

FARMLOG

CSA | FARM NEWS | RECIPES

WEEK 14

SHARE CONTENTS

SLICING TOMATOES

FRESH CANDY ONIONS

CURLY KALE

SLICING CUCUMBERS

ZUCCHINI

YELLOW SQUASH

GREEN BELL PEPPER

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IRRIGATION WORK

Consistent moisture is key to a steady supply of veggies ready to harvest on the farm. In the spring, we typically have an abundance of moisture available for growing our crops. When things turn hot in the summer, evaporation increases and the soil can turn dry quickly.

Our first line of defense for protecting crops from drought is soil organic matter. The higher the organic matter content of our soils, the more moisture they can hold. To increase our soil organic matter we focus on always having a plant growing in the soil, either a crop we will harvest or a cover crop we are raising to feed the soil microbes.

As a last resort we use irrigation to get us through the dry times. Because we use our municipal water source, we must be mindful of how we use this water, not only because it is expensive but because so many others depend on the supply.

We spent the weekend hopeful of a soaking rain, but with no rain by Sunday evening we were working out in our heads what needed to happen on Monday to get the irrigation system up and running. Thankfully, and much to our surprise, it rained Monday evening! We have lots of crops at a critical moisture stage, and today they got just what they needed!

Thanks to Amy Williams for sharing a tried and true recipe that she thought others might like. The recipe comes from the American Heart Association's [Meals in Minutes Cookbook](#). Eat in good health!

Mozzarella Polenta with Roasted Vegetable Salsa

Ingredients: vegetable oil spray, 16-ounce package prepared fat-free polenta

Salsa: 2 medium tomatoes, 1 large green bell pepper, 1 large

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zucchini, 1 yellow squash, 1 tablespoon cider vinegar, 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil, 1 teaspoon dried oregano (substitute with fresh if you have it), ½ teaspoon bottled minced garlic or 1 medium clove garlic, minced, ⅛ teaspoon salt, ¼ cup finely snipped fresh parsley or fresh cilantro, and ½ cup shredded nonfat or part-skim mozzarella cheese.

Preparation: Preheat broiler. Line two baking sheets with aluminum foil. Spray foil with vegetable oil spray. Gently rinse polenta under running water; pat dry with paper towels. Cut polenta into eight rounds, put on one baking sheet, and set aside.

For salsa, cut tomatoes in half crosswise and put cut side up on second baking sheet. Cut pepper in half lengthwise and remove ribs, seeds, and stem. Flatten each half with palm pulling out any parts of pepper that curve under; put on same baking sheet. Cut zucchini and squash in half lengthwise and add cut side up to baking sheet. Lightly spray vegetables with vegetable oil spray. Broil for 5 minutes about 4 inches from heat. Turn vegetable over and broil for 3 minutes, or until lightly charred.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, stir together remaining salsa ingredients except parsley; set aside.

Using a knife and fork, coarsely chop vegetables. In a medium mixing bowl, stir together vegetables, vinegar mixture, and parsley. Cover with aluminum foil to keep warm.

Broil polenta for 3 minutes, turn rounds over, and broil for 2 minutes. Sprinkle with mozzarella and broil for 1 minute, or until beginning to lightly brown.

To serve, arrange two polenta rounds on each of four dinner plates; then spoon about ½ cup salsa mixture on and around polenta.