



WEEK OF AUGUST 24TH 2015 #34/52



## ONLY ONE MORE SAUCE PARTY LEFT!

Buy Tickets for the Labor Day Weekend Tomato Sauce Party at [eatwell.com/events](http://eatwell.com/events)

September 5th - 6th (Labor Day Weekend!) Camp an extra night!



## Tomato Selection

In the spring we planted one quarter acre of variety trials in our tomato field. These are crosses performed by our good friend Tomato Fred. He is a breeder working with heirloom varieties. I am looking for a bush tomato that we do not have to stake that has a great flavor. In a quarter acre we had about 2,500 plants. Fred came last week to walk through and select the plants he wanted. He expected to find half a dozen and came away with twelve. It is a numbers game, you just have to have a lot of plants to choose from. You walk the beds looking for productive plants. Ok it may have a lot of fruit but if they are all cracked just move on. So when we find all our basic criteria fulfilled only then do we bend down and taste the fruit. The seed will be saved, grown out, and selected again. The work continues here and in Mexico. The seed we sow next February will have been saved from the fruit picked on our farm last week.

## Strawberry Fields Forever

Well not quite, we do have to replace them every couple of years.

We get the plants from Norcal Nursery. They are not grown organically and as there is no organic alternative we can use them. We tried organic plants in January but they did not put on enough growth before fruiting in May and June. Planting now allows the crown to grow strong roots ready for cropping next year. The varieties are all clones meaning they come from one original plant. There is too much variation in strawberry seed for us to use them.

The crowns are lifted in January, sorted, boxed up and stored in a freezer until we pick them up in August. We use a woven plastic fabric to control the weeds and keep the fruit away from the soil. This is the third use for the sheets of fabric we planted through this week.

As it is woven we plant then turn on sprinklers. This keeps the plants cool while they are coming back to life and rooting into the soil. Within a couple of days shoots appear. Growth can be quite rapid in the warm soil. Over the winter the plants go dormant bursting back into life in March and beginning to fruit in May.

Typically the plants have a short life in our area but we have managed to keep them productive for several years. This year's crop was the first in seven years that was disappointing. We still are not sure why. Normally the field is covered in berries in May. These new beds have had two cover crops, chickens, sheep and never grown strawberries before so we have high hopes for next years crop.



## Challenging Weeding

Ramon and Leonardo are the tractor hoeing crew. They have the hardest time keeping on top of the weeds at this time of the year as we have to irrigate the young crops frequently due to the heat. This encourages the weeds to grow and the wet soil makes hoeing more difficult. Leonardo was constantly stopping and cleaning the fingers. As Ramon said they have to keep on it for if they let the weeds grow, he will hear from papa Ramon, his father. Papa Ramon cleans up any missed weeds with his hoe.



WE WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS!

[ORGANIC@EATWELL.COM](mailto:ORGANIC@EATWELL.COM)  
TEXT/VOICE 707-999-1150





## Recipes and Menu Suggestions

Grilled Steak with Tomatillos - Serve with Rice and Heirloom Tomato Salad

Uses: Tomatillos, Onions, Heirloom Tomatoes and Parsley

Shredded Chicken - Serve with Tortillas or Rice and Cucumber Poppy Seed Salad

Uses: Lunchbox Peppers, Cherry Tomatoes, Onion, Cucumbers, Parsley

Basil Goat Cheese Stuffed Peppers on Ciabatta Rolls - Serve with Steamed Summer Squash if you have them in your share

Uses: Basil, Lunchbox Peppers, Small Red Peppers, Summer Squash

Fruit Salad, cut and dice fruit, give a good squeeze of lemon juice and serve with Yogurt

Uses: Melons, if they are in your share, Nectarines, Plums

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

## I Promise It Is Worth It

At both of the Sauce parties I cooked a few of our meat birds for folks to try, and I have to say they are fabulous! I know many of you will think it is crazy to spend \$8.00 a lb (member price, regular market price is \$9.00) on chicken, but it is so worth it. I am not going to get into the justification of the price, (let me assure you hatching and pasture raising these meat birds is really expensive) but rather I would like to address the eating experience. When we talk about obscure types of meat, very often it is described as tasting like chicken; the sad thing is, chicken doesn't taste like chicken anymore. The comment I heard from folks at the sauce party was how incredibly chickeny the flavor is. I would describe it as more like turkey in the way turkey has a solid flavor. Our Bruces have that amount of chicken flavor. I have made soup with the leftover bones and have never seen such gelatinous stock in my life, and I didn't have to cook the bones for days to get that. That tells me our birds are really rich in collagen, and you can taste the minerals. I can not wait until we are making stock from these birds; our already extraordinary chicken stock will be mind blowing.

