KITCHEN GARDENERS INTERNATIONAL

Published on *Kitchen Gardeners International* (http://kgi.org)

Pugliese Pepper Relish

Sun, 02/20/2005 - 07:15 -- Kitchy
Introduction:

Although this appears at first glance to be quite labor intensive, the labors are spread out over several days and the result is well worth any effort. Do make this when peppers in the market are fresh from local farms and gardens, not shipped in from far away. The flavors will be that much better and more intense. The balance of sweet and hot peppers is really up to you: If you have mildly spicy peppers, like New Mexico or Anaheim peppers, for instance, make Pepone with those on their own; but if, on the other hand, the only chiles available are fiercely hot--like Scotch bonnets--you might want to cut down on the quantity of chilies and increase the amount of sweet peppers.

Preparation:

Wash and thoroughly dry the peppers and chiles, then cut them in half, discarding the seeds and white internal membranes. Chop the peppers, chiles, celery, carrots, onion, and rather coarsely by hand. Transfer the chopped vegetables to a bowl and add the salt. Set aside for 24 hours, but do not refrigerate. The vegetables will give off quite a lot of liquid. At the end of that time, turn into a colander, rinse the salt off thoroughly under running water, and set to drain. Transfer to a bowl, cover with the vinegar, and set aside for another 24 hours. Have ready 4 pint (or 8 half-pint) sterile canning jars. Drain the vegetables in a colander, but do not rinse. Fill the jars with vegetables, then olive oil, which should completely cover the chopped vegetables. Push a table knife into the jar in several places to get rid of any air bubbles. Screw down the lid and proceed with the remaining jars. Process the jars for 20 minutes in a water bath canner. Remove from heat and let cool. Then remove the jars from the canning kettle. Set aside in a cool, dark place. The Pepone will be ready to use in 2 weeks. Use as a condiment for any meat or fish dish.

Ingredients:

6 pounds green and red sweet peppers2 medium carrots, peeled1 quart white wine vinegar1 large white onion2 cups extra-virgin olive oil15 fresh hot red chilies4 plump garlic cloves3 celery stalks2 tablespoons sea salt

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