2013

Zucchini, The Overachiever

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**Zucchini, The Overachiever**

Zucchini squash is one of those vegetables that gardeners snort at derisively. Not that they hate them mind you. It's really more of a grudging sort of respect, the same you might give to an overachieving classmate who makes that ten page research paper an easy A, or the athlete that can run a full marathon after three weeks of training. Zucchini definitely goes above and beyond the call of duty; during the warm season, one plant seems to produce at least a fruit or two a day, and if we miss one in the patch, that eight inch zucchini becomes a three foot behemoth almost overnight! There's a weird and amusing sense of panic when I happen upon one, a surprise that's partly a bit impressed, partly annoyed knowing that the plant is draining away its energy into one colossal fruit—most gardeners/farmers would much rather have many small, more flavorful fruit in its stead.

And what a delectable veggie it can be, if it's cooked right. The alternative, a flavorless mushy mess that comes from old fruit being cooked too long, is what turns many people off of squash all together. A shorter cooking times is usually the rule. I prefer mine a bit on the undercooked side, still bright green (or yellow) with a bit of crunch. It can even be tasty raw with dip or grated in a salad. For the big zucchini that “got away,” they're actually perfect for bread and cookies, giving both desserts a moist, puffed-up texture that melts in your mouth. I even knew one lady in the community garden who could, with the right cut and the correct spices, make a dessert that was almost a perfect rendition of apple cobbler, without using any apples whatsoever. For such an easy to grow, productive, and versatile veggie, it doesn't get much respect.

It was, however, interesting enough to be one of the first veggies to come back with European explorers after the discovery of Mesoamerica. However, as is common with many contemporary vegetables, the zucchini back then didn't really exist yet. It descends from a species called Curcubita pepo, which amazingly is the same species that many of our extremely different looking crooknecks, scallop squash, acorn squash, and pumpkins come from. Even stranger, because squash are so dependent on bees, the flowers of one type often cross with another type, and if the seed is saved, something really strange might pop out of the ground next year! I wonder what a one pound green zucchini would look like if it was crossed with a hundred pound orange pumpkin? Could you make a jack-o-lantern out of it and still eat it grilled like a zucchini? Maybe it's time for an experiment to find out!

*Andrew Croft*
Stuffed Zucchini

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

Trim stems from zucchini and slice lengthwise. Scoop out seeds and put in bowl. Mix seeds with sausage, garlic, bread crumbs, and parmesan cheese. Stuff squash with sausage mixture and place in 9x13 inch baking pan. Pour sauce over squash and cover pan with foil.

Bake in preheated oven for 45 minutes, or until sausage is cooked. Remove foil and cover with mozzarella cheese. Cook until cheese is melted.

recipe from allrecipes.com

On the Farm News

This summer we have been blessed to share this farm with all of you. The following is a note written by Cath Branwood, a videographer who volunteered with us this summer.

This summer was my first experience on an organic farm. And wow, has it been a learning curve! I was introduced to it by Eric and asked to make a short video to promote the great work, which everyone does here. So, from June to August, I spent fun times getting my hands dirty, capturing all the interesting people and events of the farm. What was most exciting to me was seeing all the colorful fruits and vegetables grow from seedlings to beautiful tasty produce for harvest.

I was lucky enough get a lot of good produce with my CSA share, so not only did I get to see the food grown and harvested, but I could experiment with it through cooking too. While I do not consider myself to be a food idiot, a lot of the food coming in the box was totally new to me. It took time to work out what each leafy green and strangely shaped root vegetable was! So this summer was definitely a culinary adventure.

Huge thanks to Shannon’s newsletter recipes and that master chef called Google. Who knew that Kale could be so versatile? But, I think my beetroot and potato mash recipe shall remain in my personal vault.

I had so much fun, getting to know the interns down on the farm. They study a variety of programs, including Soil Science, Environmental studies, Plant Science and Residential Landscaping. Amongst the interns, there is a real sense of community, and an excitement about learning how an organic farm operates. Everyone seems to have the common goal of encouraging themselves and local people to become more self-sufficient, organic and sustainable.

While each intern admits that the summer work is hard, the morning starts are early and the sun is hot, that seems to be half the enjoyment! So come down, join the team, pick a kohlrabi or two, and learn how to grow your own organic produce. In my opinion, the work by students, on this farm, is a stepping-stone to a sustainable future!

by Cath Branwood

Announcements

Pumpkin Days
Pumpkin Days is coming up! We are celebrating the end of a beautiful season with our annual Pumpkin Day celebration on Oct. 12 from Noon-5pm. As CSA members your admission is free. Come celebrate with us!

Last pickup
The last pickup is next Thursday and Saturday (September 26 and 28)

What you might see in your next box

cucumbers
tomatoes
zucchini
peppers
leeks
squash
corn
kale
beets
thyme

sage
basil
chives
chard
carrots
melons
green
onions
tomatillos