



WEEK OF AUGUST 22ND 2016 #34/52



## State of the CSA

Sometimes I feel like the bearer of bad news, but I feel it is important to be open with our members. It goes without saying that these past 4 1/2



years have been incredibly hard on us with Nigel's illness, many ups and downs. That has taken a toll on the farm, mostly it is hard on our crew. For several months now, Nigel has not been able to go out onto the farm at all. But the other reality is, over the past several years the number of CSA boxes has steadily gone down. When Nigel and I were first together, our CSA share numbers were in the 900's every week, we are now down to 450. Summer is the worst time of year, because that is when people go on vacation and so many shares are put on hold. The start of school is literally at our door and this is the perfect time to ramp things up and get our numbers up again.

Truthfully, we can not be a successful farm without bringing our numbers up at least by 100 every week. My goal is to get us back to 700. Most of our members only get a box every other week, so even though we still have over 900 CSA members, that quite often leaves us at 450 boxes per week.

We seriously need your help. Imagine if each of our 900 members got just one person to sign up for a share! If they got a box every other week, that would increase our numbers by 450 shares per week. So truthfully, we only need half of you to do that to reach my goal, but please don't think you should be the half that doesn't find someone. Connie and I are working on coming up with some strategies to get the word out and find new ways to grow the CSA. Connie has been doing some outreach and going to various events around the greater Bay Area. Keep us in mind for speaking to groups or organizations you might be involved with. If you want postcards to share with co-workers or parents at your kids' school, please request them or order them to be delivered with your box. They are available as Add-On Items under Donations & Promos in CSAware. If you have any ideas for other ways we can reach out to the community, let us know, we are open to all suggestions! Pass along the coupon code 16E@TWELL to anyone interested in signing up for a subscription to receive 4 CSA Box deliveries for \$99. Have them include your name when they make their purchase and you will receive a referral gift.

One area I really want to explore is how to get good food to people who really can't afford it or live in areas where they do not have easy access to good food. We are working on getting set up with CalFresh, the state program that provides funds to purchase food. In the meantime, one option to consider is sponsoring a family with a 4 box subscription. We opened a new drop site in the Bayview where Bay Leaf Kitchen and Laughing Monk Brewing has their offices. A very high percentage of the culinary campers from Bay Leaf were here on a scholarship. Those kids love to cook, love the farm and love the food they experienced here. Wouldn't it be fabulous to offer them a heavily discounted CSA membership, or even one that is completely covered by a sponsor? We will have a place on CSAware where you can donate if you would like to do that. If any of you have any ideas, please don't hesitate to share it with me. You can always reach me at [drinkwellsofters@gmail.com](mailto:drinkwellsofters@gmail.com) or call (texting is actually better) 530-554-3971.

I really want to keep all of you in the loop on the progress we make with increasing our CSA numbers each week, so I will ask Connie to include the weekly number on the newsletter. After all, this is Your CSA and it is Your Farm and for many of you, it is a big part of Your Life. I know this is important to you as well. If we work together, I have no doubt we can reach my goal of 700 shares a week, so let's make this happen!

## One More To Go

This past weekend was the last of the Sauce Parties. Now, the event season here on the farm is almost at an end, with only the Pumpkin Party left.

Connie took on the role of Event Coordinator this year and did a truly wonderful job. Believe me, it isn't an easy one. Fortunately for her, though, Emily and Christopher worked quite hard last year making signs, creating lists and setting up systems. Connie was able to walk in and "only" do the work of running the events. They typically are very long, hot weekends and she is back in Monday morning getting right back to work as normal. I can't thank her enough for taking on this responsibility because the events are so important. They are what really turns this CSA into a Community.



