



www.ottawafarmersmarket.ca

Phone 613-239-4955

September 21, 2008

Where would we be without Alliums?

Allium is the onion genus, with up to 1250 species, making it one of the largest plant genera in the world. They are perennial bulbous plants that produce chemical compounds (mostly cystein sulfoxide) that give them a characteristic onion or garlic taste and odor, and many are used as food plants. Most bulbous alliums increase by forming little bulbs or "offsets" around the old one, as well as by seed. Several species can form many bulbils (tiny bulbs) in the flowerhead. Members of the genus include many valued vegetables such as onions, shallots, leeks, and herbs such as garlic and chives. A strong "oniony" odor is characteristic of the whole genus, but not all members are equally flavourful. Some *Allium* species are used as border plants.

Buying & Storage Tips

Onions (*Allium cepa*) –onions chosen for storage should be dry on the outside and firm to the touch. The skin should be papery, almost brittle, and the shape smooth, round or oval. Store in mesh bags for maximum air circulation. If kept cool, dry, and in the dark, they should last well for up to one month. Do not store in the refrigerator.

Garlic (*Allium sativum*) – look for bulbs that are firm, plump, non-sprouted and unshrivelled. The paper-like sheath around each clove should be completely closed. Store in a dry, well-ventilated location. Check to make sure they remain clean, firm and dry. Garlic should last several months in the right conditions.

Leeks (*Allium ampeloprasum*) – good quality leeks are firm and smooth, free of blemishes, with leaves unfaded. Rounded bulb bottoms may indicate old age – look for flat bottoms. Before storing, trim any bruised or damaged leaves. Keep damp, loosely wrapped, for up to one week in the refrigerator.

Winners of Last Week's Basket
Draw

Karen Ballum

Patricia Sommerville

Elena Kirilloff

Make sure you put in a ticket
when you visit the Market!

Hoople Creek Farm

Stacey and Jamie have always had an organic vegetable garden, even when they lived in the city, but the opportunity to turn that passion into a business wasn't realized until this year. In the spring of 2007 they bought their farm in Ingleside and started growing vegetables that summer. They began selling at the Market in June of 2008. They have a 56 acre farm, of which 25 are used for pasture and hay for their flock of 26 sheep, which they hope to start marketing next season. They approach their business as an extension of their family garden. They grow everything organically, and try to go beyond the organic standards, approaching the garden with Eliot Coleman's philosophy of plant-positive, rather than pest-negative gardening. With a focus on soil improvement, they believe they can produce better quality and better tasting food, with significantly less energy use than conventional farming. Everything they grow and pick gets individual attention. All of the planting, weeding and picking is done by hand without outside help. They give special attention to their greens by picking them early in the morning before market day, washing them in ice cold well water, then keeping everything chilled until minutes before you buy them. They then pack them in biodegradable paper bags to sell to their customers.

Today's Recipe

Pesto

(Compliments of J. Lindsay Kellock)

3 medium cloves garlic, peeled
2 cups fresh basil leaves, packed
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan-Reggiano
1/4 cup freshly grated Romano
1/2 cup extra virgin Olive oil
1/3 cup pine nuts (optional)

In a food processor or blender, combine basil, garlic and two tablespoons of olive oil. Pulse several times. Add cheeses and process, while slowly adding the rest of the oil. Set aside. Heat a small skillet until medium hot, add pine nuts, stir briskly with a wooden spoon until they are lightly browned. Chop lightly and add to the basil mixture, stirring to mix. Serve over hot pasta, or on crusty bread, over vegetables, in soups, over potatoes or meat dishes. If desired, freeze in ice cube tray, transfer frozen cubes to a plastic bag. Keeps about 3 months.

Next Week - we feature apples, the versatile fruit enjoyed in so many ways!

**See you at the Market on
Thursday from 1 – 6 p.m.**