

I am Captain Curc(urbit)



Diagram A

... The Garden, the final frontier. These are the tales of the Ranch starship. Our mission: to build gardens in strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new organic varieties and to boldly go where no gardeners have gone before...

Greetings from the Ranch Starship. This week our galactic contacts report hot weather, increased water consumption, and an abundance of Cucurbitaceae sightings. The cucurbit plant family includes such vegetables as cucumber (Diagram A) and squash and fruits like the honeydew and cantaloupe. We expect copious amounts of each to be present

at the rendezvous location on Friday at 1600 hours. The extreme heat seems to aid in their productivity, a phenomena that we have our top scientists exploring at present.

In order to protect our curcubit bounty, we've erected an electric fence to eliminate varmint problems (Diagram B). Thus far all encounters with raccoons, coyotes, and deer have ended in victory for the Ranch Starfleet. During a routine fence inspection, three of our bravest galactic fighters were trapped by the barrier for hours until their fearless leader beamed them back up to the ship. This concludes our weeks de-brief.

Signed, Captain Curc(urbit)



Diagram B

While I don't have the wit to continue this newsletter in the epical voice of Captain Kirk, we are excited to share our abundance of squash, cucumbers, and melons (Diagram C)! Our curcubit sections are lush and currently kept safe by the electric fence our livestock department helped us erect this week.

One of the interesting features of our garden is how it changes every year. Some of these changes are not planned (i.e. replanting due to flooding) but most are by design. A great example is our use of crop rotation. Each year we rotate which plant family is located in which section. Our basic rotation is composed of a four year cycle where we first plant solanaceae crops (tomatoes, peppers, eggplant), followed in the second year by brassica crops (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage), succeeded by the Cucurbitaceae crops listed above. The



final year we let the field rest, usually planting a ni-

trogen fixing cover-crop and something lush and fast growing to reduce the weed population and add organic matter to the soil. Crop rotations are a great way to cut down on fungus that may grow in the soil, keep pests from congregating in a particular area, and recharge our soils nutrients every few years. We think Captain Kirk would be proud of these innovative, "next-generation" solutions.

We've tried to let our "pioneering" spirit in the garden this week bleed over into the newsletter, so we've included a few novel recipes for you to try. The Paletas (Mexican popsicles) are delicious! And don't be scared of the pickling recipe; it is quick and easy.

Stay cool,
Your Gardeners



In Your Basket This Week

Peppers	Eggplant	Okra
Squash/Melon	Cucumbers	
Sunflowers	Zinnias	



Spicy Honey and Cucumber Palzeta

1/2 medium honeydew, peeled and roughly chopped
1/2 cucumber, peeled and roughly chopped
1 jalapeño, seeded and cleaned, roughly chopped
1/2 cup sugar (optional)
1 lime sliced (optional)

Puree honeydew, cucumber, and jalapeño in a blender. Add sugar to the liquid if it is too spicy or not sweet enough. Fill up Popsicle molds. Place in freezer and wait patiently for 6 hours to freeze. Serve with a slice of lime.

Makes 6 Popsicles



Korean Quick Pickles

This quick cucumber pickle recipe is ready in twenty minutes, and the sweet and salty flavor makes it the perfect side dish. With just four ingredients, you can make this really snappy, crunchy cucumber salad that is good with Korean meals and sandwiches.

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 25 minutes

4 small cucumbers

3 Tbsp. sugar

1 Tbsp. salt

1/4 cup vinegar

Cut cucumbers into uniform strips or round slices (use mandoline for thinner strips)

Sprinkle cucumbers with sugar and salt and toss gently to combine.

Add vinegar, stirring to coat all cucumbers.

Let sit about 20 minutes before serving.

Cold Yogurt and Cucumber Soup

1 medium-sized cucumber (about 1/2 lb.)

2 c. yogurt

2 tsp. white vinegar

1 tsp. olive oil

- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. finely cut fresh mint
- 1 tsp. finely cut fresh dill
- 1 clove garlic, crushed

With a small, sharp knife, peel cucumber and slice it lengthwise into halves. Scoop out the seeds by running the tip of a teaspoon down the center of each half. Discard the seeds and grate the cucumber coarsely. There should be about 1 cup. In a deep bowl, stir the yogurt with a whisk or large spoon until it is completely smooth. Gently but thoroughly beat in the grated cucumber, vinegar, olive oil, mint, dill, garlic and salt. Do not overbeat. Taste for seasoning, adding more salt if necessary. Refrigerate the soup for at least two hours, or until it is thoroughly chilled. Serve 2 to 4.

Fried Okra

- 10 pods okra, sliced in 1/4 inch pieces
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil

In a small bowl, soak okra in egg for 5 to 10 minutes. In a medium bowl, combine cornmeal, salt, and pepper.

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat.

Dredge okra in the cornmeal mixture, coating evenly. Carefully place okra in hot oil; stir continuously. Reduce heat to medium when okra first starts to brown, and cook until golden. Drain on paper towels.



Any and all recipe suggestions are welcome at CSA@heifer.org