



August 7, 2004

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Fair Share Farm CSA Newsletter

This Week's Share:

Full Share:

'Silver Queen' sweet corn
Green beans or baby leeks
Tomatoes
Eggplant
Peppers
Fingerling potatoes
Melon
Cucumbers
Basil

Partial Share:

'Silver Queen' sweet corn
Eggplant or peppers
Fingerling potatoes
Melon
Sweet onions
Basil

Next week: look for more melons, sweet peppers, tomatoes and garlic. New will be okra.

Autumn on our minds

With this autumn-like weather, it seems like we should be eating broccoli, cutting firewood, and filling the root cellar instead of weeding, mowing, and enjoying summer veggies like melons and sweet corn. As it is, we are just about done planting seeds for the fall. While some fall vegetables have been growing for months, like winter squash, potatoes, garlic and onions, crops like lettuce, the brassicas (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower), and greens are planted around this time of year. The main planting of fall broccoli was planted in the fields last week. Cauliflower and cabbage are going out this week. We grow Toscano kale in the fall that we really love. Its full of sweet flavor. So we have a bunch of it about ready to leave the greenhouse and be planted outside. Except for some quick growers like lettuce, arugula, and radishes, all other fall crops will in the ground by the end of the week.

Autumn is also the time of year to think about planting and/or dividing perennials. With all the rain this year we have realized that our perennial herb area is in the wrong spot. It was so very soggy

and most herbs like well-drained soil. We'll be moving most of them over to fields on higher ground in the fall.

We have also begun to plan for a small orchard of fruit trees, cane fruit, and strawberries. Many of you have mentioned how much you would like to have more fruit in your shares, and we are listening! We are now busy researching varieties that do best in our area. Typically, fruit trees are high maintenance with many pest and disease problems that frustrate organic growers. If you know of a fruit tree that has good pest resistance, great tasting fruit, and good yields, let us know. We will also be consulting some experts in the field including area farmers and the University extension service.

Survey says:

Keep turning in those surveys. Your input is very important to us. It helps us plan for what to put in the shares this fall as well as next year. And we've already incorporated some of your great ideas into our plans for the remainder of the year.

Thanks for taking the time to fill out the surveys and return them to us. Let us know if you have lost yours and need another one. In this year of elections, make sure your voice is heard.

SAVE THE DATE!

Fair Share Farm CSA First Annual

End of the Season Dinner

Saturday, October 23rd, mid/late afternoon

Celebrate with us and your fellow members the completion of the first year of our experiment in Community Supported Agriculture.

stay tuned for more info soon

Calendar

August 18th — CSA Distribution, Crossroads Market

August 21st— CSA Distribution, Fair Share Farm

Recipes

Classic Pesto

We planted a lot of basil this year to see how it would do over the entire season. The first 2 plantings are now starting to go to flower, the first step towards dying back, and also the point in time when herbs are at their peak of flavor, so we couldn't pass up handing out this large bunch of green freshness.

- ◆ 1 cup packed fresh basil leaves
- ◆ 3 tablespoons pine nuts or chopped walnuts, toasted lightly and cooled
- ◆ 1 large garlic clove, chopped
- ◆ 3 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- ◆ 1/3 olive oil

Put all of the ingredients in a food processor and blend with salt and pepper to taste until you have a coarse paste. Use it on pasta, pizza, veges, as a sandwich spread, etc.

If you want to freeze it, omit the Parmesan and add it after defrosting.

Roasted Peppers

One great way to enjoy peppers, especially the thick walled ones, is to roast them. There are many ways to do this, and also some hazards to be aware of.

First, you need to blister the skin of the pepper. Some people stick it with a fork and roast it like a marshmallow over a stovetop gas flame or grill. Another method is to clean the peppers (cut in half, take out seeds) and grill them, skin side down. A convenient way that I like is to broil them.

Your Share Items

Melons

We are happy that for the past several weeks (and at least 1 or 2 more), we have been able to give everyone some melons. Here's a little about each one.

Cantaloupe and Tropical Melons

We are growing several varieties of cantaloupe, some tough for even us to tell apart. The larger ones are the heirloom *Hale's Best* and the more oval *Retato degli ortolani* from Italian seed. They have a really great fragrance, juicy flesh and a nice flavor. We have found the small melons, *Minnesota Midget* and *Charentais* also share these nice traits, and are sweeter. We were only able to get a few of the smaller melons, due to disease, but will work to be able to grow melons like these on a consistent basis in the future.

You clean them first, and then place them on a broiler rack (skins up) in your toaster or conventional oven.

When the skins are charred black (15 minutes or so), put the peppers in a closed container (a bowl with a plate over it), and let them cool. The skins should then come off easy.

Be very careful at each step if using hot peppers. We know members who couldn't sleep at night after stripping the skin off some hot ones because their hands were on fire. Wearing latex gloves is best, but cutting them under running water, or in a tub of flowing water is also good. Remember to keep your hands away from your eyes.

Boule d'Or translates to "golden perfection", and we've found that when it is perfectly ripe, it is. It is a large, round, bright yellow melon with a pale green and white flesh that can be candy sweet. It is an heirloom from at least 1895.

Passport is a similar, but more fragrant variety that ripened first for us both this year and last. It has a tropical taste, and many of you have said you liked it.

The baseball sized striped red melon you may have had as a choice is called *Tigger*. It's flamboyant rind is the casing for a white flesh that is good for a single serving. Also "tropical" in flavor.

Watermelons—red flesh

Our watermelon varieties numbered seven this year, and all have done rather well. The smaller melons include; *Golden Midget*, with an oval, football-sized shape and a bright yellow, lightly striped rind: the dark green *Sugar Baby*, which gets more volley ball sized, hopefully being able to fit into your fridge easily; and small but mature versions of the larger varieties.

One of our nicest large melons is Moon and Stars. It has a dark green rind with a heavy spattering of yellow spots, making it resemble a night sky. Even the leaves of the plants have yellow spots.

The *Asahi Miyako* is a rare Japanese seed we got from our Italian seed supplier. We've yet to try these, but they have a light and dark green striped rind and are supposed to be as sweet as they come. *Crimson Sweet* is a similar watermelon we are comparing for disease resistance, taste, and ripening time.

Watermelon—yellow and cream flesh

We have two yellow fleshed watermelons that we are trying this year, *Yellow Doll* and *Cream of Saskatchewan*. They are very similar, both inside and out. Each have a green rind with dark green stripes, and a yellow, sweet, juicy flesh. We are trying to keep them apart, so we can hopefully determine their subtleties.

Potatoes

A little on potatoes...we are slowly digging them out of the ground. The ones we have right now are great—*Red Thumb Fingerlings*. Nice red skin, fingerling shape, and a pink flesh with red streaking; and *Yellow Banana*, brown skin with gold flesh. Both are great for potato salad, or freshly steamed with some herbs and butter.

Peppers

We've been straining to give you a variety of peppers, and it's about to start (they've been slow to ripen.). We have hot, sweet, frying, drying, green, red, yellow, orange and purple peppers. We have been tasting them and are very pleased. All of the peppers have a good crispness and texture, and then their unique features begin to show themselves. Enjoy them now, I'll explain in detail next week.

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