

# Farm News

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## Around The Farm

Cool mornings lead to warm days and the light and leaves fall gracefully on the farm. The crows scour the freshly mowed fields for treasures unearthed and the cedar waxwings fly in their large flocks, high pitched whistles drawing our eyes upward, as we watch them glide to the next Madrone tree to feast on berries. Deer grow dark brown and thick and all the leaves have mostly fallen from the black oaks. The Acorn Woodpeckers are diligently filling every nook and cranny on the farm with their acorns as we clean up, stow things away, try to make some sense out of our piles in the barn. Time to savor the last weeks of work on the farm, to take pleasure in the most mundane tasks that we all take for granted, and awaken ourselves to the beauty of the work that we do.

Today in your box you'll find a lovely Kabocha-type winter squash. We grow a few varieties of this type of squash including 'Sunshine', which is dark orange and 'Buttercup', which is green. They're both great to use in soups or curries or eaten plain after baking. Also in your boxes will be beets, purple carrots, lettuce, fennel and kale. Enjoy.

## Cooking the Harvest

**Kabocha squash and fennel soup with crème fraiche and candied pumpkin seeds** from *Sunday Suppers at Lucques* by Suzanne Goin

2 lbs of Kabocha squash, 2 medium bulbs of fennel, 4 tablespoons olive oil, 2 tsp fennel seeds, 4 tablespoons butter, 2 cups sliced onions, 1 TBS thyme leaves, 2 chiles de arbol (or other hot chili), 1 bay leaf, ¾ cup sherry, 10 cups water or chicken broth, ¼ cup crème fraiche or sour cream, candied pumpkin seeds, salt and pepper. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Cut the squash in half lengthwise, and remove the seeds. Place the squash cut side down on a cutting board, and use a sharp knife to remove the peel. Slice the squash into 1-inch thick wedges. Toss the squash and fennel with the olive oil, 1 teaspoon salt, and some freshly ground black pepper. Place the vegetables flat on a baking sheet and roast about 35 minutes, until tender and slightly caramelized.

Meanwhile, toast the fennel seeds in a small pan over medium heat 2 to 3 minutes, until the seeds release their aroma and are lightly browned. Pound them coarsely in a mortar. Heat a Dutch oven or soup pot over high heat for 2 minutes. Add the butter, and when it foams, add the onions, fennel seeds, thyme, chiles, bay leaf, 1 teaspoon salt, and a good amount of freshly ground black pepper. Reduce the heat to medium-high, and cook about 10 minutes, stirring often, until the onions are soft, translucent, and starting to color. Add the squash and fennel, and stir to coat with the onions for a minute. Turn the heat back up to high and pour in the sherry. Let it reduce for a minute or two, and then add the stock and 1 tablespoon salt. Bring to a boil, turn down the heat, and simmer 20 minutes. Strain the soup in a colander set in a pot. Put a third of the solids into a blender with ½ cup of the broth. (You will need to puree the soup in batches.) Process the soup at the lowest speed until the squash mixture is pureed. Add another ½ cup broth and then turn the speed up to high and pour in more liquid, a little at a time, until the soup has the consistency of heavy cream. Blend at least a minute on high speed, until the soup is completely smooth and very creamy. Transfer to a container, and repeat with the rest of the ingredients. You may not need all the liquid. Taste for balance and seasoning. Pour the soup into six bowls, spoon some crème fraiche (or sour cream) in the center of each, and scatter the pumpkin seeds over the top.

## Candied Pumpkin Seeds

¼ teaspoon cumin seeds, 2 teaspoons butter, ½ cup raw pumpkin seeds, 1 Tbs sugar, generous pinch of ground cinnamon, paprika, and cayenne pepper, 1 teaspoon honey, salt

Toast the cumin seeds in a small pan over medium heat 2-3 minutes, until the seeds release their aroma and are lightly browned. Pound them coarsely in a mortar. Melt the butter in the cumin pan over medium heat. Add the pumpkin seeds and sugar, then sprinkle the spices and a healthy pinch of salt over them. Toss the pumpkin seeds to coat them well with the butter, and cook for a few minutes, until just after they begin to pop and color slightly. Turn off the heat, and wait 30 seconds. Add the honey, tossing well to coat the seeds. Spread on a plate and let them cool.