## Shredded Chicken Sauce Party #2

Eatwell Farmhouse Kitchen

1 Bruce, left whole if you have a dutch oven or heavy duty pot big enough  
3 TB of good Oil for the bottom of the pot  
1 large Onion, roughly chopped  
4 cloves Garlic  
1 container of Lunchbox Peppers, tops removed and cut in halves  
1 basket Cherry Tomatoes  
4 sprigs of Parsley, stems cut short  
Salt and Pepper

Preheat oven to 350 F. In a dutch oven heat the oil over medium, then add the onion and garlic. Cook for just a couple of minutes to let the onion and garlic soften a bit and coat in the oil. Toss in the peppers and parsley and mix well. Put the whole bird, if it fits, right on top. Sprinkle with a bit of salt and pepper, cover with the lid and pop into the oven. Cook for a good 1 1/2 hours, check to see if it is done, if not let it cook a bit longer. When the chicken is done the meat will literally fall off the bones. Take the bird out of the pot and put on a platter or in a large bowl and allow to cool so you can handle it. Take all the meat off the bone and separate out the skin as well. Shred the meat. Using a stick blender puree what is left in your pot, taste and adjust seasoning if you like. You can add some cumin, chili powder and coriander if you would like it to have more of taco seasoning. Put the shredded chicken back into the pot in the sauce and reheat and serve.

## Cucumber and Poppy Seed Salad

From "Ottolenghi" by Yotam Ottolenghi - Serves 4

6 small Cucumbers - about 500 gm  
2 mild Red Chiles, thinly sliced  
3 TB roughly chopped Cilantro OR use the Parsley in this week's share. I know it is a different flavor, but goes so well with cucumbers  
2 oz White Wine Vinegar or Rice Vinegar  
4 oz Sunflower Oil  
2 TB Poppy Seeds  
2 TB Caster Sugar  
Salt and Black Pepper

Chop off and discard the ends of the cucumbers. Slice the cucumbers at an angle, so you end up with pieces 1 cm thick and 3 - 4 cm long. Mix together all the ingredients in a large bowl. Use your hands to massage the flavors gently into the cucumbers. Taste and adjust the amount of sugar and salt according to the quality of the cucumbers. The salad should be sharp and sweet, almost like a pickle. If not serving immediately, you might need to drain some liquid off later. Adjust the seasoning again afterwards.

## Basil & Goat Cheese Stuffed Sweet Pepper

From Sumptuous Spoonful recommended to us by CSA Member Brooke B.

For the Filling:

1 - 6 oz. Package Goat Cheese  
4 oz Light Cream Cheese  
2-3 TB fresh Basil leaves, chopped fine  
1 TB finely chopped Garlic

For the Rest:

1/2 lb or so Lunchbox Peppers  
Use the small red tomatoes to make your favorite marinara sauce  
Ciabatta rolls, halved and toasted

Combine the goat cheese, cream cheese, basil and garlic in a bowl until well mixed. Set the cheese mixture in a thin line on the cheese wrapper or a piece of waxed paper and shape it into

a thin log about the width of the bottom of the peppers. Don't worry if your log isn't long enough to fill all the peppers - you can make more cheese logs as you go. Wash a few peppers, pat them dry, cut off the tops (save the top next to each pepper!), then with a small thin knife, cut out any seeds or flesh in the middle of the peppers. Insert a log of cheese into each pepper, and add a little more on top and smush the cheese mixture down into the pepper to fill it fully. Place the pepper top back on. Repeat with the rest of the peppers. If you run out of peppers, relax knowing you'll have some yummy cheese to spread on your crackers. If you run out of cheese, save those peppers for another use! Find a rimmed baking pan or oven-safe dish that will fit your peppers. Spread a layer of marinara sauce over the bottom, then arrange the peppers on the sauce. Bake at 400 F for about 15 minutes or until the peppers are browned on top. To serve: Spread a bit of hot marinara on a toasted ciabatta roll and top with one or two of the stuffed peppers. Garnish with fresh basil leaves or basil flowers, if you like. Enjoy while they are hot!

## Steak and Tomatillos

Eatwell Farmhouse Kitchen

This really isn't a recipe but more of a suggestion. If you have a griddle pan, get it really hot with a good brushing of oil. Sear your well seasoned steak to your preference of done. Remove the steak from the pan and let sit tented for a few minutes. Throw the tomatillos into the pan with any of the juices that are left. You can add some thinly sliced onion as well. Cook until the tomatillos are nice and squishy. Serve along side your steak.

### This Week's Box List

Lunchbox Peppers  
Cherry Tomatoes  
Small Red Tomatoes  
Heirloom Tomatoes  
Basil  
Onions  
Cucumbers  
Nectarines  
Plums  
Parsley  
Tomatillo  
Summer Squash or Melon