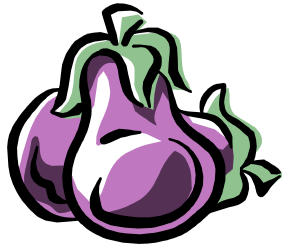




Eggplant Pasta Salad

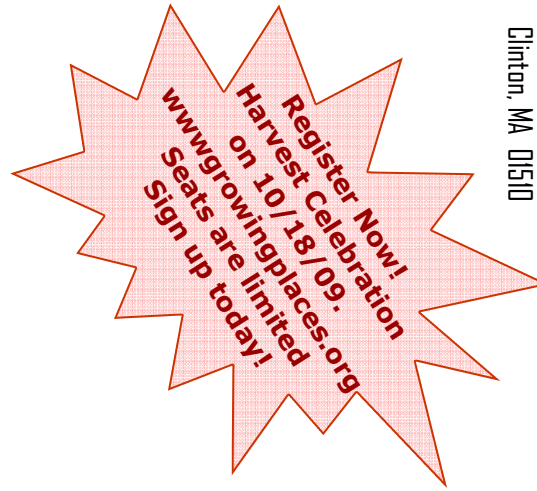
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 celery stalks, sliced
- 1 eggplant, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 1 pint grape tomatoes, halved
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- ¼ cup white wine vinegar
- Kosher salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons capers
- ¼ cup pine nuts, toasted (optional)
- 1 cup fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped
- 1 pound dried penne



Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the celery and cook, 3 minutes. Stir in the eggplant and tomatoes.

In a small bowl, combine the tomato paste, vinegar, ¼ cup water, 2 ½ teaspoons salt, ¼ teaspoon pepper, and the sugar. Stir into the eggplant. Cover and reduce heat to medium-low. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the eggplant is tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the capers, pine nuts (if using), and parsley.

Meanwhile, cook the penne according to the package directions. Toss with the remaining oil, let cool, and cover. Combine the eggplant with the pasta before serving.



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NEW CROP: WINTER SQUASH

The winter squashes – acorn, butternut, pumpkins, etc – are starting to ripen. These are great sources of nutrition that last into the winter and possibly spring. They often store very well in a cool dry location for several months.

Acorn, delicata and spaghetti squash should be eaten first, since they do not store as long as butternut and buttercup squash. So how do you know when to harvest these squashes? There are two characteristic signs that indicate that winter squash is ready to harvest:

- The stem starts to shrivel up and dry;
- The skin is so hard that you can't cut it with your thumbnail. (Pumpkins are an exception as their skin tends to stay a bit soft even when ripe – the orange color is a good indicator, however.)

Cut squash from the vine with a sharp knife leaving 1-2 inches of stem. Store acorn, delicata and spaghetti squashes right away. Cure all other varieties in the sun for about 10 days to harden the skin for better storage. If there is a chance of frost, cover them or move them inside, then put them back outside to finish curing. Store cured squash in a cool, dry location with good air circulation until ready to use.

Acorn squash has the shortest storage time, so be sure to use them early (within a month or two). Other winter squashes can be stored for 3 or more months.



TIME TO PINCH THE FLOWERS

Since your garden is starting to slow down its production, you want to do whatever you can to finish ripening the fruits and vegetables that are still growing in your garden. In order to do this, you can pinch off any blossoms that you might see— use a sharp pair of scissors or knife, or even your fingers, to remove the blossom from the stem. Removing the blossom will direct the energy in the plant away from trying to create a new fruit or vegetable and instead focus it on trying to ripen what is currently growing.

If there is a fruit forming at the bottom of the blossom don't bother pinching off the blossom unless it's a pumpkin, winter squash or melon. At this point in the season, these crops will not have enough time to develop a fruit to full ripeness. So, you might as well remove the blossom and the forming fruit.



Good candidates for blossom pinching are pumpkins, winter squashes, melons, tomatoes, peppers and eggplants.

HOME DELIVERIES:

Garlic bulbs are being distributed to everyone who requested them with instructions on what to do with them.

Our next home delivery scheduled is compost so be on the lookout!

GPGP offers Gardeners Nutrition Education & Cooking Classes

GPGP is rolling out the first of many Nutrition Education and Cooking Classes beginning Wednesday, September 30th. Using Share Our Strength's Operation Frontline Program, GPGP will offer a six-week workshop where participants will receive:

- *Courses promoting healthy food choices
- *Lifelong cooking skills, practical nutrition information and food budgeting strategies to use right away.
- *Groceries at the end of each class to practice the recipes learned at home.

The classes will be led by Kathy Elkind, Nourishment Consultant and GPGP volunteer, and the first series will take place at Saint Joseph Church in Fitchburg thanks to Dolores Thibault-Munoz and her staff at the Cleghorn Neighborhood Center. For more information call Jodi at 978.598.3723



TO DO THIS WEEK:

- If you requested garlic, be on the look out for a home delivery of bulbs with instructions.
- Watch for slugs and cabbage worms. See Growing Guide suggestions on removing them
- Harvest splitting tomatoes and use them as soon

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REGISTER NOW TO ATTEND OUR HARVEST CELEBRATION ON 10/18/09 @ WWW.GROWINGPLACES.ORG

