



Bear Prints

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Thanks to everyone who donated to the family shelter. Just wanted to let you know that three people have volunteered to deliver the two shares on a rotating basis. One member generously agreed to chip in a quarter share and another member overheard our conversation and volunteered to match his donation. Just another \$65 left. (Add to your 2nd half?) Way to go guys and thanks a bunch from us & the shelter!

Farm News

I often review last year's newsletters when drafting this year's, particularly when discussing "new" vegetables. I'd research earlier years if I was more organized but that's another story. Some topics are perennial: the weather, weeding, stringing up the tomatoes... I was just reading about "saving" the onions (we were forced to do that earlier this year due to all the weeds). Some veggies are more demanding than others, but each have their issues. Carrots, which are new this week, are of the high maintenance variety. They won't germinate if conditions aren't just right (moist but not too wet—HA this spring!) and they take forever to come up. Thus the weeds are already ahead of them and they can't stand much competition. Weeding carrots is a very meticulous, (some would say nit-picky) time consuming job that most people hate. You have to be very careful to get all the weeds without pulling up all the carrots. I happen to like it, although after a few days even I have my limits. New part-time worker Erin doesn't mind carrot weeding either and she's pretty good at it, so I have company. We are currently working on the next batch. I just wanted to explain, that although we'd all love to have carrots every week, it's just not possible on our scale and without herbicides. So don't waste those carrots!

Not much news other than weeding like crazy last week. Take a walk around & you'll see. With this weather you'll also appreciate all our workers all the more.

What's New In Your Share This Week

New this week as mentioned are **carrots**. We grow different varieties of most vegetables and they are no exception. This variety is Mokum, I believe. They're an early variety that tends to be skinny. They aren't very big since they didn't have the best of growing conditions this spring, but they are very sweet. Store them in a plastic bag in the fridge, if they make it home. Eat them raw or cook just until tender in little water. We also have **kohlrabi** this week. It is the spaceship vegetable, very odd-looking but tasty. It is a cross between a turnip and a cabbage. To me, it tastes like the stalks of broccoli. Very crisp raw, it makes a fine crudité. It's great boiled & mashed as well. You can strip the leaves off their tough stems and boil, steam or sauté them, too. Cut off the leaves before you store it in the fridge. You should do that with all the root crops, otherwise the leaves sap the moisture right out of them. You do have to peel the

bulbous stem – the skin is too tough. Too bad you have to peel the pretty purple ones; they all look the same on the inside.

All kinds of new stuff this week. We also have **fresh garlic**. You can use it right away, just as you would garlic from the store; the skin just isn't papery. If you already have garlic you are using, then just leave the whole stalk on for now until the skin becomes papery, then you can cut off the stalk & it will keep just fine. Don't ever store garlic in the fridge though, since it doesn't like the moisture.

Finally, we also have **escarole**. It looks like a big, loose lettuce, but it isn't as tender or as mild. It is fantastic in the recipe on the back page, though. Mike found this recipe this past winter and we've been cooking it regularly ever since. Quick, easy and non-fattening. What more to ask for? Sandi Manna & kids transplanted it.

The end of July is fast approaching, so for people who owe for the second half, the \$225 is due by August 1st. Thanks!

Remember, you can come by the farm anytime, not just on your pick up day. We understand you all are very busy, but sometimes it's nice to just walk around in the fields & visit the critters.

Bear Hill Farm CSA

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*PICK UP MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, OR
FRIDAY
3 PM UNTIL 7 PM*

*(Please make arrangements at least one week
in advance to switch your pick-up day.)*

CSA Since 1998

COME ANYTIME —
THIS IS YOUR FARM!

How About a Little Vinaigrette?

Why is it that life seems to just get busier and more chaotic, even though I consider myself to be on the path toward simplicity? I suppose SOMEday I won't have a million projects all going at once (and then, of course, I'll be completely bored). I know I'm not alone in this feeling, either, so maybe I'm also not the only one looking for shortcuts to everyday routines — things that will give me more time for the projects, but won't lead to the sense of being deprived, that I'm not taking care of the "small stuff"...like eating well.

