

Honk Honk (and wave)

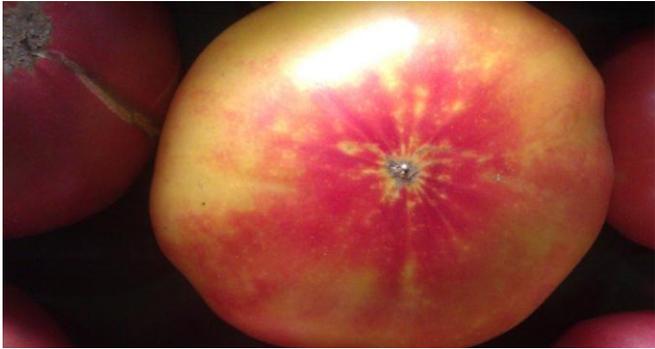
From John

As I am sure most of you know by now, I am pretty crazy about my wife. I always say that my life's greatest accomplishment was taking her as my wife, an assertion I am positive I'll maintain until the day I die. I'm not so sure she got as lucky; like they say, in every marriage someone marries up. When I was a manager at another farm back East we spent a year apart while we navigated the immigration process to get back to the States. I remember when we were apart I was scared that the stress and fear of separation might cause me to waver and sabotage the relationship. I made a promise to myself that helped me get through it. I promised myself that every day I would take the time to think about why I loved her so much and what made her so special to me. I also made the promise that when we were eventually reunited I would continue this practice so that as the initial romance fades and we fall into the normal routines of marriage I would never forget who she is and why she is the greatest thing that ever happened to me. We are certainly still a young couple, coming up on our 4th anniversary this winter, but our love and commitment tangibly grows each and every day. The greatest challenge of our lives came early in our relationship, and taught us that together we are strong and that no challenge can defeat us. So this is a paean to my wife but 'what does this have to do with the CSA?' you might ask. Well, I recall one of my apprentices asking me what she was like (while she was stuck in Brasil) having never met her. My reply made him laugh like heck and quote it frequently to other people which was 'she has the sexiest work ethic I ever saw.' Not too many people other than a farmer could think of a work ethic as a sexy attribute but I assure you it can be. I bring this up because without her seemingly super-human work ethic and all-around quality of

ON DECK

We will bid adieu to summer favorites like beans, melons and sweet corn. While tomatoes, peppers and eggplants should continue along with greens, onions, garlic, potatoes. In the coming weeks a distinct flavor of fall will be here as we see the return of cabbage, broccoli and winter squash.

work there would be no Fazenda Boa Terra. (trivia note: Lidia is a pretty big comic book geek, so I have to wonder if here obsession with super-heroes may bely something greater from within) I work on the farm as much as I possibly can, but it's fair to say that she does 80% of what it takes to get you your shares each week. We are not a highly mechanized farm, almost everything we do is done with good ol' manual labor. We doubled the size of our farm this year, expanding to 60 CSA members and one farmer's market. It is truly an amazing feat that she can do this almost completely on her own. I do the tillage and fertility work and lots of odd jobs but Lidia does nearly 100% percent of the greenhouse work, the planting, the seeding, the weeding, the harvesting, the washing, the packing and the delivery. To put this in some context, at [Gardens of Eagan](#) I grow about 40 or so varieties from about 15 main crops on 60 acres. We are a highly mechanized operation but still have upwards of 20 people there each day meaning we farm about 3 acres per employee. At [Fazenda Boa Terra](#) we grow about 110 varieties from 40 major crops on 4.5 acres with only Lidia doing almost all of the work with minimal mechanical help. Even if I generously assume that I do 20 percent of the work that leaves Lidia with more than 3.5 acres to herself. Not to forget that she does most of the work taking care of the chicken flock. The expertise and grace with which she does her work day in and day out makes each and every one of our lives richer, healthier and happier. We are all in her debt. One day we will be able to work together each day, but until then I will have to settle for honking the horn, waving and sometimes blowing a kiss as I drive by on my tractor from my other farm.



Heirloom Tomato Guide:

From top to bottom; Cherokee Purple, Striped German, Pruden's Purple and Indigo Rose. For full color look for this week Newsletter online at www.fbt.ag

News and Notes

- Not much room left here, other than to say thanks you for being the best CSA members a farmer could ask for!

Featured Item

With tomato season finally upon us it's hard not to feature our delicious variety of heirloom tomatoes. Heirlooms are increasingly difficult to find outside of your CSA share or personal garden. This is because most commercial growers are seeking something that is uniform in shape and size as well as thick skinned for easy picking and shipping. An heirloom meets none of these requirements and will rarely survive the often rough trip between the field and the supermarket shelf. However what they do have is amazing flavors and textures that just might change forever your concept of what a tomato should taste like. Heirlooms are non-hybridized open pollinated plants, meaning that they require insects to pollinate the flowers and that their genetic will remain from one generation to the next allowing you to save the seed and grow the exact same tomato the following year. You will surely notice their tender skin and that they easily bruise and crack. Frankly they are a real pain in the rear to grow commercially, but we think a life without heirloom tomatoes is no life at all. So handle them lightly and keep from on your countertop for no more than a week (you can ripen green ones for longer shelf life) and get ready for some mind blowing red sauces, salads, sandwiches and salsas.

Recipe of the Week

Beet and Heirloom Tomato Salad

Ingredients:

6 beets, trimmed and halved lengthwise
 2 lbs heirloom tomatoes, cut into wedges
 1/3 cup basil leaves, roughly torn
 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
 Extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Toss beets with extra virgin olive oil, season with salt and roast until tender, about 30 minutes. Once they have cooled, peel and cut them into wedges.

Combine the beets, heirloom tomatoes and basil, drizzle with balsamic vinegar and olive oil and season to taste.