

# FARMER IN THE FIELD



## SWEET, TENDER SUMMER SQUASH

By Bonnie Swank

July 2009

This is the first time I've put the brakes on an article and went in a completely different direction. What changed my mind? I asked Dick to pick some summer squash to go with the halibut we had gotten from the farmers market. Closing up the store I grabbed some shelled peas, a yellow onion and a few heirloom tomatoes. Sautéing the thinly sliced onion in olive oil I started to prepare the squash, yellow and pale green scalloped squash, dark green zucchini and a creamy green Mediterranean variety named Magda. My knife sliced through them as if I was cutting butter. And so I started to create what turned out to be a delightfully fresh summer dinner.

Summer squash are the fruits of the species *Cucurbita pepo* although they are known as a vegetable in the culinary world. The name "summer squash" refers to the short storage life of these squashes, unlike the winter squashes which are considered long keepers. How many of you have had a squash plant in your back yard? I'm sure the story is the same with everyone, you forget to check your plant for a day or two and suddenly you're picking monster squash. You hand them out to your friends, family and neighbors. Suddenly there is an abundance of zucchini bread being handed out at work, church, on the street corner.....

Summer squash are a subset of squashes that are harvested when immature (while the rind is still tender and edible). If you can pick your squash when young and tender you

will never tire of these delicious summer flavors, and neither will your friends, family and neighbors.

Did You Know? Every part of the squash plant can be eaten, including the leaves and tender shoots which can be cooked in omelets or soups for example.

Yes the (skin) of the summer squash is in fact a rind, although my mother-in-law doesn't believe me.