

September 7, 2005

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Fair Share Farm CSA Newsletter

This Week's Share:

Full Share:

Tomatoes
Fingerling potatoes
Leeks
Yellow wax beans or 'Rattlesnake' beans
Garlic
Summer squash
Sweet peppers
Italian parsley, oregano or lovage
Okra or eggplant or cherry tomatoes

Partial Share:

Tomatoes
Fingerling potatoes
Leeks
Beans or Squash or Peppers
Garlic
Italian parsley, oregano or lovage

Next week: beans, green tomatoes, carrots, onions, and shallots.

Calendar

September 14th— Distribution, Wednesdays

September 17th— Distribution, Saturday

GAS PRICES & LOCAL FOOD

Every conversation we had in the last week seemed to include the tragedy unfolding in the Gulf States and the rising prices at the pump. Where gas prices will go in the future is up for debate, but it has got us thinking about our place as farmers in our energy-intensive culture.

We often use the word "sustainable" to describe our farming practices. We do this in part to avoid being sued, as legally we cannot use the word "organic" without going thru an elaborate and expensive certification process with the USDA. Sustainability is also a better word to describe our intent. We not only don't use pesticides, we farm with the intent to use as little non-renewable resources as possible. Instead of buying petroleum-based fertilizers, we plant cover crops. Instead of spraying herbicides, we cultivate & mulch. We use crop rotation and various barriers to protect our crops from pests instead of toxic pesticides.

Large-scale commercial agriculture, whether organic or not, is dependant on the fuel costs associated with farming on a large scale. The big farms in California use an incredible amount of energy in the field. When produce is picked by the hands of

the farm laborers there is usually a piece of equipment involved that receives the produce, sometimes even with its own washing & packing area and a refrigeration unit. Some crops, including certain varieties of green beans, have been developed to produce all their fruit at once so that it can be mechanically harvested. Once picked, the average vegetable travels 1,300 miles from farm to plate, usually refrigerated the entire time. All of this energy adds up and often exceeds the actual energy held in the food itself.

We see Community Supported Agriculture as being one of the most sustainable ways to feed our community, as well as communities around the world. Instead of an energy-intensive food system with a few large-scale farms in California and farther shipping our food to us, we envision a future when local and regional networks are able to provide for a majority of our community's needs. We're not there, yet, though. Our farm does use non-renewable energy. Gas powers our tractor, mower, and irrigation pump. Last year we spent over \$300 on farm-related fuel and we expect that to be up this year with more land under cultivation and rising prices. All of our electricity payments go to a wind farm

in Kansas through an option with Platte Clay Electricity Co-op. Our walk-in cooler and the ventilation fan in the greenhouse run on this electricity. We do not own a refrigerated truck, nor do we need one. Once each week we drive to Kansas City with the veggies packed in our van and once each week we drive to the Liberty distribution at the Barth's home. Almost all produce you receive from the farm was either picked that morning or the day before and has traveled less than 50 miles (40 miles to K.C., 20 miles to Liberty, and even less if you pick up at the farm).

THIS WEEK AT THE FARM

The soil dried out enough to not only get the cover crops spaded in, but we've already started irrigating. The fall crops got a good drink this week and continue to look promising. We may have radishes as early as next week. The first fall planting of arugula mostly drowned, but a second is on the way. All of the seeds for fall all already sprouting and most of the transplants are out of the greenhouse. Packs of goldfinches bulking up for winter are grazing the spent sunflowers. The okra is as high as our heads.

Recipes

Potato Salad with Lovage

No doubt everyone in the CSA has a recipe for potato salad. We would like you to share them with us, as we share this one with you.

