

# Pinehold Gardens *Field Notes*

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## In This Week's Box

From our hoophouses:

- Cucumbers: Tasty Jade
- Tomatoes: grape, cherry, slicer, paste
- Celery

From the drift free portions of our fields:

- Garlic
- Basil

From Simon's Gardens

- Canteloupe

## HERBICIDE DRIFT UPDATE

Our lawyer is still reviewing our insurance coverage and I am still working on documenting our losses. It is taking a while, but in a way that is good as we have new items that we now will claim as a loss. We had decided to not to plant in the areas of the fields that have flooded during the last two fall seasons. But we had run out of room to replant items that we lost and plant our normal fall crops so we risked it and planted some fast maturing lettuce, beets and a few other items in that area. Monday's storm and the last week's rain has left at least a third of those crops under water.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

It helps to have a supportive spouse in times like these. Who would have thought that herbicide drift would test a marriage? I have been overburdened with paperwork for the past eight years dealing with my parent's end of life care and estate paperwork and I was so looking forward to being at home and getting back to farming. And then drift paperwork drifts into my life.

We were so very fortunate to be considered an essential business and to have so many people interested once again in CSAs and cooking. And us



We had just finished cultivating the replanted crops as well as the fall crops a day before the rain bomb. Our intent was to show good things were growing, and then... Luckily our loses at this point look minimal.

and our workers could easily be Covid safe and socially distance both in the fields and in multiple work spaces. And we never went anywhere during the farming season so things being closed were not affecting us.

And we do realize how Covid has affected everyone's lives and livelihoods and we think of everyone every day and wish the best for everyone.

As we have said many, many times over the past many weeks, we truly do appreciate your patience, understanding and all the wonderful emails of support that we have received.

### FIELD NOTES

When it rains, it pours, literally. Monday afternoon we received 3.5 inches of rain in 40 minutes. The rain came down so fast that there was flooding everywhere and then torrents of water pouring off the fields, like rivers that rise when surrounding areas feed into them. It moved gravel from a roadway 50 feet. And that is the second time in eight days that we received 3.5 inches or more. The total rainfall for eight days was almost eight inches, or two months worth of rain.

### HERBICIDE EDUCATION 101

Almost every person asks this question. If it can be sprayed on corn that ends up being fed to cows, cattle, pigs and chickens and ends up in high fructose corn syrup, all of which is consumed by humans, why is that allowed?

DATCP gave me this reply: "I would encourage you to review the following EPA website which explains what pesticide tolerances are and how they are established: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-tolerances>. While corn has an established tolerance for residues of these active ingredients, many of the impacted crops you grow do not. This is largely due to a lack of data evaluating the pesticide residues on those crops. Without this data, EPA cannot establish a tolerance level for that residue on a particular crop."

## Greek Salad Bites

*From Member Jeff Siuta*

### Ingredients:

- 1 long, relatively thin cucumber or several "pickle" cucumbers, cut into 3/8" slices
- 1 small red onion, very thinly sliced
- 4-6 ounces of imported Greek feta cheese (chunk – not crumbled), cut into 1-inch squares, 1/2" thick
- Basil, oregano or cilantro pesto
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved, seeds shaken out or several plum tomatoes sliced 1/2" thick
- Toothpicks or cocktail picks

### Directions:

- Assemble the appetizer. Start with a slice of cucumber.
- Add a single layer of red onion.
- Spread the onion with a thin layer of pesto.
- Place a cube of feta onto the pesto. Sprinkle the cheese with parsley leaves.
- Top with a tomato half, rounded side up. Slide a toothpick or cocktail pick through the tomato down to cucumber to hold the stack in place.

### Jeff's Notes:

- This is a very simple appetizer to make on short notice. It's easy to make a number of these quickly by creating them one layer at a time – do all the cucumbers, then all the onions, then the pesto, etc.
- Here's a variation that's even easier to put together on short notice (and a good way to use up a bunch of basil): Caprese Salad Bites. Start with a slice of fresh mozzarella (BelGioioso makes a pre-sliced "log" that works well for this); add a dollop of basil pesto; top with a halved cherry tomato and a small basil leaf; slice a toothpick or cocktail pick through the stack. You might also consider a small drizzle of olive oil and/or balsamic vinegar, as well.

