

HOME & GARDEN

Vegetable recipes

Take full advantage of the payoff

By PAT LEUCHTMAN
Recorder Columnist

The children don't run out to the garden to plant, weed and harvest vegetables because they like the exercise, or working in the sun or communing with nature. They like to eat and so they put up with working in the garden while waiting for the payoff — food, glorious food.

I have a vegetarian daughter who doesn't much care for vegetables, but even she will take a break from peanut butter and pasta when eggplant parmesiana or a soybean casserole with corn, tomatoes, carrots, potatoes and herbs is on the menu. And it is amazing to me that a dozen or so common vegetables can be combined and recombined, their colors, textures and flavors kaleidoscopically changing to suit every culture's cuisine and taste.

Today I'd like to give you just three of our favorite recipes that use a variety of vegetables. (Actually, the pistou or pesto is in a class by itself and I'm sure you'll find your own uses for it; I cannot recommend it highly enough.)

SOUPE AU PISTOU

- 3 qts. water
- 2 cups each: sliced carrots, cut up potato, diced leek or onion
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 cups fresh white shell beans, if available, but then omit the navy beans further on
- 2 cups fresh cut green beans
- 2 cups cooked or canned navy beans or kidney beans
- 1 cup each: sliced zucchini and summer squash

Boil the water, carrots, potato, onion and salt (with beans, if available) for about 40 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Twenty minutes before serving, add the rest of the vegetables and bring to a boil. Simmer for about 15 minutes until

BETWEEN THE ROWS

vegetables are just cooked enough.

PISTOU

- 5 cloves garlic, mashed
- 4 tablespoons tomato puree
- ½ cup fresh basil
- ½ to 2 cups fresh grated Parmesan cheese
- ½ cup olive oil

Puree the basil in a blender with the olive oil and transfer to a mixing bowl. Add the crushed garlic, tomato puree and the Parmesan cheese. This will make an aromatic, flavorful mixture to be used in many ways.

Prepare the pistou while the soup is cooking. To serve, put a spoonful of the pistou in the center of each soup bowl and pour the soup over it. The pistou will then blend with the soup and will turn a plain vegetable meal into something so spectacular that it will be fit for your most discriminating company.

In Italian the pistou is called pesto sauce and it can be served alone on a plateful of pasta, or it can add a special wallop to canned spaghetti sauce — or even homemade. If you don't keep a potful of fresh basil growing on your windowsill all winter, it is possible to blend up batches of basil and olive oil and freeze them in small amounts to be pulled out whenever you need them. Pesto is reason enough to grow a big patch of basil every year. It is delicious.

Somedays when you have finished the canning and the freezing, you will still be left with a little bit of this and a little bit of that and you won't be in the mood to look at another vegetable. Fortunately they can all be blended together into a mixed vegetable relish that is going to look awfully

bright and good when the dark days of winter are upon us.

MIXED VEGETABLE RELISH

- 2 cups carrots, sliced
- 2 cups lima beans
- 2 cups cauliflower florets
- 2 cups sweet corn
- 4 cups sliced small cucumbers
- 2 cups chopped onions
- 2 cups cut up green beans
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 6 sweet peppers, coarsely chopped
- 2 cups sugar
- ¼ cup white mustard seeds
- 2½ teaspoons salt
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- Vinegar

Boil the vegetables in a small amount of water until tender. Add other ingredients including enough vinegar to cover. Boil for 15 minutes. Ladle into hot sterilized jars; seal at once. Makes 10 pints.

These vegetable treats are just a few of the favorites in my family along with a multi-vegetable borscht and broccoli quiche. I would be very interested in hearing some of the other ways my readers use vegetables, especially green tomatoes, because by gazing into my crystal ball I see that season fast approaching.

Readers will also be pleased to remember that this weekend is not only fair weekend, on Saturday (Sept. 12) the Greenfield Garden Club will hold its 6th annual Fall Sale of houseplants at the Burnham Barn, 588 Lamplack Road, Greenfield, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. All plants will come from the homes and gardens of club members and it will be a great opportunity to stock up on houseplants for the coming winter at reasonable prices.

GARDEN CALENDAR

The following information is provided by the Franklin County Extension Service.

Now is the time to:

- take cuttings of outdoor plants such as geraniums, impatiens, coleus and begonias to start plants inside.
- plant a winter cover crop such as annual ryegrass in your garden. Even if you still have vegetables growing, a cover crop can be seeded in vacant areas at a rate of two pounds per 1,000 square feet of garden area.
- start a perennial flower border. The soil is in good condition for planting, and the plants should be well-established before cold weather sets in.

Notes:

- Harvest gourds and pumpkins before the first frost.
- Continue to pick plant materials to dry for use in arrangements. For a fact sheet on drying plant materials, contact the Extension Service office at 774-2902.
- Crickets are entering homes now and can be annoying with their chirpings. They rarely become abundant in a home but will eat paper and garments made of cotton, linen, wool or fur — especially if they are soiled with food or perspiration. They are harmless to people and, when they are in the basement or garage, cause little or no injury. They may become pests in flower gardens. For a fact sheet on controlling crickets, contact the Extension Service.

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