- ◇ 1-1/2 lb potatoes
- ◇ 1 large red onion, cut into bite-size pieces
- ◇ 2 cups peppers, cut into bite size pieces
- ◇ 2 pickles, chopped
- ◇ 2 cloves of garlic, chopped fine
- ◇ 1 tsp salt & 1 tsp pepper
- ◇ 1 tbsp mayonnaise
- ◇ 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- ◇ 1 tbsp olive oil
- ◇ 1/4 cup lovage or parsley, chopped

Cut the potatoes into similar size pieces and steam until tender. Cool and cut into bite-size pieces. In a large bowl mix the potatoes, onions, peppers, garlic, pickles, salt and pepper. In a separate bowl mix the mayo, mustard and olive oil to make the dressing. Add the dressing to the salad, top with the lovage/parsley and stir together. If you have never tried lovage before, start with less than 1/4 cup and see what you think. Add more salt the pepper to taste. You can also add such things as capers, chopped hard boiled eggs and/or celery.

Garden Minestrone (*adapted from the Kathryn Conrad recipe*)

From member Ann Flynn, this a great

way to make a delicious soup from whatever you might have in the fridge, as well as this week's share.

- ◇ 2 tsp olive oil
- ◇ 1 large onion, chopped
- ◇ 2 tbsp fresh oregano
- ◇ 4 garlic cloves, minced
- ◇ 1 medium summer squash or zucchini
- ◇ 1 cup chopped carrots
- ◇ 1 large sweet pepper
- ◇ 4 cups finely chopped tomatoes
- ◇ 1-1/2 cups snap beans, cleaned and snapped in half
- ◇ 4 cups of water or broth (vegetable or chicken)
- ◇ 1-1/2 cups spaghetti, broken into 2 inch pieces, or small macaroni
- ◇ 1 cup chopped Swiss chard, spinach or sorrel
- ◇ Salt a pepper to taste

Heat the oil in a large soup pot over medium high heat. Add onion to pan and sauté 3 minutes or until softened. Add oregano and garlic, sauté 1 minute. Stir in squash, carrots, beans and peppers. Sauté 5 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Add 1 cup of water or broth to the tomatoes, mix, and add to the soup pot.

Add 3 cups of water/broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Add pasta and cook at a simmer for 10 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in chard/spinach. Add more water if needed.

Top with grated cheese and parsley.

Your Share Items

Leeks

One thing that we like to hear from new members are comments like "I never tried tomatillos/kohlrabi/heirloom tomatoes/etc. but now I really like them." Such has been the case with leeks. In the mid-season survey, 15 out of 27 respondents checked "Give Me More!" in the vegetable part of the survey.

Except for our perennial plants and trees, they are in the ground longer than any other vegetable we grow. We start the plants in the greenhouse in February. We planted 800 row feet of leeks this year. Half of these we will harvest over the next 6 to 8 weeks, and the other half we will mulch with straw over the winter, and dig them for your first share next May. We plan on giving you leeks at least 3 times before the end of this season.

There are several good leek recipes in the newsletter archive, including Potato Leek Soup (Week 18 2004) and Angel Hair Pasta with Leeks (Week 1 2005).

Hot Peppers

There are some things that we grow that we are pretty sure not everybody wants, one of them is hot peppers. But we grow them because we see them as an essential ingredient in the kitchen. There are lots of types of hot peppers, and here we are talking about the really hot ones, such as **Serrano** and **Thai Hot Drying Pep-**

pers. They are generally small or long and skinny. The way we often use them is by dropping 1 or 2 into a dish, and fishing them out at the end. It helps add a zing to a dish, while keeping you from biting into a big chunk of hot pepper (as long as you remember to remove them!) For the rest of the season, we will have an excess of them in the herb box. They will be available both dried and fresh. If you get the fresh ones and don't use them right away, put them out in a warm, dry place and they should dry down. You can them store them in a jar for a year or two.

Lovage

An old herb used medicinally, in savory dishes or made into candy, lovage is for us a substitute for celery (which we have not been able to grow well yet). A relative of parsley, it's flavor is somewhat strong, but it is a nice addition to dishes like potato salad and cole slaw. Use it sparingly at first. Store it like celery in the vegetable crisper.

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