



BLACKBROOK FARM

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Drought...?

For the folks on the other side of the river, you may not know this. It's really, really dry out here in Clayton. The last time we had rain to speak of was about four weeks ago. Random House dictionary defines a drought as "a period of dry weather, especially one that is injurious to crops." People often split hairs over the exact point at which we are allowed to call something a drought. Some will say it is two weeks without rain. Some may say four weeks. The weather guys only call it drought well after it matters. It's pretty easy to predict weather after the fact, and they do it all the time. You could call them "post facto prognosticators." We may have just coined a term. But if you want to know when there's really a drought, just ask a farmer. Farmer's know when plants stop growing, because plants are our livelihood. Farmer's know when they have to spend half their week managing irrigation equipment so their transplants root in, or so their seeds germinate, or so they can still have crops to harvest in two weeks from now.

Our intern, Kenny, was surprised earlier this year at the sensation of working outside while it was raining. He said he had never really felt that before. Most people who work outside even will quit when the rain comes. But not us. There's only so much time in a day to get the things done that need to get done. We're like postal workers—rain or shine. Since the middle of June, it's been nothing but shine out here in Clayton. Unfortunately we have not been able to fully ingrain in Kenny our "work in the rain" work ethic.

What's In the Box:

Cherry Tomatoes- (Full Share Only) First of the season! Fear not, half shares, there will soon be many more!

Bell Peppers- First of the season! This week you got an assortment of pale yellow, green or purple peppers. These are all mild, sweet peppers that you can use in any dish, cassarole, bake, saute, salad or stir fry.

Eggplant-A couple recipes for you to try out this week. Eggplant is great!

Carrots- (Full Share Only) Still very sweet and delicious!

Squash- Zucchini and Summer Squash. Try out the parmesan recipe using your squash.

Ailsa Craig Onions- These onions are not cured, they are fresh. So store them in the fridge, not on the counter. Ailsas are a sweet, mild onion that we love to use in any dish.

Beets with Greens- These are some sweet Beets! Top them if you need them to store better in the fridge. Try tossing them with olive oil, garlic, salt and pepper and



Farmer James tressling tomatoes



Washing Beets

Roasted Eggplant Salad with Beans and Cashews

adapted from Featherstone Farm Cookbook

- 2 eggplants, diced into 1 inch cubes
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 lb green beans, cut into 1 inch pieces
- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 1/4 tsp ground pepper
- 1/2 cup roasted cashews, chopped
- 1/2 cup cilantro, chopped
- preheat oven to 475 degrees

Toss the eggplant in olive oil and 1/2 tsp of salt. Place eggplant in a single layer on a cookie sheet in oven for 25 to 30 min or until golden brown

Cook beans in a large sauce pan of boiling water until they become crisp-tender, about 2 minutes. Drains. Transfer them to a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking process. Drain, and pat dry with paper towels.

In large bowl, whisk together the lime juice, vegetable oil, curry powder, remaining salt and pepper. Toss the eggplant, beans, cashews and cilantro with the dressing and serve immediately.

Eggplant-Zucchini Parmesan

Drought...?, Con't.

It's been more like a "work in the blistering hot sun" work ethic. I'll bet he longs for sweet rain now! Kenny's a good worker either way though.

Speaking of longing for rain...did we mention drought? So yeah, it's definitely a drought out here on the farm. And in a strange way, it is actually made worse by the ridiculously wet spring we've had. Experienced farmers can tell you, when crops have had plenty of water their whole lives, they tend to have shallow roots because they haven't had to grow downwards for the water. What happens to a shallow rooted crop when the water dries up? The crop dries up too! Or if it doesn't shrivel and wither, it will certainly stop producing so it can focus on rooting down and surviving the drought. Geeze, that's what we should be doing! We do pretty much feel like burying our heads in the dirt, too. But we'd have to bury our heads pretty deep if we wanted a sip of water...

