



THE ALLEGED FARM NEWS

5 October 2006

I have twenty tapas dishes to cook in the next two days so I will keep this brief.

You all have shell beans. I believe they are a variety called Tongue of Fire. I start to lose track of such details at this point in the year. Whatever the variety, as the name suggests, the beans need to be shelled, though I guess it could also be interpreted to mean that the shells are the edible part. They are not, as you will discover if you try chewing on one (or all of them, for that matter). If you try eating the shelled beans raw you may come to the conclusion that they are not edible either. However, you will discover that they are not only edible but tasty once they have been boiled until they are soft (about 30 minutes), particularly if you add lots of garlic to the pot. You could also put in some onion or diced carrot or chopped bacon or wine or chicken stock or hot pepper or a little rosemary (using more than a little rosemary in any one dish, particularly fresh rosemary, always strikes me as a mistake). Or you could put all those things in with the beans. Once the beans are soft you can eat them hot or cold.

Broccoli rabe (or raab or rape—we do not seem to have settled on a spelling), like most other cooking greens, tastes best sautéed in olive oil with lots of garlic. Sometimes it can be fairly bitter. You can reduce the bitterness by blanching it first. Or you can add things to it to soften its taste—things such as shell beans and cooked onion, or potatoes, for instance.

The Bogatyr garlic came in third (that is, last) in the garlic tasting at the open house this past Sunday. A variety called Music won. German Porcelain came in second. I like both Music and German Porcelain (I have not had much garlic of any kind I don't like—and any variety of fresh hardneck garlic is going to taste better than the old softneck stuff in the grocery store), but I prefer Bogatyr. If any of you not at the open house prefer one or another of the varieties you should let me know. It will help determine how much of each kind I plant.

I would also be interested to know if you have a favorite potato variety. I recognize that the differences can be subtle and that different types work better with certain cooking methods (Yukons are excellent mashed; fingerlings make great fried potatoes; russets make good baked potatoes and French fries). But I feel confident that the true potato aficionados amongst you will have opinions on the various varieties we have handed out so far (Chieftan, Norland, Chippewah, Yukon Gold, Amey russet, Nicola, Russian Banana fingerling and Satina if I remember correctly).

As for radishes, I do not know that different varieties really taste very different, but I can never resist growing a few weird looking ones, as some of you will see when you examine your bag. Many of you will recognize the pink variety from last week, but some of you have a long red Italian variety (Red Fuoco).

And now, back to the stove.

This week's share: Shell beans, Beets, Broccoli rabe, Cabbage, Carrots, Bogatyr garlic, Onions, Satina potatoes, Radishes, Winter squash, Dill, Rosemary

Fruit share: Flemish pears, Empire apples and cider from O.A. Borden and Sons, Easton.