



Gathering Together Farm

Phone: (541) 929-4273

Email: markets@gatheringtogetherfarm.com

CSA Newsletter—Week 9, August 4th, 2020

Solanaceous Siblings—Getting to know Eggplant & Hierba Mora

TABLE OF BOX CONTENTS



- **Eggplant** (photo by LB)
- Cilantro
- Chard (see [week 5](#) fritata recipe)
- 1 bu. Carrots
- Summer Squash
- Cucumbers
- Tomatoes
- Shallots
- Lettuce
- Nicola Potatoes
- 2 Willamette Sweet Onions
- **First of the Season Treat**, either:
 - **Crockett Green Beans (all off-farm pick-ups)**—We wait all year for these tender sweet treats! Beans and peas contain more protein than the average vegetable and can make incredibly filling on their own as a result. Try sautéing your beans with onions and caramelizing with soy sauce or tamari, and simply serve with rice.
 - OR**
 - **Serendipity Sweet Corn (on-farm pick-ups)**—A Bicolor corn with a mosaic of white & yellow kernels. Serendipity is our main season variety and it is our favorite! There are many a farmer’s dinner throughout heat season that consist of 3 to 4 ears of corn slathered with something fatty and salty and nothing else. Corn is all you need.

Happy August, veggie lovers!

August in Oregon is the true month of summer. It’s hot and dry, a time to jump into the river, eat corn on the cob, and soon fresh watermelon and cantaloupe. For a farmer, August is heavy, a never-ending race against time to capture sunlight that’s been bundled up into delicious fruits.



This month of sun is probably a Solanaceous plant’s favorite time of the year. Solanaceae, also known as the Night Shade family, is home to many of your favorite summer treats, including tomatoes, peppers, tomatillos, potatoes, and eggplant. But those are not the only night shades in the field!

Hierba mora is a common weed in Willamette Valley farm fields, an herbaceous leafy plant with little white flowers and a vaguely eggplantish vibe. It is seen nothing more than a fast-growing nuisance that threatens to taint your salad mix with poisonous little black berries. But it wasn’t until I worked alongside Margarita that I learned otherwise.

One day we were out harvesting lettuce, and as we walked out of the field, Margarita stayed behind and appeared to be pulling weeds. She ripped the last few plants out of the ground, bundled them up in her hand, and hustled back over to the truck. “Qué tienes?” I asked. *What do you have?* “Hierba mora, es rico,” she said. *Hierba mora, it’s delicious.* Confused, I said I thought the berries were poisonous, and she said yes, they were, and that’s why you harvest them just before they start flowering like she was doing right then.

Hierba mora is one of many edible native herbaceous plants collectively referred to as *quelites*, including *hierba mora*, *verdolaga* (purslane), *quintonil* (wild amaranth) and so many more. Margarita said that back in Guatemala she ate these greens all the time, although the plants were much bigger there.

Back when we could go over to our coworkers’ homes without fear of potentially spreading the coronavirus, I enjoyed hierba mora over at Margarita’s many a time. She stews it lightly in stock, cooking it down to an incredibly rich spinach-like green, which is cut perfectly with pickled jalapenos, onions, and carrots, and a mountain of tortillas that you are very responsible for finishing. It is Popeye-status nourishing at the end of a day.

So every time I enjoy the wonky celestial wonder of an eggplant, I always give a little shout out hierba mora, to all the stories I didn’t know that I didn’t know, to all the beautiful plants who have been labeled as weeds but who are so much more, and of course, to Margarita. #knowyourfarmer

—with love, your vegucator, LB markets@gatheringtogetherfarm.com

We’d love to see what you’re doing with your CSA box! Tag us on social media @gatheringtogetherfarm!

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MARINATED TERIYAKI EGGPLANT WITH CILANTRO



Adapted from <https://cupfulofkale.com/vegan-marinated-teriyaki-eggplant/>

INGREDIENTS

- 1-2 **Eggplant**
- Teriyaki Marinade
 - ½ cup soy sauce
 - ¼ cup mirin
 - 1 Tbsp rice wine vinegar
 - 1-2 Tbsp brown sugar (or honey)
 - 1 inch ginger root, grated
 - 3 garlic cloves, roughly minced
- To serve:
 - White rice
 - **Cilantro**
 - Sesame Seeds
 - **Fresh onion tops**

*Add tofu or chicken
to your sauté to make
an even more filling
meal.*

DIRECTIONS

1. Whisk the sauce ingredients in a bowl, making sure the sugar is dissolved.
2. Cut the eggplant into small chunks, place in a large bowl and then pour the marinade over the top. Stir and make sure it is all coated, set aside.
3. Let marinate for at least 20 minutes, stirring a few times.
4. Place a griddle pan on the hob over medium-high heat. Once hot place the marinated eggplant in.
5. Pour over any excess marinade over the top whilst cooking. You may need to do it in two lots so you can keep the first lot on a low heat in the oven.
6. Cook for a few minutes on each side until brown and starting to char from the griddle lines.
7. Serve straight away with rice & top with cilantro, onion tops, & sesame seeds. (I'd serve it with spicy chili oil too!)

SIMPLE CILANTRO VINAIGRETTE

—Adapted from <https://pinchofyum.com/5-ingredient-cilantro-vinaigrette>

INGREDIENTS

- 1 huge bunch of fresh **cilantro** (2 cups packed)
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup water, *if needed*

DIRECTIONS

1. Blend everything up for about a minute until smooth. Add the water if you need more volume in the blender to make it run smoothly. Season to taste!
2. **PUT ON EVERYTHING!** I actually do mean everything. Ex. Salad! Eggs! Crispy Potatoes! So delicious.

CRISPY BUTTERY SMASHED POTATOES

—Adapted from the Portland Farmers Market Cookbook by Ellen Jackson

INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs yellow-fleshed **potatoes**, unpeeled
- 2-3 tbsp olive oil
- 4 tbsp butter, melted and divided
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- 2 tsp finely chopped herbs of your liking
- Salt & pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Add the potatoes to a large pot and cover them with cold water by several inches. Generously salt the water and bring it to a boil over high heat.
2. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook the potatoes until just before they are fork-tender, about 10 minutes. Drain the potatoes in a colander and let them cool for 10 minutes.
3. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F.
4. Lightly coat a baking sheet with the oil. Evenly space the boiled potatoes out across the sheet and, using a small glass or a fork lightly coated with oil, gently flatten each potato by pressing down until it mashes into an oblong shape.
5. Brush the potatoes generously with 2 Tbsp of the melted butter, sprinkle them with salt and pepper to taste, and bake them for 10 minutes.
6. Add the garlic and herbs to the remaining 2 Tbsp butter, brush the potatoes again, and bake until they are golden brown and crispy, about 8-10 minutes more.