



CSA Reminders

We are already over one third of the way through the season's deliveries and feel great about how things are progressing. We are open to your feedback on what items you are liking, how the logistics are working for you, or any other suggestions. Thank you for keeping the boxes in good condition from week to week. Please remember to bring them back on Wednesdays when you pick up so we can refill them for you.

History and Farming

In last week's newsletter I discussed briefly the fact that we farm the way we do to connect with nature and with our heritage. Much of my personal inspiration comes from the year I spent in France learning about their food systems through shopping at grocery stores, markets, bakeries and butcher shops, working on farms, and taking place in the ceremony that is dinner in a French household. The culture impacted me deeply and I became determined that I could live the same quality of life in the United States that I witnessed in France.

During the 1800s, Paris, France was an epicenter of vegetable production exemplifying many characteristics of today's local food movement. Produce was grown in gardens surrounding the city center and included a wide selection of in season and out-of-season veggies using season extension techniques. The system was sustainable because farmers used "transportation byproducts" (horse manure mixed with straw from stables) as both a heat source and fertility booster. Additionally this system was so productive that it fed not only the citizens of Paris but produce was even exported to England! (Source: The Winter Harvest Handbook by Elliot Coleman) France outside of Paris is also known for its varied micro climates, fertile soils, and the resulting high quality food.

While France has found ways to maintain the values of family mealtime, food quality and integrity of production methods, we often lose sight of these ideals in the United States. Vegetable gardening in the U.S. has strong roots in the depression era and during wartime when victory gardens were considered patriotic. These days

agricultural land is dedicated to sprawling fields of corn and soybeans that lack a human connection with the soil, weeds, insects, and biodiversity. "Field work" commonly consists of spending time in a climate controlled, GPS driven tractor instead of actually digging in the dirt, and in the Midwest it is rare to see a fieldworker among the corn and soybeans on any given day. The CSA gives us the opportunity to farm in a way that would please our ancestors and to become intimately connected to our microclimate. Even though I have only been farming at Ridgeroll Farm (where we grow our produce) for this season I have already learned so much about our little corner of the world. We use some modern technology (for example our drip irrigation system) but we have also found that sometimes it is best not to reinvent the wheel. I hope the CSA has helped you look at food and mealtime in a new light and to enjoy some of the simple pleasures that our ancestors would have also enjoyed.

Box 6 Items

Red Onion: This fresh onion is bursting with flavor for your salad, salsa, fried with potatoes, or any of your favorite onion uses.

Potatoes: Please enjoy these red potatoes!

Beans: Green or purple (although purple beans will turn green with cooking). Green beans have a light crunch. Purple beans have a nutty flavor.

Carrots: Prepare for a short gap in carrots until our next crop is ready.

Summer Squash: Transform squash into ribbons for a faux spaghetti or grate it up and add to an egg bake.

Cucumber: Larger cucumbers this week would be great in a salad with the red onion or in the creamy cucumber salad recipe below.

Herbs: Spice up any dish with a sprinkling of finely chopped herbs.

Baby Romaine Lettuce: These "little gems" are a versatile lettuce and should keep slightly longer than mixed greens.

Recipes

Creamy Cucumber Salad

2 medium cukes thinly sliced
1 small red onion thinly sliced
1/2 cup sour cream

1 Tbl white wine vinegar
1 Tsp sugar
1/2 Tsp salt

Combine cucumbers and onion. Stir in the rest of the ingredients and cover. Chill in refrigerator. Makes 3 to 4 cups. Delicious on a warm summer day!

Green Beans Almondine

Green or Purple beans
2 tablespoons slivered almonds

2 tablespoons butter or 2 tablespoons margarine
1 teaspoon lemon juice

Trim the ends of fresh beans French style and cook, covered in a small amount of boiling salted water until crisp-tender. Drain and submerge beans in ice water for an instant to stop cooking and retain green color.

Cook almonds in butter over low heat, stirring occasionally, until golden. Add green beans and cook until heated. Remove from the heat and add lemon juice. Serve immediately.