A very sweet thing happened this past weekend at the Sauce Party. Kiko, one of our younger CSA members (I believe she is 9!), made a get well card for Nigel. She took it around to everyone saucing to have them write a quick note. I can't tell you how much little things like that mean to us. As much as we try to stay tough during this challenge, these precious acts by a 9 year old just make us melt and kind of fall apart again. It makes us realize that



what we do here on the farm is important. We are making a difference, particularly for our young CSA members. Kiko's dad told me her older sister Izzy says that the sauce party is her favorite weekend of the year. I know the last two years, Izzy and I have had some really great conversations about people connecting with strangers, a sense of community created over a weekend and eating too much kale. Those conversations have made an impression on her and on me! The Sauce Parties are such a great time to catch up with many of our members, hear what is going on with the kids, see how much they have grown over the year, or maybe not see the kids at all because they are grown up now and off doing their own thing. This past weekend, it was great to see several families come up as a group and work together on their saucing. The Sauce Party, more than any other event on the farm, really gives us all a chance to be a part of a big community and cook together. So as the season comes close to the end, I do hope to see many of you here for the Pumpkin Party!

This Week's Total CSA Boxes: 453



## Recipes and Menu Suggestions

- Cannellini Beans with Red Slicers or Cherry Tomatoes and Basil Vinaigrette; serve with good crusty Bread  
Uses: Basil, Onion, Cherry or Red Slicer Tomatoes
- Cucumber Salad, Roasted Pork, Roasted Potatoes  
Uses: Onion, Cucumber
- Eggplant, Zucchini with Cucumber Sauce; serve with San Marzanos roasted in Olive Oil and Grilled Chicken  
Uses: Eggplant, Zucchini, Cucumber, San Marzanos
- Chicken Lunchbox Peppers served over Rice with Grilled Summer Squash on the side  
Uses: Lunchbox Peppers, Onions, Summer Squash

**All recipes can be found at: [www.eatwell.com](http://www.eatwell.com) under the "CSA Farm Box" tab. Just click "Recipes."**

## Summer Fruit

As I am writing this morning, I am nibbling away on half a melon with some yogurt. I typically don't eat this way - eating while doing something else. I prefer to pay more attention on my meal, but I am pretty crunched for time this morning. What I noticed though, is the melon is just so delicious. Each bite just grabs my attention. How lucky I am to have all this great food, literally, out my front and back door. Fruit this good is expensive and hard to find, so I find myself still not out of the mindset of treasuring it and trying to make it stretch. Really silly, because in my house we get much of what is leftover from the market, so most often there is more than we can eat. AND yet, I still can't just let myself go for it, consequently I find myself giving a bit more to the chickens than I really should. Today, I hope to use some of the fruit for fresh juice, maybe some melon with a little cucumber and a couple of strawberries? Not sure yet, but I do hope to put all of it to good use (although feeding the chickens is actually a great use of excess produce). I take the strawberries that don't sell at the market to steam juice. That juice then is used to make Strawberry Softers, which we sell at the Farmers Market. I can do that with a lot of the fruit, but for all of you I would suggest if you feel you might not get through your fruit, cut it up and freeze it. Frozen fruit can be enjoyed many ways, in pies, smoothies, freezer jam, over porridge and is always a welcomed treat in the middle of winter. I love to freeze melons (not the watermelon though) in chunks and toss those into winter smoothies. For that matter, you could cube summer squash and freeze them for use later in the year. This is how we make a bountiful harvest stretch and really work for us.

## Basil Vinaigrette

Recipe by David Lebovitz sent to me by CSA member Nancy M. A couple of weeks ago, one of our members sent me a recipe for Basil Vinaigrette by David Lebovitz that is absolutely delicious. On his blog, there was a picture of tomatoes, white beans, and yummy, crusty bread. It all looked so delicious, I got up right after reading the recipe to put some white beans in my instant pot and made a batch of Basil Vinaigrette. For several days, I lived off white beans with chopped heirloom tomatoes and good crusty bread. I loved every bite. I was so excited to include the Basil Vinaigrette recipe in last week's newsletter, but as life goes, we didn't have basil in the box! I am quite excited to share this one with you this week and I know, it is only a Vinaigrette, but I burnt out on pesto many years ago, so this recipe is perfect for me. Also, I used a bit on some roasted chicken, really delicious.

