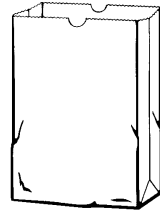


IN THE BAG
Potomac Vegetable Farms
July 30, 2008



Mini: green beans, tomatoes, basil, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, pepper, onion, mint

Regular: green beans, tomatoes, basil, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, pepper, onion, mint

Robust: green beans, tomatoes, basil, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, pepper, onion, mint, beets

We're excited that everyone got two kinds of tomatoes this week. Finally, it's really feeling like summer. We tried to give you each some variety of slicing tomatoes: yellow, red and pink. I don't think I need to tell you how to eat them!

Here's a little story from Hana in Vienna.

Green beans are a prevalent vegetable, but not many people know how much work it takes to grow them. And not just work on our end – work on the plant's end, too. In a perfect world, bean plants would flourish all summer disturbed only by gentle breezes and the occasional butterfly. But on our pesticide-free farm, bean plants are beleaguered little souls – tortured by innocent-looking yellow bugs called Mexican bean beetles. There are an astonishing number of bean beetles in the world – and they all seem to have congregated on the few scattered bean patches we have on our farm, chewing up the leaves and making fuzzy yellow larvae to ensure future leaf-chewing. The bean patches stick out like a sore thumb because the broad green leaves turn withered, lacy and brown under the beetles' constant attention. The bean plants don't survive for more than about two weeks of harvest.

We take what measures we can to combat the bean beetles – we order *pediobus* wasps from Rutgers University that prey on the beetles, and we're replanting beans all the time. But the real hard workers are the bean plants – despite their precious leaves being torn to shreds and yellow bugs flying all around them, they still manage to pump out baskets of beans.

Here at PVF West, we're experimenting with growing pole beans. That means vining bean plants that need trellising. They seem to handle to bug stress better and distribute a nice harvest of beans over a longer period. We are growing many varieties and they are all very "beany" and delicious!

Garlic Green Beans

This is the recipe we make at home. Every child will eat it.

1 pound green beans
3 cloves garlic
Salt
Olive oil

Snap off the stem ends of the green beans and wash them. Boil the green beans in a heavy pot, uncovered, until they're dark green. While it's boiling, mince up your garlic. Drain the green beans and, using the same pot, sauté the garlic briefly in olive oil – just for one minute, so

they're soft but not brown. Put the green beans back in and cover them with the minced garlic. Add salt to taste.

Green Beans Simmered with Tomato

(adapted from *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone*)

2 small white onions, sliced into thin rounds
1 garlic clove
1 ½ pounds green beans, stem ends removed, cut into 2-inch lengths

1 tomato, peeled, seeded, and diced
2 tsp chopped parsley
2 tsp chopped summer savory or dill
Salt and pepper
Olive oil

Heat the oil in a medium or large skillet, add the onions, and cook over medium heat until soft and translucent – about 4 minutes. Add the garlic, beans, tomato, and enough water just to cover. Simmer until the beans are tender, then add the herbs and simmer 1 to 2 minutes more. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot, tepid, or even chilled.

Sweet-and-Sour Basil Tomatoes

(adapted from *The Gardener's Community Cookbook*)

Careful - this one could pickle if it's marinated for too long.

1 pound tomatoes, any color
2-3 tbsp brown sugar
2-3 tbsp balsamic vinegar

1 ½ - 2 tbsp olive oil
2-3 tbsp shredded fresh basil leaves
1 tbsp chopped chives

Slice the tomatoes as thickly or as thinly as you like and arrange them on a serving platter. Sprinkle on the brown sugar, then the vinegar. Drizzle the olive oil over the top. Sprinkle on the basil and chives. Set aside to marinate for 5 – 10 minutes, then serve.