



Farm Updates

Mother Nature has given us another archetypical fall week perfect for various fall projects and harvesting the continued bounty. This week I worked on cleaning up plants that are done producing and harvesting items that will not withstand the frost. Even though the eggplants did not have a wildly successful year, everyone is getting a taste of this popular Mediterranean ingredient today along with an assortment of sweet peppers. I have also been working on pulling up various “materials” around the farm—quick hoop wickets, row fabric, weights for the row fabric, irrigation tubing, marker stakes, cattle panel trellises, posts, drip tape and its end caps, and other odds and ends. It is a little bittersweet to see so many veggies coming to an end but at the same time I have been installing more quick hoops and row fabric to help protect lettuce for the remaining two boxes, and in a fit of enthusiasm I even direct seeded a few “surprise greens” taking a gamble on the weather for the end of the month. Lastly, I have been working on all sorts of surprises for the storage shares coming up at the end of the month. Don't forget to either mail in your payment or hand it to me at pick up. This week is your last chance to let me know if you are interested so I can get everything ready. The first week of October has disappeared in a flash reminding me of the ephemeral quality of fall.

A Word on GMOs

It might be the corn and soybean harvest that has been starting up around me or the type of news that I pay attention to, but lately I have been contemplating the use of plants that are genetically modified to tolerate the spraying herbicides and other chemicals. As a fellow

farmer told me this summer, nobody ever wants to spray their crops with chemicals. It isn't fun or satisfying even when using organically accepted biological sprays. Unfortunately these methods once touted as groundbreaking in terms of weed management have created a cycle of having to use even more powerful chemicals to combat weeds that have developed immunity. I feel fortunate to be surrounded by cropland that is grown without the use of these technologies and farmers who support organic growing-- it is better for the planet and for the people who are farming the land. Glyphosate (aka round-up) is known to be carcinogenic, and other chemicals now being used in agriculture (2,4-D—a systemic herbicide and ingredient in Agent Orange used in the Vietnam War) are even worse. Countries all over Europe are attempting to ban GMO seeds in the wake of a United Nations report that small scale organic farming is the only way to feed the world in a growing food crisis, but our own government is telling us that GMOs are the only way we can feed a growing global population. I am not sure how to interpret government aid for sustainable small scale farming when it seems to be in direct conflict with the policies that support large Ag and the use of chemicals and patented GMO seeds. There is an obvious shift in the country among consumers and I hope that policy makers listen to the growing movement. Even though our CSA is still small (we are about 33 members strong), I feel so lucky to be able to produce real food for real people, and even at this point in the season I still get really excited when I feel I am delivering you a nutritious, chemical free and delicious box of veggies. Do you feel that GMOs are an important issue and fairly represented in the media? Was it an influence in your decision to join a CSA? I would love to hear your input in the discussion.

Box 18 Items

Kale: Tis the season for perfect looking kale. Use it in the soup recipe below or add it to any hearty dish for extra depth.

Banana Peppers: Assorted sweet banana peppers would be wonderful roasted with eggplant, tomato and onion or as a snack. Peppers do not tolerate frost so I have picked them all but they will keep for a couple weeks in the fridge.

Eggplant: Eggplants may be small but they add some great meaty texture to any vegetarian dish.

Leeks: Leeks are one of my favorite fall alliums for their delicate flavor somewhere between and onion, shallot and scallion. Make sure to rinse chopped leeks in cold water so the dirt is removed from between the layers.

Yukon Gold Potatoes: Boil the potatoes and then toss with butter, parsley, salt and pepper. Or add them to the soup recipe below.

White onion: White onions have a longer storage potential.

Parsley: This herb from the same family as celery and carrots is a great compliment to your fall soups and stews or sprinkled on roasted veggies.

Tomatoes: This is officially the last week of tomatoes. What a bounty this summer. I am already excited to try some of the same and new varieties next season.

Yellow Onions: Yellow onions do not store well but taste delicious. Use it in the soup recipe below.

Radish Duo: Great for a snack or in a salad. Don't forget that the greens are also edible!

Small Squash: This size is perfect to stuff with veggies, rice, ground meat, herbs and spices.

Recipes

Potato Kale Soup

2 Tablespoons olive oil
2 Yellow onions diced
5-10 Garlic cloves chopped
1 leek, cleaned and thinly sliced
2 teaspoons kosher salt

1 pound Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and diced
6 cups vegetable or chicken stock
¾ pounds kale with ribs removed and chopped
½ teaspoon fresh cracked black pepper
Hot paprika and olive oil for garnish

Heat olive oil in a large wide saucepan over medium-low heat. Add onions, garlic, and leek, season with 1 teaspoon salt, and cook over low heat covered and stirring frequently, until vegetables are cooked down and really soft with no color, up to 10 minutes.

Add potatoes, stock and remaining 1 teaspoon salt, and simmer over low heat until potatoes are fully cooked, about 30 minutes. Let potato leek mixture cool to room temperature, then puree it in a food processor or blender, working in batches as needed, or directly in the pot with an immersion blender, until completely smooth.

Return puree to original saucepan and bring it to a simmer over medium heat. Stir in the kale and season with salt and pepper. Serve soup in deep bowls and garnish with a sprinkle of hot paprika and a drizzle of olive oil if desired. Serve with a wedge of crusty bread. Adapted from this Sunday's Star Tribune.