

## Pizza from local farm produce

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*Emma Montoya, who raises fruits and vegetables organically at the In the Beginning Farm that she and her family have created in Palominas, is shown here stuffing squash blossoms with slices of mozzarella cheese to place on top of a traditional Mexican dish called Calabacitas made with young summer squash, onions and garlic and stuffed squash blossoms. (Photo by Valerie McCaffrey)*

**BY VALERIE MCCAFFREY**  
For the Herald/Review

Summer is here and fruits and vegetables are ripening in the fields and orchards around the county. Taste the season with a Zuke Pizza. This specialty pizza will be offered by Bisbee's Bella Roma Pizza for the month of July, made with baby zucchini and heirloom Lemon, Zephyr or Tatume summer squash, Italian purple garlic and Candy Apple Red onions grown by Jim and Emma Montoya at In the Beginning Farm in Palominas.

The Montoyas have been steadily increasing the amount of "organic" produce that they sell at the Bisbee and Sierra Vista Farmers Markets.

Emma is originally from Mexico, so she brings with her a wealth of culinary and agricultural knowledge. The farm specializes in raising heirloom and desert

varieties with seeds gleaned from Native Seeds/SEARCH, the Tucson seed bank and other seed saving organizations around the country.

The couple has been perfecting the Italian purple garlic they raise every year and hope to offer a Garlic Planting field day this September to share knowledge of this crop that does very well here.

My husband Dave and I visited the Montoyas on their farm early on Independence Day. After touring the fields with Jim and Emma, searching the rows to locate several varieties of young melons, admiring the purple potato flowers, harvesting some onions (ready when all but three leaves are brown and drying over), picking some yellow squash blossoms and sampling yucca blossoms which are a wild salad ingredient, we were treated to Emma's version of "calabacitas," a popular Mexican dish. While it was cooking we sipped Agua de Sandia made from watermelon (or cantaloupe) slices blended with ice and served with a sprig of spearmint.

At both farmers markets this week, the Montoyas will offer squash blossoms, Zephyr, Tatume (a sweet and nutty Mexican variety) and Lemon squash, purple Italian (medium), Siberian (hot) and mild elephant garlic, French shallots (huge this year), green, purple and yellow bush beans, yellow Granex, Candy Apple Red and White Sweet Contessa onions as well as "epazote" (an herb good for the stomach that aids with the digestion of dried beans), dill, sage and spearmint.

After the farmers market in Bisbee last Saturday I stopped by Bella Roma Pizza, conveniently located at 9 Naco Road in Old Bisbee to get a Zuke Pizza. I met Rita Shipley and Oliver Searchfield the owners who are members of Slow Food USA and believe in supporting sustainable agriculture. They are frequent shoppers at the Bisbee Farmers Market and this summer started a Farmers Market Series of specialty pizzas featuring different vegetables grown by local farmers.

I enjoyed the pizza made from a ball of dough (prepared fresh daily) and shaped while I watched. The couple roast their own tomatoes for their sauce and use only natural ingredients in their pizzas and salads and no high fructose corn or hydrogenated fats.

Visit [www.bisbeepizza.com](http://www.bisbeepizza.com) to check out their menu and pizza special. Next month they will offer a Baba Ghanoush pizza made with the Montoya's eggplant.