



SUNSHINE IN A BOX



Special Edition Volume 6 issue 2

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Farm Updates

Greetings and Happy Earth Day!

Spring has arrived at the farm! Every year I am more amazed when the garlic pops up, the birds return, and the soil gradually comes back to life. As I was direct seeding carrots and radishes in the mini hoop house, it was exciting to see the micro ecosystem complete with a spider, toad, and many small insects breaking down the biomass. These are all signs of a balanced system and made me feel like we are on the right track.

Consider a contribution to the Solar Fresh Member Fund—this program will match your donated funds with a family in need (feel free to send someone my way who might benefit from a free or low cost CSA share). Right now we are almost fully funded to reach our goal of 3 half shares, and still need to identify one family to receive this benefit. Promoting social justice in the food system is an important aspect of resilient farming, and this is another step we are taking as a CSA to uphold this value. Together we are creating a more diverse and equitable CSA.

Covid-19 Response

It has been about a month since the last newsletter and there have been several developments in the pandemic situation since then that might affect the CSA. I am keeping up to date with guidelines from the state Health Department, Department of Agriculture, and the Minnesota Farmer's Market Association for Covid-19 specific food safety that might go beyond my normal food safety practices. The important thing to know is that food production is considered essential, and of all the models for getting food that I can think of, CSA is the safest and most resilient way to confront our supply chain and public health risk. (Cont p. 3)

Who We Are

As the CSA sign ups come in, I have been thinking about who we are as a community. Every season, I grow, harvest, and deliver produce to the membership sometimes knowing your names and faces and sometimes not meeting new members until almost the end of the season. (Cont p. 3)

Recipes

Shaved Asparagus Salad

Classic Peanut Butter Cookies

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Recipes

Shaved Asparagus Salad

1 lb asparagus
Zest and juice of one lemon
2 Tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled, but still liquid

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
4 hardboiled eggs, quartered
Small bundle of chives, cut into 1 inch lengths

Trim tough ends off asparagus. Slice off asparagus tops and chop them roughly. Use a vegetable peeler to shave the asparagus into long, thin curls.

Whisk together lemon juice, butter, salt, and pepper. Toss all ingredients together and serve immediately. Serves four. (Cornell, 2014)

Classic Peanut Butter Cookies

1 cup firmly packed brown sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter, softened
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup peanut butter
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups all-purpose flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
sugar

Heat oven to 350 degrees

Combine brown sugar, butter and peanut butter in bowl. Beat on medium speed until well mixed. Add egg and vanilla; continue beating until well mixed. Add flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Beat at low speed until well mixed.

Shape dough into 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch balls; roll in sugar. Place 2 inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheets; flatten balls in crisscross pattern with fork dipped in sugar. Bake 8-10 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. (Land O Lakes, 2020)



(Covid-19 Response cont. from p.1) **So far, research shows that the virus is generally not spread via food or packaging**, however I have decided to switch to single use paper handle bags for this season. The waxed cardboard boxes are a symbol of the CSA and do an amazing job keeping produce fresh however the paper bags will not only reduce touchpoints but will also streamline CSA pick up. Everyone has a lot on their minds right now and hopefully not worrying about returning your CSA box will help eliminate one extra step in our changing and uncertain routines. We will assess as we go and make changes as needed about returning to the waxed cardboard boxes or sticking with the paper handle bags.

As we approach our first pick up, I will present information on how everything will work so that we are on the same page. I am holding off on presenting these guidelines until we have more information and resources from state agencies. Hopefully there will not be drastic changes to our normal routine—just common sense stuff to keep us all safe. Please let me know if you have any questions/concerns/ideas on how to address these challenges.

(Who We Are cont. from p. 1) In a way the CSA model has similarities to the new way of living during this pandemic. We are connected but not necessarily through face to face interactions. We keep in touch through food, recipes, cooking, the newsletter, the physical produce and its sensory qualities, and the good vibes I send your way every day as I think about the individuals and families receiving a CSA share.

And I have learned a lot about you over the last several years. This season so far, we are 60% return customers and 40% new customers. Most of my sign ups come from women with a handful of men who reach out to order their shares. We are not very culturally diverse (yet). We are caretakers, mothers and fathers, chefs and home cooks. We aren't afraid to try something new in the kitchen. We are stewards of our communities and the land. We are thoughtful people who care about putting a face and landscape to our food production. We are prayerful people. We are generous and grateful. We have had hard times before and we face adversity with courage and cheerfulness.

This season, you might see me at pick up and don't be afraid to say "Hi" and introduce yourself (probably from a distance) or even shoot me an email if you tried a really good recipe or had a veggie you really liked (or didn't like) or if your paper handle bag falls apart and you miss the waxed cardboard box, or maybe you really like the new paper handle bags, or you just want to check in. I am busy during the summer but never too busy to connect with you and get to know you however we can do that. Every CSA is different and it has been a joy to watch our CSA's personality emerge.

Bibliography

Cornell, T. (2014). *Minnesota Farmers Market Cookbook: A Guide to Selecting and Preparing the Best Local Produce with SEasonal Recipes from Local Chefs and Farmers*. Minneapolis: Voyageur Press.

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