We are thanking ourselves for choosing to have a new, medium capacity well drilled (60 gallons per minute) on our new farm, though. Up until now we have been watering only with drip tape, which we really love. Drip tape is great because it is laid right along the ground with the plants and lets out just the perfect amount of water right where the plant needs it. This minimizes evaporation and maximizes the effectiveness of water usage—not like those big corn and soy farm "pivot" irrigators that circle around the corn fields during the heat of the day. Because of our well, we will now be able to save some labor by using sprinkler irrigation, but unlike many larger commodity farmers, we will run our sprinklers at night. When they choose to water during the heat of the day, they sacrifice up to 25% or more of their water to evaporation. With each pivot system

What's in the Box

roasting them in the oven.

Broccoli- Broccoli is one of those staples that we use everyday. Hopefully you are finding ways to enjoy this fresh broccoli, too.

Swiss Chard- You can use this chard as a fresh salad green or in a saute, bake or stir fry.

Green Beans- We believe strongly in the bean. Recipe included. Store in plastic bag in fridge.

Cilantro- We like to offer this a few time throughout the year because cilantro is one of our favorite herbs. Reipe included.

Cucumbers- And of course the cucumbers!

running more than 1000 gallons per minute, we're talking well over a million gallons of water per day. 25% of a million is a lot of freaking water! Then multiply that by the number of pivot systems that run during the day in this whole country! And what do you get for all that wasted water? Corn and soy commodity crops, high fructose corn syrup, bad health, gross inequality... We thank you for finding a better place to spend your food dollars.

Yeah, it's a drought.

Enjoy Your Veggies,

Your Farmers

P.S.

Please remember to bring your boxes back to your drop site. Some of you are very good about this, but after our sixth deliver we will have bought between four and five new rounds of boxes. This is expensive for us and it's a good opportunity to conserve resources.

2 pounds medium-size, firm eggplant and zucchini, sliced lengthwise 1/2 inch thick
1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons kosher salt
3 cups dry bread crumbs
4 cups grated Grana Padano or Parmigiano-Reggiano
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
4 large eggs
1/2 cup milk
1 1/2 cups All-purpose flour, for dredging
3 garlic cloves, crushed and peeled
14 ounces fresh spinach, washed and trimmed
5 cups marinara sauce (see recipe)
1 pound low-moisture mozzarella, shredded

1. Salt eggplants on both sides with 1 tablespoon kosher salt. Layer in a large colander set in the sink. Let drain about 1/2 hour, then rinse and pat dry.
2. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. In a large shallow bowl, toss together the bread crumbs, 2 cups of the grated cheese and 1 cup of the olive oil. Season with 1/2 teaspoon salt. In another shallow bowl, beat the eggs and milk with a pinch of salt. Spread the flour on a plate.
3. Dredge the eggplant slices in flour, egg, then bread crumbs, pressing in the crumbs to make sure they adhere. Lay the eggplant slices on parchment lined sheet pans, without touching. Bake eggplant, rotating the sheet pans halfway through baking, until cooked through and crumbs are crisp and golden, about 25 minutes. Let cool slightly.
4. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil over medium-high heat. Add smashed garlic and sauté until just golden, about 1 to 2 minutes. Add the spinach with any water clinging to the leaves, season with remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt, cover and cook until wilted, about 3 to 4 minutes. Check occasionally to make sure the bottom of the pan is not dry, adding water a tablespoon at a time if necessary. Once the spinach is wilted, uncover and cook until spinach is tender and excess water is gone, about 4 minutes.
5. To assemble, spread 3/4 cup of the marinara sauce in the bottom of a 10-by-15-inch baking dish. Add half of the baked eggplant and zucchini in an even layer. Spread with 1 cup marinara. Sprinkle with 1/2 cup grated Grana Padano. Sprinkle with half the shredded mozzarella. Spread all of the spinach in one layer. Spread with 2 more cups marinara. Sprinkle with the remaining grated mozzarella and 1/2 cup grated Grana Padano. Top with an even layer of the remaining eggplant and zucchini. Spread remaining sauce on top and sprinkle with remaining grated Grana Padano. Tent the baking dish with foil, so it is not touching the cheese and bake until bubbly, about 30 minutes. Uncover and bake until cheese is browned and crusty and sauce is bubbling all over, another 15 minutes. Let cool and set 5 to 10 minutes.