

FIELD *notes*

UCSC Farm
Community Supported Agriculture
Sixteenth Harvest: 9/28/10 & 10/01/10

What's in the box?

Romaine Lettuce, *Plato II*
Endive, *Frisee*
Onions, *Purplette*
Cilantro, *Santo*
Hot Peppers, *Tiburón*
Beans, *Green (Bronco) & Yellow Wax (Gold Rush)*
Heirloom Tomatoes, *Chianti Rose & Cherokee Purple*
Apples, *Gala*
Pears, *Bartlett*
Potatoes, *Yellow Finn*
Winter Squash, *Sweet Reba Acorn*

Words from the Field: Brussels Sprouts Research Encourages Organic Production

by: Danelle Myer, first-year apprentice

In the field at UCSC this spring, three 300-foot beds of Brussels sprouts were planted adjacent to one bed of sweet alyssum, a flower known to attract beneficial insects. CSA members who enjoy eating Brussels sprouts may be happy to learn this, although they will not see sprouts in their boxes this season. Instead, this planting has an even greater, long-range purpose.

Brussels sprouts were first planted along the Central Coast in the 1920s with production increasing dramatically in the 1940s with the introduction of the frozen food industry. In recent years, production methods and an increase in foreign imports have decreased production to 3,000 acres, primarily located in San Mateo, Santa Cruz and Monterey counties. Of all Brussels sprouts grown in the U.S., California produces 90% - a majority of which is grown on the Central Coast.

Brussels sprouts are Brassicas, related to cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower. From an agricultural perspective, they are in the ground a long while (typically nine months) and require a significant amount of inputs and care as they tend to succumb to pests and disease. Two particularly problematic pests are the Diamondback moth (DBM) and cabbage aphid.

Our patch of Brussels sprouts are part of a research project, funded by the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF), that is observing the life cycle of these plants as well as patterns affiliated with DBM and aphid populations. Two other farms are participating in this on-farm research, Rodini Farms in Davenport and Jacobs Farms at Wilder Ranch. The research project was designed by and is being carried out by Janet Bryer and Diego Nieto, under the direction of Sean Swezey. With Sean in the lead, these three of our colleagues make up the natural science team of the Center for Agroecology. Apprentices are helping to monitor and document the presence of DBM larva, cabbage aphids and their predator insects.

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Brussel Sprout Research (continued)

One key insect in this cycle is the syrphid fly, whose larvae prey upon cabbage aphids (therefore helping to control populations) and is attracted by sweet alyssum.

Pest management research like this has not been conducted on organically grown Brussels sprouts for more than 20 years, and sprouts grown conventionally rely heavily on organophosphate insecticides. Because little is known about organic pest controls, most growers have been reluctant to grow Brussels sprouts organically.

It is hoped that results from these observations will lead to an increase in organic Brussels sprouts production, and perhaps, they will be included in CSA boxes in years to come.

Chilies Rellenos --Fresh from the Farm & Garden

Whole mild chili peppers
1 pound Jack cheese, cut into thin strips
5 large eggs
1/4 cup flour
1 1/4 cups milk
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 pound grated cheddar cheese
1/2 teaspoon paprika
Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Remove stems and seeds from peppers by slitting one side. Slip strips of cheese into peppers and arrange in a 9 x 13 inch baking dish. Sprinkle with grated cheese.

Beat eggs and gradually add flour, milk, and salt. Pour over chilies. Sprinkle on paprika.

Bake uncovered for 45 minutes.
Serves 6-8

Sauce

Saute onion slices in hot oil in medium-sized saucepan. Process tomatoes in blender or food processor. Add tomatoes and garlic to sauteed onion slices. Season with salt and pepper and add oregano. Add sugar and correct seasoning.

Cover and cook over medium heat for 5 minutes. If sauce is too thick, add tomato juice as needed. Pour over chilies rellenos before serving or serve separately.

Poblanos filled with Potato, Cheddar, & Cilantro

4 Poblano Peppers
1/2 Tbs. olive oil
1 onion, diced
1 medium potato, diced and steamed until tender
1 or 2 Jalapeno chilies, seeded and diced
1 Tbs coarsely chooped cilantro
1/2 cup grated white cheddar cheese

Grill poblanos directly over an open flame using metal tongs to turn them until the skin is blistered and charred. Transfer to a bowl and cover to steam. Preheat the oven to 375 and lightly oil a baking dish. Saute onions, and 1/4 teaspoon salt over medium heat until the onions begin to soften. Add the potatoes, jalapeno, and 1/4 cup water. Cover and cook over low heat for about 5 minutes. Once the poblanos are cooled peel the skins off, keeping the stems on. Make a lengthwise slit in each pepper and remove the seeds. Toss the potato mixture with the cilantro, cheese, and 1/4 tea salt. Stuff each pepper, being careful to keep the stems in place. Place them seam side down in the dish and bake about 20 minutes until peppers have puffed a bit.