- 1/2 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil  
1 1/2 TB Red or White Wine vinegar  
1 TB Water  
1 small Shallot, peeled and sliced - I used a little bit of our onion  
1 tsp Dijon Mustard  
3/4 tsp Kosher or Flaky Salt  
2 cups loosely packed fresh Basil Leaves  
Put the olive oil, vinegar, water, shallot, mustard, and salt in a blender. Coarsely chop the basil leaves and immediately put them in the blender. Cover the blender and mix on high-speed for 15 to 30 seconds until the vinaigrette is smooth. If the sauce is too thick for your liking, add a little more water or olive oil to thin it out. This vinaigrette can be used right away or will keep for a week in the refrigerator. Best served at room temperature.

## Eggplant and Zucchini with Cucumber Yogurt Sauce

Recipe by Sandra Curtis

It's really great to have Sandee here, because she has been doing little trips all over Europe and trying out wonderful traditional dishes. She is working on a cookbook of European dishes, mostly ones that are not so well known here in the US.

- About 2 1/2 lb Eggplant  
About 3 lbs Zucchini  
Salt

- A piece of Cucumber finely chopped or grated, about 1/4 cup  
1/2 cup Yogurt  
1/2 tsp Salt  
4 cloves Garlic

Slice zucchini and eggplant and lay slices on a tea towel before sprinkling with salt. Let sit for 1/2 an hour, then flip over and salt the other side. After another 1/2 hour, wipe off the second side. Heat oil in a deep skillet and fry the vegetables until browned. Drain away excess oil and place on a serving plate. For the cucumber yogurt sauce: mix cukes, garlic and yogurt, pour over the fried vegetables. You can also serve this on the sauce on the side.

### This Week's Box List

Cherry Tomatoes  
Red Tomatoes  
San Marzano Tomatoes  
Lunchbox Peppers  
Eggplant  
Cucumbers  
Summer Squash  
Onions  
Basil  
Plums  
Strawberries  
Grapes  
Watermelon or other melon

## Chicken with Lunchbox Peppers

Recipe from the Eatwell Farmhouse Kitchen I included this recipe in the Friday email last week or the week before. It is so incredibly simple and so completely delicious, I have to put it in this week's newsletter. Sorry for the repetition. I enjoyed this dinner with some Summer Squash I cooked with oil and rosemary salt on a grill pan.

- 1 box Lunchbox Peppers, washed and left whole  
1 Chicken, you can use a whole chicken or chicken pieces  
1 Onion, chopped  
Olive Oil

Eatwell Farm Rosemary Salt, or regular salt

Freshly ground Black Pepper  
In a Dutch Oven, place chopped onions and whole lunchbox peppers into the bottom of the pot. Put chicken on top and drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle on salt and pepper. Cover and pop into a preheated oven at 375 F. Cook for about 30 minutes, turn pieces over and cook until done. Remove chicken from the pot. Using an immersion blender, puree the peppers and onion in the juices of the chicken until nice and creamy. Serve chicken with the pepper sauce on the side.

## Cucumber Salad

Recipe by Sandra Curtis

My dear friend Sandee is visiting this week. The one thing she and I have always done together is cook. Sometimes we end up spending so much time trying to figure exactly what we *want* to cook, we end up running out of time *to* cook. She made this for us with last night's dinner and it was so refreshing, simple and delicious. I had to include it with this week's recipes.

- 2 Seedless Cucumber  
1 TB Salt  
1/3 cup White Wine Vinegar or Cider Vinegar  
2 tsp Sugar  
1 handful fresh Dill (optional)  
1/2 tsp Fennel Seeds (optional)

Use a fork to score the sides of the cucumbers lengthwise. Slice thin, done with the slicing edge of a grater, slicing disk of a food processor or using a mandolin. If using dill, chop finely. Mix vinegar with the salt, sugar, and garlic. Add the dill or fennel seeds, if desired, stir. Add the dressing to the sliced cucumber and marinate, covered and chill at least 1 hour and up to 6 hours.