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POTOMAC VEGETABLE FARMS
www.potomacvegetablefarms.com
pvfnewsletter@gmail.com

Tasting Notes: Flavor-Ice 2023 Release

This is your in-depth tasting guide to the current selection of freezy pop flavors, written with care by PVF's sommelier-in-residence, Rachel Udall.

GREEN

Incredible lightness - citric and bright in nature. Masterful, subtle blending of both lemon and lime notes. Revitalizing, enlivening. Pair with rustic tomato sandwich prepared tableside at lunch.

PURPLE

Deep, deep notes of grape and children's cough medication. A certain elegance to its rich, dark purple hues. To be enjoyed slowly - gag reflex may be triggered when one is reminded of being force fed cough syrup as a sick youth. Pairs perfectly with the dirt and tomato tar that never really washes off your hands.

BLUE

Powerful and joyous. Notes that should not, cannot exist in nature. Bold hints of blue, cyan, sapphire. Potent and reinvigorating. Pair with the overwhelming scent of rotting onions that remains on

your person for days.

ORANGE

Heavily vibrant, expressing notes of citrus and pith - some may pick up on subtle hints of orange. Light, crisp, sunny. Jovial in spirit. Be patient with this one - best when no other flavor options are available. Pairs lovely with lying down on a wooden table after picking tomatoes for three hours in exceptional heat.

RED

Noted on packaging as "strawberry" flavored - ignore

this labeling. Notes of cherry, raspberry - any other red fruits except strawberry. Backed by a subtle swath of sweetness that creates a delightful tasting experience. Pair with sweat and large swaths of gnats flying into your mouth.

PINK

Exotic and light. A melodic blend of 20 or more flavors that cannot truly be picked apart and probably shouldn't. Delightfully pink on the nose. Pairs wonderfully with the sigh of relief after a day well worked.



photo courtesy of helen roads

Dressing up as Freezie Pops for Halloween in 2022.

Hot + Spicy

by Stacey Carlberg + Casey Gustowarow

If you're driving through the front three acres of Potomac Vegetable Farms West, you're driving through Fireside Farm. A high proportion of our veggie rows are Casey's favorite crop : peppers. Sure, we grow sweet peppers - but the real variety lies in the hot pepper patch.

His interest in hot peppers stems from a few years of living and traveling around Southeast Asia before his farming days. He thoroughly enjoyed the big and bold flavors of the food in the region. A big draw of Casey towards farming was the access to the freshest and most interesting ingredients to be used in his kitchen. There's usually some food project in process in the house - a crock of something fermenting, a jar of something brewing or a fresh meal being whipped up in the pan - with some added spice from hot peppers.

Hot peppers played a key role in our dating relationship early on. Stacey, a true Midwesterner, hadn't eaten much of anything spicier than black pepper or those red pepper flakes that you put on pizza before hanging around Casey. We were cooking a meal together in the worker kitchen, a jar of recently made habanero sauce sitting on the stovetop. Stacey wanted to prove she could handle the heat and put a big dollop in the dish. Unbeknownst to her, Casey had already put a big helping of the sauce into the dish! We managed to sweat through that meal together, but now consult each other before adding large amounts of spice to a dish.

Once we started attending farmers markets regularly, there seemed to be a lack of hot peppers. Casey was ready to fill that niche for the dedicated contingent of customers that really, really enjoy them. There's a wide variety of flavors, colors, intensities and uses that keep it interesting in the field and in the kitchen. Stacey loves setting them up to make a colorful display.

However, the number of varieties grown each year tends to be a point of contention...er, conversation. It takes some effort to keep the hot peppers organized in the greenhouse and field, educate the workers about what they're picking and how to sell them and come up with the appropriate signage and baskets to display everything. One year, Stacey asked Casey to cap the number at 20 varieties. We settled at 32. But, now Casey does the seeding and spotting and organizes the planting - so Stacey doesn't find out how many varieties are really growing until the



Casey showing off a selection of hot peppers from Fireside Farm.

peppers get harvested.

But, there are just so many uses in the kitchen that keep Casey trying new varieties. He likes to dry them and use later for chili flakes or throw them whole into a pot of beans. He uses them to make fresh fridge pickles or fermented pickles or flavored vinegars. He even bought a roaster to cook them over fire. Stacey even likes the smell of the roasting chiles.

Casey's current favorites are Fresnos, Jalapenos, Anaheims and Aji Dulces for their flavoring capacity without too much heat. Chefs we work with like Aleppos, Espelettes, Calabrians and Guajillos. Our spiciest are probably Aji Limon, Habaneros and Scotch Bonnets.

We stopped growing the ones that make you want to die. We had a brief stint of growing Carolina Reapers for our friends making hot sauce at Number 1 Sons. Stacey asked Casey to never bring them to market for fear of some customer eating one in the market tent. This fear was based on several incidents of driving up on workers sweating and gagging in the field after trying hot peppers during harvest. She just had the inclination that some folks can't help themselves. Sure enough, they slipped on the market load one day and a few hours into market there was a small crowd of teenage boys gathered outside the tent. Carolina Reaper in one hand, jug of milk in the other hand. Phone for making a video in a friend's hand. You can go on to YouTube and watch a video to get a sense of how this scenario ends. But, that was the end of growing Carolina Reapers.

Now, we're keeping it pretty spicy but a lot less hot.

Soft Serve: My Limited Adventure in the Industry

by Michael Lipsky

In the summer of 1956 one of my two part-time jobs was working in the soft serve ice cream concession at Kline's in Ocean Beach, N.Y. Ocean Beach, on Fire Island, was something of a paradise for families with children, with its easy access to both the ocean and the bay, and the absence of cars.