Well, we're all off to a really good start by having the absolute freshest vegetables to work with. I frankly can't wait to get a bite of my first Bear Hill Farm carrot of the season: no sautéing, spicing or nothing; just wash, peel & munch. They're so much better than the bagged variety (even organic), which have been sitting around for who knows how long.

Speaking of fresh, you also don't want to cut corners when it comes to your salad dressing. Fresh vinaigrette is so simple. Shake in a jar: 1 TBS Dijon mustard, 3 TBS vinegar (any flavor), 1/2 C olive oil, and some salt & pepper. Add some of our lovely fresh garlic for more punch. Compare that with the bottled kind, which can contain anything from xanthan gum and propylene glycol alginate (?) to that old manufacturer's favorite, high fructose corn syrup.

But now that you have the fresh vegetables and the dressing, you're in prime position to make life easier for yourself on any given hectic weeknight. That's because vinaigrette is not only the perfect salad dressing, but it also makes an excellent marinade. Slice some of the carrots and marinate for a *very* simple side dish. (Add cumin & turmeric for Middle Eastern flavor, or soy sauce & sesame oil to go Asian. You get the idea.) Or cut the zucchini into chunks, marinate it, and toss on the grill along with your burgers. (You can marinate chicken in the vinaigrette, too, just use a separate bag so as not to cross-contaminate.) Kohlrabi is also good sliced thin and marinated, although you can just as easily use only a little lemon juice. At the end of the week, serve all the leftover side dishes along with some hardboiled egg slices and a baguette for the coolest antipasto plate ever.

As much as I relish (haha) my time in the kitchen, "real life" too often gets in the way. But, shortcuts in hand, nothing beats the satisfied feeling of eating well.

— Anna Barker (annabarker@charter.net)

Recipe: Escarole

Here is Mike's recipe for escarole. He originally got it from one of those little recipe books you find by the cash register. It called for regular sausage but we substituted turkey sausage. You can use any green (we've tried Swiss chard) but escarole is particularly yummy in this.—AG

Sausage, Beans & Greens

8 oz. hot (or mild) turkey Italian sausage links

1/2 cup chopped onions

2 19-oz. cans cannellini beans (white kidney beans),
drained & rinsed

3/4 cup reduced sodium chicken (or veg.) broth (or more)

1/4 cup dry white wine or reduced sodium broth

2T snipped fresh thyme or 1 tsp. dried thyme, crushed

1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes

2 cups coarsely chopped escarole (or other greens)

1/4 cup finely shredded parmesan cheese (optional)

Wash escarole thoroughly. In a large skillet cook sausage & onion over medium heat about 5 minutes or until sausage is brown & onion is tender. Mike adds broth to keep it from sticking, since the turkey sausage has little fat. It reduces & really adds to the dish. Stir in beans, broth,

wine & thyme & red pepper. Bring to boil, reduce heat, cover & cook for 5 minutes. Stir in escarole & heat until wilted. If you want, top with cheese. And only one pan to wash!

Fresh Produce...In the Bag

Mike & Anne and the gang at Bear Hill Farm grew it, you're going to take it home, cook it, and eat it. Simple enough, but let's not forget the stages that come in between: packaging and storing. Do it improperly, and you're denying yourself fresh flavor.

There are (almost) always plastic bags available at the Farm, but if you can swing it, we suggest that you bring a cooler along for carting everything home. Stick an ice pack in the bottom and you won't have to run red lights rushing your stuff home to the fridge. Once home, don't chuck it all on the counter for "later." Make sure your greens, especially, are bagged individually, with a cloth (paper or otherwise) to soak up excess moisture. As soon as possible.

When bagging stuff at the farm, put heavier items at the bottom, and set the more fragile produce, especially greens, on top. Produce seems to appreciate being treated lovingly, and in turn will taste better for you. — Anna