially of the smaller varieties. The Koralik plants, a heirloom cherry tomato from Russia that consistently wins taste trials, have a lot more fruit than leaves. We’re eager to share them with you.

The bugs haven’t yet been a problem, thanks to the weather. The tomato horned worms are just starting to show, a few at a time. The chickens love them! The dreaded squash bug hasn’t made an appearance yet, and for that, we’re thankful.

The shell beans are starting to plump up, and we have many varieties of heirloom snap and soy beans on their way. The tomatillos are filling out their husks, the Chiras baby corn is waist high, the peppers are getting larger, and (finally!) the eggplant are flowering. It may be late, but the summer bounty is on its way.

Thanks for coming to market this week. Eat well!

-- Chris and Eric Wagoner
www.boannsbanks.com

Featured Vegetable

This week’s featured item is one of the world’s most important food crops and has been grown (originally in South America) for at least 8000 of years -- *Solanum tuberosum*, the humble potato. The ancestors of the Incas in the mountains of Peru first tamed the potato. The plant was so important to their culture that, like Eskimos and snow, the modern day Quechua Indians (the descendants of the Inca) have more than 1000 different names for potatoes in their native language. Their Spanish conquerors took the potato back to Europe as a curiosity – the name comes from the Caribbean word “batata” which actually refers to the sweet potato brought over by African slaves (and isn’t at all related to the potato). Sir Francis Drake fed his crew with potatoes during his voyages, and he gave some to his friend Sir Walter Raleigh. Raleigh planted them in his estates in Ireland, where they’ve been a staple food ever since. He presented Queen Elizabeth I with a gift of potatoes, and her cooks proceeded to make a meal of them. Unfortunately, having never seen potatoes before, they cooked the stems and leaves, which are quite poisonous. The royal family got sick, and potatoes were banned in England for over 100 years. It was Marie Antoinette who brought potatoes out of obscurity in Europe, by wearing the flowers in her hair. Soon after, everyone wanted potatoes. Thanks largely to the ease with which one can make drinking alcohol out of potatoes, northern Europe nearly forgot about its favorite vegetable, the turnip, in favor of potatoes. They are high in Vitamin C, potassium, and fiber as well.

The specific variety we’ve brought in this week is an original Peruvian heirloom, “Peruvian Blue”. Potato farmers have grown it for a long time to mark the end of their rows, but recently it has caught on in culinary circles. It is a good all-purpose potato, especially well suited to boiling, roasting, or mashing.