## Basic Pesto

### Ingredients

- 1 cup fresh basil or oregano or cilantro leaves
- 1 cup fresh parsley leaves
- 2 large garlic cloves
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- 1/2 cup walnuts or pine nuts
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

### Directions

- Combine the herb of choice, parsley, garlic, cheese and nuts in a food processor or blender. Process to mix.
- With the food processor running, slowly add the olive oil.
- Add salt and pepper to taste, and process to the desired consistency.
- Let stand at least 5 minutes before serving.

# Celery Perspectives

*From Member Jeff Siuta*

Celery is one of those vegetables that turns up in a lot of recipes, but is seldom on the marquee – it's usually way down in the supporting cast. I love the crunch of fresh celery, and we literally always have cut celery in the fridge as a go-to vegetable with lunch or for a quick snack.



Aside from just munching a celery stick, a few of our favorite ways to eat it fresh are:

- The classic "Ants on a Log:" fill the celery stick with peanut butter and top with a few raisins.
- Cream cheese stuffed celery with a dusting of sweet paprika – "fancy food" from my childhood days.
- My go-to quick salad (no lettuce required): chop up equal quantities of celery, bell peppers, cucumbers and mozzarella cheese; add a handful of kalamata olives; season with salt and pepper and oil and vinegar.

The process of cutting celery up into sticks leaves a lot of stuff that gets cut off. Here's a few environmentally ethical ideas for getting more mileage from your celery:

- Use the tender, pale leaves at the top as an addition to a green salad. They can be stored for several days in the fridge by wrapping them gently in a damp paper towel and storing them in a sealable bag.
- The darker green leaves can be chopped and added to soups and stews as a flavor enhancer. They, too, can be stored like the tender leaves. If soups and stews are a winter thing in your home, simply freeze them (without the paper towel) until you're ready to use them.
- Celery is one of those vegetables that turns up in a lot of recipes, but is seldom on the marquee – it's usually way down in the supporting cast. I love the crunch of fresh celery, and we literally always have cut celery in the fridge as a go-to vegetable with lunch or for a snack.
- The bottom of the bunch of celery can be saved for use in making stock – along with some of the really tough, dark leaves from the top. We regularly keep 32-oz. deli or yogurt containers in the freezer to save our cut-offs from celery, carrots, onions, leeks, herbs, etc. Once we have 2-3 full containers, they get dumped into the stock pot with some salt, herbs, peppercorns, spices (whatever smells good together that day) and water and cooked down (again, use your nose to tell when it smells done – usually about 1-1/2 to 2 hours. Strain and press the solids, and then store the stock in 4-cup containers for use in other recipes. Try cooking pasta in your vegetable stock!
- Finally, compost what you absolutely can't use – and compost the solids from making stock, too. It's a "Circle of Life" thing.

# Garden Salsa

*From Member Jeff Siuta*

*Based on – Recipe from Kathy Gunst/Here & Now*

## Ingredients:

- 12 cherry tomatoes, cut in half or quarters, depending on the size
- 2 large ripe tomatoes, cubed
- 1 sweet green, red or yellow pepper, cut into cubes
- 1 small red or white onion, finely chopped
- 2 scallions, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, chopped, optional
- 1 jalapeño, cut in half, seeded, and finely chopped (remove seeds if you don't want a spicy salsa or add a few for a moderately spicy salsa and keep them all for a hot hot salsa)
- 2-1/2 tablespoons olive oil
- Juice from 1 large lime
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

## Directions:

- In a medium bowl gently mix all the ingredients.
- Taste for seasoning adding more lime juice, oil, salt, pepper or jalapeño as desired.

The salsa will keep for about 2 hours. Serve with chips.



Ken Knetzger and Amanda Raduenz have been primping and pruning the tomatoes in the greenhouse to increase production and improve quality of the fruit.

# Eggplant Parmesan

*From Member Jeff Siuta*

## Ingredients:

- 1 medium or 2 small eggplants
- 1 cup all-purpose flour, seasoned with salt and pepper
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 3-4 cups fine seasoned Italian breadcrumbs
- Olive oil for frying
- 5-6 cups Marinara sauce
- 1½ cups shredded Parmesan or Romano cheese (or a mixture of both)
- 1 pound shredded Mozzarella cheese

