

Summer corn salad

BY BRIAN MEDFORD

I remember walking through the corn stalks in my grandparents' garden. I had yet to hit 6 foot 3 inches tall and the stalks towered over me. The ears of corn felt like magic. I still can't explain how the plant knows to grow that way.

I'm sure there was a make-believe world I dreamt up among those corn stalks, although I can't remember it now. It was hot, at the height of summer vacation and I was in my grandparents' backyard. That's enough of a memory for me.

More recently, my friend, known as the other Brian, raised a container bed vegetable garden in his driveway. He's masterminded a microclimate in Seattle that rivals the Southern summer. Over the past few years, he's endeavored to grow corn. I will not criticize his effort. I'll just say the results have been fodder for conversation.

Perhaps the most startling revelation about the other Brian's driveway corn field happened one evening when I received an impromptu garden tour. A lady with her dog walked by and commented, "You know what they say: knee high by the Fourth of July," then walked off.

It was almost August at this point. Even so, my friend and I looked at each other in disbelief. Of course it's not knee high. It's the Northwest and the corn is growing in 4 inches of dirt in a plastic container.

Growing vegetables should be a delight, not a source of criticism. Some things will work, some won't work. I attempted to grow okra in Seattle one summer, and the results were uninspiring. I achieved one okra pod from five or six plants. It didn't



Grape tomatoes and basil leaves garnish a bed of sweet summer corn.

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stop me from frying the single pod up and savoring my tiny bounty. If your crop flourishes or languishes, let's count it all

as joy.

Whether it's corn from the garden, corn from the farmers market or grocery store, corn means summer has arrived. Grill it, saute it or put it in a salad. And if it's not knee high, you still gave it your all. Celebrate corn and celebrate summer.

Summer corn salad

Adapted from Genevieve Ko, serves four to six

Ingredients

- Five ears of sweet corn
- 1 pint grape tomatoes, halved
- One lime
- 3 to 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1/2 cup fresh basil leaves, torn
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro leaves, torn

Preparation

Shuck the corn and boil or steam it on the stovetop just until brighter in color, about 2 to 3 minutes. Cut the kernels off the cobs, transfer them to a large bowl and add the tomatoes.

Finely grate lime zest over the corn mixture, then squeeze the juice from the lime all over. Add in the oil and a generous pinch of salt. Mix well, then tear the herbs over the salad and gently fold them in. Season to taste with salt and serve or refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 24 hours.

Brian Medford is a baker, teacher and the owner of The Rusty Cup in Astoria. He has lived in the Northwest for more than 20 years and delights in Southern cooking. Contact him at blmedford@gmail.com.

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