

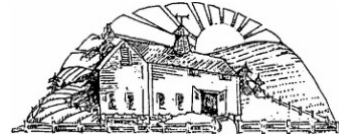
Summer Squash and Red Quinoa Salad with Walnuts

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup red or other quinoa, rinsed in a fine-mesh sieve, drained
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt plus more for seasoning
- 1 pound assorted summer squash
- 2 tablespoons finely grated Parmesan plus 1/4 cup shaved with a peeler
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon Sherry vinegar
- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 1/2 cup walnuts, toasted
- 1/4 cup fresh basil leaves, torn

Directions

1. Bring quinoa and 4 cups water to a boil in a medium saucepan. Season with salt, cover, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until quinoa is tender but not mushy, 12-15 minutes. Drain; return quinoa to hot saucepan. Cover and let sit for 15 minutes. Uncover; fluff with a fork and let cool.
2. Cut squash into 1/8"-thick slices, some lengthwise and some crosswise. Transfer to a large bowl, season with 2 teaspoons salt, and toss to coat. Let sit until slightly wilted, about 15 minutes. Rinse under cold water and drain well. Pat dry with paper towels.
3. Whisk grated Parmesan, zest, juice, and vinegar in a medium bowl. Gradually whisk in oil. Season dressing with salt and pepper.
4. Combine squash, quinoa, parsley, walnuts, and basil in a large bowl. Pour dressing over; toss to coat. Garnish with shaved Parmesan.



Sisters Hill Farm

127 Sisters Hill Road, PO Box 22, Stanfordville, NY

June 27, 2015
June 30, 2015

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Upcoming events! Save the dates

Tonight June 30th 5-7PM Onion Weeding!

Saturday July 4th 10-12AM Garlic Harvest!

Saturday July 11th 5PM First Farm Barbeque of the season with musical guest "Bob and the Boys"



Field notes from farmer Dave

Last week we had the pleasure of having a visitor help us out for a few days. She (Iming) was a native Californian now calling South Africa home. She had formerly worked in healthcare, but was yearning for work better suited to her personality. That's when she discovered her love of growing food. Rather than simply jump into farming she decided to make a trip to the Northeast to learn from as many experienced farmers as she could. She conducted research online, and asked farmers who they recommended she visit. Her trip was quite successful, providing the varied education she was seeking. Having visited and worked on a dozen farms over the last few months, she found many things unique and compelling about Sisters Hill Farm. In fact, she enjoyed her time here so much that she is considering applying for a full season apprenticeship next spring, getting an entire season under her belt before breaking out on her own!

As she worked alongside us, she peppered me with questions about every aspect of the farm. It was fun to share my knowledge and insight, but it was also interesting to pick her brain about what set our farm apart from the rest. I already have a pretty keen sense of what we do well, but I don't visit other organic farms nearly as often as I once did.

One thing that I hadn't really thought about in a number of years is that we don't use any plastic mulch on the farm. Of the farms she had worked on and visited, we were unique in avoiding its use. Every other farm on her itinerary used plastic mulch extensively. I must admit, I have to thank Sister Mary Ann for that one. When I began the farm, I lobbied for its use, citing the fact that it was standard practice in the veggie world, and would promote better growth. She put her foot down-- I moved on-- and

learned to grow great veggies without it.

Despite its ability to warm soil and preserve moisture, most farms use plastic mulch primarily to prevent weeds. Somewhat paradoxically, we were also the most weed free farm I'ming visited. You may be wondering how we accomplish that?

I like to use the analogy of building a house. First you create a comprehensive plan, then you begin construction with a straight and plumb foundation. Once those two items are taken care of, the rest of the process goes much more smoothly. The plan would be akin to the systems you create; for example at Sisters Hill Farm all crops are planted using the same basic "bed." A bed here is a growing area 5 feet wide (by 200' long). In that 5 foot space are 3 rows each 15 inches apart. Depending on the crops size and needs we grow plants in 1, 2 or 3 rows. The beauty of this system is that, using a marker of my design and construction, we can mark the bare soil with all three rows and plant a variety of crops by hand at an nearly infinite number of spacing combinations, both quickly and efficiently. Then, even though we have planted by hand, we can go back into the bed later as the crop grows and stir the soil between the rows with precisely spaced cultivators. These cultivators are mounted under the very same tractor we used to mark the beds. Once the crops have outgrown the tractor we can use hand tools as well. The important principle here is that--even though we are small scale and plant by hand--the row widths, and spacing between rows never change; so we can use precise tools to scratch out weeds when they are very small between those rows.

Another important principle is to always use the biggest tool first. If we can get in the bed with the tractor, we do that first, stirring up 95% of the bed or so, then we use the small tools, like handheld wire weeders for the very small spaces between the plants. Often we simply use our fingertips, exercising yet another vital principle in efficient weed control; get them when they are small--so tiny that a simple swipe of the tip of your index finger drags their roots from the soil to dry in the sun.

Yet another principle that I employ is to cultivate the soil when it has reached optimal tilth. Tilth, to all you non-farmers, is the workability of the soil, how amenable it is to stirring (or any tillage or cultivation activity). A soil of optimal tilth will crumble easily into small (but not dust like) particles. If you have ever walked through the forest and reached into the hollow in a dead tree where the rotting wood is slowly being transformed into a crumbly, rich, black, sweet smelling concoction--that's good tilth. That's what we are looking for, timing wise, for targeting our cultivation. If we weed right when the soil is drying out just enough, and the tilth is perfect, weeding is fast and efficient. If you wait too long after a rain, sometimes the soil can be crusty, and difficult to penetrate, or it turns to dust; if you cultivate too soon, it can be clumpy and cloddy. The key is to have the machinery, tools and labor tuned up and lined up, so when conditions are perfect, you can cover a lot of ground quickly.

Which brings me to an exciting new purchase--just today I picked up several new cultivator parts-- 50 or 60 years old at least-- but innovative nevertheless. They will help me address some of the holes and weaker

points in our cultivation system. I'm always looking for a better way to get things done!

I hope this newsletter article helps you better understand one small aspect of how we grow your food with love and pride. Enjoy your shares!!

***** From *EatingWell.com* *****

Pureed Broccoli Soup - 8 servings, about 1 cup each

Ingredients

- • 1 tablespoon butter
- • 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- • 1 medium onion, chopped
- • 1 stalk celery, chopped
- • 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- • 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme or parsley
- • 8 cups chopped broccoli (stems and florets)
- • 2 cups water
- • 4 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth, "no-chicken" broth (see Note) or vegetable broth
- • 1/2 cup half-and-half (optional)
- • 1/2 teaspoon salt
- • Freshly ground pepper to taste

Directions

1. 1. Heat butter and oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat until the butter melts. Add onion and celery; cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, 4 to 6 minutes. Add garlic and thyme (or parsley); cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 10 seconds.
2. 2. Stir in broccoli. Add water and broth; bring to a lively simmer over high heat. Reduce heat to maintain a lively simmer and cook until very tender, about 8 minutes.
3. 3. Puree the soup in batches in a blender until smooth. (Use caution when pureeing hot liquids.) Stir in half-and-half (if using), salt and pepper.

Tips & Notes

Make Ahead Tip: Cover and refrigerate for up to 4 days or freeze for up to 3 months.

Note: Chicken-flavored broth, a vegetarian broth despite its name, is preferable to vegetable broth in some recipes for its hearty, rich flavor. Sometimes called "No-Chicken Broth," it can be found with the soups in the natural-foods section of most supermarkets.