Kline's sold beach wear, beach toys, sun screen and anything summer residents and visitors might have forgotten to bring from the city.

So far as I knew, soft serve was an infant industry, available at roadside stands but at the time not widely consumed. Kline's had bought two new machines. It devoted one end of the store to the new product. Chris, a few years older than me, was in charge.

The basic mix, arriving in five gallon milk containers, was a thin liquid the pale straw color of manilla file folders. To this unappetizing liquid one added sugar and other additives, including "flavors."

One day Chris decided he wanted to serve coffee-flavored soft serve. He brought a pot of coffee from home and dumped it into the mix; end of story.

Skills developed on the job included moving the cone in a tight circle below the spigot of the machine to obtain the signature swirl. Since the job was also my first retail experience I probably learned to make change and interact with customers as if I knew what I was talking about.

During the afternoon shift the operation worked well. It was in the evenings, at approximately nine p.m., that things unraveled.

In those years, when television was not yet widespread in vacation communities and home entertainment systems were a distant development, the community movie house, separated from Kline's by a small village green, was the center of village entertainment. There were two shows. The kids went to the early show.

Parents sometimes accompanied the kids, or they met them after the show to walk them home through the dark streets. But first they needed ice cream.

At some point, when the first showing of the movie ended, the doors of the Community House would open and children would spill out, heading toward their evening treat. At Kline's we were ready for the assault.

The first half-dozen or so soft serve cones were served as expected. The second half-dozen or so soft serve cones were—let us say—a little softer. Starting with about the second dozen servings, the soft serve machines were drooling cool, shapeless liquids.

Evidently, the machines required the liquid to spend a certain amount of time in a cooling chamber. The high demand of the clamoring children undercut that requirement.

In memory, Kline's never truly solved the problem. Parents learned to line up early, or they opted for other frozen dessert options further away from the Community House.

Has soft serve technology improved? I wouldn't know. I haven't favored soft serve since I learned how it was made over 65 years ago.

Spicy Margarita

Recipe from Isabel Hulkower

Combine ingredients in a clean jar. Let infuse for at least 3 hours and up to overnight.

Spicy Margarita

- 2 ounces infused tequila
- Juice of 1 whole lime
- ½ ounce triple sec, preferably Cointreau
- Salt or tajin for rim

What do you do when you want to embrace being hot yet experience the sweet relief of being cool? Make a hot pepper infused spicy marg using hot peppers from your CSA share.

Infused tequila

- 1 hot pepper of choice, sliced thinly
- 1 cup tequila of choice

Shake and serve over ice, feel into the sweet duality of summer, enjoy.



A Week of 95 Degrees

by Michael Bradford

200 pony baskets full of tomatoes, Hana said. That's what we need to pick every week to keep this farm running. I walk through the farm Monday morning, surveying the 3,000 plants I've been tending, and I agree. There are 200 ponies worth of ripening tomatoes on these vines, and they all need to be picked.

The heat this week is not a joke. When it gets into the nineties I have to remind myself constantly, "the sun is trying to kill you, Michael.

Don't let it get the upper hand." I drink gallons. I move my body to expose and protect different sides. I breathe deeply, like my life depends on it. I remind the crew after every job in the afternoon: "continuing to work is completely optional at this point." Personally, however, I will not slow down. I never feel so alive as when I'm fighting for my life.

It is so dry that weeds refuse to leave the ground when I pull them: they snap like twigs or just stay put. The sweet potato vines wilt under

the sun. The wind pulls the soil up from our tilled ground, turning our most precious resource into a cloud of dust.

Our crew this week is small and formidable. They work with quick hands in the morning to beat the sun, and when the sun peaks, they keep moving, knowing that the worst of the heat is still days away, and we need these tomatoes.

When the week comes to a close we have our 200 ponies of tomatoes, and even if we wanted to work in the afternoon there's hardly anything to be done. We killed it.

I go home after lunch, walk down to the creek, take my clothes off, and sit in the shallow, cool water, slowly scrubbing the stain of tomato vines off my hands as the minnows nibble at my toes. I go back up to my house and lay my body down for a nap. The moment I lie down, I hear drops of rain falling on my tin roof a few feet above me, swelling into a deafening white noise. I manage to hear one last thought before I fall asleep: "it's not that this is satisfying. No, this is satisfaction itself."

Recently Delicious: Kombucha

Collaboratively written by Sam T. and Oscar HC

Pulling a chilled bottle of kombucha from the fridge after sweating for hours is one of life's little joys. When the bottle of 'buch was brewed by a beloved, the sipping is even sweeter. Humans are homes for bacteria, and as

we consume fermented foods and drink kombucha, we care for those bacteria and therefore care for ourselves. Sandor Katz, a fermentation revivalist, educator and author, is someone we both rely on for fermentation advice and wisdom. Katz shared in an interview, "If we could look at our skin under high magnification, we would see that we are host to this incredibly complex universe of beings and the same is true of all of the food that we eat."

"I've also learned a lot about kombucha making from my sibling," Sam says, "and sharing SCOBYs with friends and discussing our flavor experiments." Kombucha community provides an opportunity to play and indulge in creative nourishment. We are descendants of potion people, brewers of ferments, celebrating bottles of abundance and fizzy delight.

Seven Flavors We Love

1. Beet and Ginger
2. Blueberry and Basil
3. Strawberry and Thyme (or Sage)
4. Nettle, Chamomile, Lemon Balm and Apple Mint
5. Melon and Mint (Cantaloupe)
6. Anise Hyssop and Plum
7. Watermelon Mojito Hibiscus

