

## Mountain Bounty Farm News August 18-21, 2008

Greetings. Hopefully you made it through that hot, dry week. We survived but only because we were eating copious amounts of watermelons- thank goodness for watermelons. We love melons here on the farm- just when it's hotter than hot, they're bursting with sweetness in the field. We grow a whole bunch of different kinds of melons including many different kinds of muskmelons or cantaloupes and a handful of different watermelons. Some of the muskmelons are pale inside and taste somewhat like honeydews and some are bright orange like your typical cantaloupe. Our mainstay watermelon is Yellow Doll although we started growing some other yellow varieties this year like Peace and Petit Yellow. We're moving away from growing the variety Yellow Doll (as well as a handful of other varieties of other crops) because the variety was bought by Seminis, a seed company owned by the Monsanto Corporation. When we order seeds we make sure our seeds are coming from smaller seed companies who have high quality standards for their seeds and the farms that grow the seeds. We save some of our own seed of a few crops but are looking forward to doing more seed saving as the years go on. Until then we're avoiding the Monsanto-owned varieties like the plague.

We hope you enjoy the melons and the tomatoes. We grow over 15 different varieties of tomatoes- some hybrids and some heirlooms. The heirlooms tend to be much more fragile and are often big, colorful, and oddly shaped. Some of our favorites are Cherokee purple, Striped German, Brandywine and Persimmon. You'll have the chance to sample all of the varieties of tomatoes we grow at our Harvest Festival Celebration which is coming up next month on Sept 13. The party starts at 3pm. We'll have farm tours, amazing food for sale, tomato tasting, a salsa contest, music, and kids' activities. We'll post a map to the farm on our website soon (Be sure not to mapquest the address cause it sends you the back way which takes much longer!) It'll be great to get a chance to meet all of you next month. Enjoy the goodness.

### Recipes

#### **Eggplant, Tomato and Onion Gratin from *Chez Panisse Vegetables* by Alice Waters**

3 large, sweet onions	2 sprigs of thyme
3 cloves of garlic	1 bay leaf
2-3 tablespoons butter	Salt and pepper
2-3 tablespoons olive oil	3 medium eggplants
	3 ripe tomatoes

Peel and chop the onions and garlic very fine. Stew them over a medium flame for about 5 minutes, until soft, in half the butter and olive oil, with the leaves of the thyme, bay leaf and salt and pepper. Slice the eggplant into ¼ inch thick rounds. Slice the tomatoes slightly thicker. Preheat the oven to 400. Butter a shallow gratin dish. Remove the bay leaf from the onions and spread them over the bottom of the dish. Cover with overlapping rows of alternate tomato and eggplant slices. Each slice should cover two thirds of the preceding one. Season with salt and pepper, drizzle with olive oil, cover and cook in the oven until the eggplant is soft enough to be cut with a spoon, about 45 minutes. Uncover for the last 15 minutes or earlier if the tomatoes are giving up too much liquid. Brush or spoon the juices over the top occasionally to prevent the top layer from drying out. Serve with grated Parmesan.

#### **Tomato and Basil Bruchetta**

Slice large, ripe tomatoes into thick slices and season well with salt and pepper. Fry thick slices of crusty country bread in a heavy skillet in 1/8 inch of olive oil until they are golden brown on both sides (or grill the bread over a fire). As the bread fries, you will need to add more oil to keep the pan from going dry. Remove the bread slices from the pan and drain them briefly on a towel. Rub the bread slices generously with garlic. Top each slice of bread with a thick tomato slice and a basil leaf, and season with salt and pepper. Drizzle with a little olive oil and serve.