Notes from the Field:

Crop Update

What’s happening with those tomatoes?! Where’s all the eggplant? Why haven’t we received any melons? All good questions . . .

read on to find out.

After one week of seasonably warm weather in the early part of the month, nighttime temperatures in the 50s (yikes!) have left tomatoes green on the vines. The early tomatoes that we are harvesting are definitely affected by the cold in their flavor and texture. We have four varieties of heirloom tomatoes planted, including Pineapple, Black from Tula, Brandywine and Lillian’s Yellow, along with the standard red varieties. Eggplant and peppers are growing slowly—the peppers have been set back a little by corn borer. The bottom line is . . . you’ll have them when we have them.

You should be enjoying cherry tomatoes and tomatillos by now, along with our four varieties of hot peppers. Cayenne peppers are the small, skinny peppers that look wrinkly and turn red when they’re ready to pick. Garden Salsa peppers are between 6 and 8 inches long, dark green, and fairly hot. They’re best in salsa or eggs. Anaheim peppers are longer and broader, the type that chiles rellenos are made from. And finally, Ancho peppers make great roasting peppers—they are very dark green and not as elongated as the Anahieims or the Garden Salsas.

Our third planting of carrots is coming along well, and may be in your share by the time you read this. More beets are also on the horizon. For September, you should also see parsnips and rutabaga in your shares, as well as the return of radishes and turnips and the continuation of beets and carrots into the fall. We will also have some red and russet potatoes for you within the next few weeks.

Cucumbers and summer squash will be winding down, hopefully replaced by winter squash in September. Melons have sized up but have not ripened yet—we’re waiting on the watermelons and some cantaloupes and honeydews as well. Cool temperatures are causing some disease in the watermelons, so we’re hoping that they can produce tasty melons before they succumb.

Leeks have been rescued from the weeds by the AmeriCorps team and should produce a small crop in September. We should have the storage garlic cleaned and ready for you shortly as well. Another scallion crop is also on its way. Unfortunately, the onions were a casualty of the weeds this year.

Our fall brassica crop looks great so far—you can see the plants growing each week in the field to the east of the CSA distribution shelter. We have broccoli, kale, cabbage, collards and Brussels sprouts in the ground.

Our fall greens are also growing—spinach, arugula, mizuna, salad mix, braising mix, tatsoi, broccoli raie, endive, escarole, and bok choy will hopefully grace your plates before the end of the season.

Please ask us questions about the crops—we’d love to talk about them and hear your suggestions and ideas for next season. Hope to talk to you in the field!

— The Farm Crew
Two variations on a theme . . .

**Creamy Cucumber Gazpacho**  
*from Gourmet magazine*

3 English cucumbers (2 lb total), peeled  
1 1/2 yellow bell peppers, cut into 1/4-inch dice  
1 1/2 fresh jalapeño chiles, seeded and minced  
1 large garlic clove, minced  
3 tablespoons fresh lime juice 3/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro  
3/4 cup sour cream  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Seed cucumbers and put seeds in a blender. Cut cucumbers into 1/4-inch dice and combine with bell peppers, chiles, garlic, and lime juice in a large metal bowl.

Transfer half of mixture to blender with seeds and purée until smooth. Return purée to bowl and stir in remaining ingredients.

Quick-chill soup in bowl set in a larger bowl of ice and cold water, stirring frequently, until cold, about 20 minutes.

Makes about 5 1/4 cups.

**Cold Cucumber Mint Soup**  
*from Gourmet magazine*

3 cucumbers, peeled, seeded, and chopped, plus 1 cup peeled, seeded, and finely diced cucumber  
1 cup plain yogurt  
2/3 cup sour cream  
1/2 teaspoon English-style dry mustard, or to taste  
1/4 cup chopped fresh mint leaves  
cucumber slices and mint sprigs for garnish

In a blender puree chopped cucumbers, yogurt, sour cream, mustard, and salt and pepper to taste and transfer to a bowl. Chill soup at least 6 hours or overnight.

Stir in finely diced cucumber and chopped mint and garnish soup with cucumber slices and mint sprigs.

Makes about 4 1/2 cups.

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**Different from Baba Ghanoush . . .**

**Eggplant Puree with Walnuts**  
*from The Greek Vegetarian by Diane Kochilas*

2 large eggplants  
2 to 4 garlic cloves, peeled and minced  
1/2 cup shelled walnuts, coarsely chopped  
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons strained fresh lemon juice  
1 to 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar  
Salt to taste  
1/2 to 1 teaspoon sugar (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 450°F. Wash the eggplants and pat dry. Puncture the skin in several places with a fork. Place on an ungreased pan and bake for about 25 minutes, turning, until the skin is blistered and shivedled. Remove from oven and cool for a few minutes, until easy to handle.

2. While the eggplants are roasting, pulse the garlic, walnuts, and 2 tablespoons of the olive oil together in a food processor until ground and pastelike.

3. Cut off the stem and cut the eggplant in half lengthwise. Using a spoon, scrape out the pulp, discarding as many of the seeds as possible. Add the eggplant, a little at a time, to the bowl of the food processor and pulse on and off. Add the lemon juice, vinegar, and remaining olive oil and pulse until well combined. The eggplant puree does not have to be perfectly smooth. Season with salt and add a bit of sugar if necessary, as eggplants sometimes impart a trace of bitterness.