## Directions:

- Wash the eggplant and slice them into ¼-inch rounds. Leave the skins on unless you're using a really large one.
- Place a layer of the eggplant slices in a colander lined with paper towels, sprinkle with a little salt, and cover with a layer of paper towels. Repeat layering with the remaining eggplant slices atop the others. Place a plate on top of the layers and add a weight (perhaps your jar of Marinara sauce, or the like) for about an hour. This will drain excess moisture which can be acidic tasting.
- Place the flour, beaten eggs and breadcrumbs each in a shallow bowl. Prepare the slices for frying by dipping both sides in the flour, then in the egg, and finally in the breadcrumbs. Place breaded slices on a large plate, layering them between sheets of parchment paper or waxed paper.
- Add a generous amount of olive to a cast-iron or non-stick skillet (it should be enough to fry the slices without making them saturated with oil – use a light touch). Fry the slices, turning once, until they are golden brown and crispy on each side. Place fried slices on a paper towel lined plate, layering them between paper towels as the plate fills.
- Preheat your oven to 350°F.
- Spread enough Marinara sauce on the bottom of a 9x13-inch baking dish to coat it. Add a layer of eggplant slices (they can overlap each other a bit, if necessary). Cover with a layer of Mozzarella and cheese, then more sauce.
- Repeat, starting with the eggplant, until you have used all of the slices. Usually this results in 3-5 layers.
- Bake uncovered for about 20-25 minutes until the Mozzarella cheese on top is melted and just starting to brown.
- Let the dish rest for 10 minutes or so after removing it from the oven.
- Makes 4 generous servings.

## Jeff's Notes:

- The breaded slices can be baked instead of frying them. This results in a lower overall fat content, but, I feel, loses some depth of flavor.
- I prefer to use shredded rather than grated Parmesan and Romano cheeses. I feel that it results in slightly better texture, overall. In addition, I like to use Mozzarella cheese sliced of a block rather than shredded – I simply love the gooey, stringy cheese layer that results from larger pieces.

# Ciambotta

*From Member Jeff Siuta*

## Ingredients:

- 1 pound small Italian eggplant
- 1 pound zucchini
- 4 large bell peppers, cut into 1-inch squares
- 1 pound Yukon Gold potatoes
- 1 large yellow onion
- Olive oil for frying
- Kosher salt
- 2 large cloves of garlic, minced
- 1½ pounds fresh tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
- A handful of fresh basil leaves, torn
- Ground hot (cayenne) pepper or red pepper flakes, to taste
- Shaved Parmigiana Reggiano or Pecorino Romano cheese for serving.

## Directions:

- Cut the eggplant into quarters lengthwise, then cut into ½-inch thick slices. Cut the zucchini in the same manner as the eggplant. Quarter the potatoes and cut them into ¼-inch slices.
- Put ¼ inch of the olive oil into a cast iron Dutch oven or large, heavy-bottomed skillet at moderate heat. Season the eggplant with salt, and fry – turning it halfway through – in three batches until it is golden. Remove the eggplant to a paper towel lined tray with a slotted spoon. Pour off and reserve the oil from the skillet.
- Put 3 tablespoons of the reserved oil into the skillet at moderate heat. Season the peppers with salt and add to the skillet. Fry the peppers until just tender, and then remove them to the tray.
- Add 1 tablespoon of the oil to the skillet at high heat. Season the zucchini with salt and add it to the skillet. Fry the zucchini until browned and just tender, and then remove them to the tray.
- Add the remaining reserved oil, plus ¼ cup of fresh oil to the skillet and reduce the heat to a moderate level. Season the potatoes with salt and add them to the skillet. Fry them until they are browned, crusty and tender, and then remove them to the tray.
- Raise the heat to moderately high. Add the onion and garlic, and sauté them briefly until they are softened.
- Add the tomatoes and the torn basil leaves to the onion-garlic mixture. Cook briskly, stirring until the tomatoes soften.
- Return all of the vegetables to the skillet. Season with hot pepper and salt, to taste. Simmer for 5 minutes.
- Let the mixture rest for 30 minutes before serving. Serves 8.

## Jeff's Notes

- Traditionally, my family added fried hot dogs to this recipe (it was an inexpensive way to add protein to a family meal). They are cut into ½-inch slices, fried, and then added with the vegetables at the end. Vegan hot dogs work equally as well as traditional ones.
- You may substitute a pound of mushrooms for the eggplant if it is difficult to find out of season. Be sure to fry the mushrooms in small batches and let their liquid cook off.
- You may need to add additional tomato sauce or canned tomatoes to provide more liquid for the stew. If so, cook the dish for an additional 10 minutes or so to avoid that canned tomato taste.
- Serve this topped with lots of shaved or shredded cheese and slices of crusty bread.