



# Bear Prints

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October 2, 2006

Wednesday the 4th is our daughter Michalle's 30th birthday! So say a warm Happy Birthday to Farmer Michalle, AKA Blondie, this week. She is an integral part of the farm operation. Almost every head of lettuce you've received this year has been seeded, watered, transplanted, harvested and rinsed by her. She's also responsible for taking care of all the critters.

There are still some ham shanks, butts and shoulders left in the freezer. The shoulders are good for boiled dinners and the other two are typically baked.

We also have smoked ham hocks, great for soups or beans, although someone familiar with them bought a bunch last week.

*Thanks for getting your newsletters off the web. We should be able to save a bundle on copying. I try to post the new one on Monday by noon, or as soon as it's done.*

## Farm News

**Party time, this Saturday.** Pray for no rain, but we'll have it in the greenhouse even if it does. We'll still have another week or maybe 2 of pick-up's after the party, so don't stop coming. Mike says that despite all our whining earlier in the season it's turned out to be a pretty good year. We hope you think so, too. He also says we need leaves. You can drop them off anytime down the compost pile, straight down past the greenhouse near the boar and his girls. It would be great if you could dump them out of the bags, then you can re-use the bags & the leaves will compost faster.

The cantaloupe & watermelon were surprises for you this year. They don't always work out, so we don't mention them ahead of time. We thought the cantaloupe were pretty fine, if dead ripe, but the watermelon wasn't the greatest. We transplanted the plants later than we would have liked and with the cold nights of recent past they just didn't sweeten up. By the way, if you ever got home to find your garlic was soft & moldy then just take an extra one this week. We hang them all in the barn to cure and occasionally one gets spoiled. Feel it when you select your garlic to check if it is firm & don't store them in the fridge.

We sold two of the piglets last week. The rest will leave in a week or two. Others will raise them up now that they're well started. We might be getting a new sheep this week. He was a 4-H project in Shirley and his owner wants him to go to a good home.

## What's New In Your Share This Week

I can't believe we still have **basil** at the beginning of October. It's pick your own, free for all as much as you want now. Same for the **cherry tomatoes** and **tomatillos**, but make sure the latter are ripe (full & splitting their husks).

New this week are **sugar or pie pumpkins** and **spaghetti squash**. The pumpkins are tough to carve, they are the eating kind. Better to draw on them if you want to decorate. If you aren't familiar with the spaghetti squash, I think you'll be happily surprised. You can prick it all over with a fork, then bake in a 350\* oven for about an hour until tender, or prick and cook in the microwave for 15 minutes or so. When done cut it in half & scoop out the seeds & yucky middle stuff. Then take a fork (show the kids) & pull the flesh into spaghetti like strands. It looks just like pasta, but it stays a bit crunchy. I loved it just sprinkled with herbs,

salt & pepper, red pepper flakes & some parmesan cheese. I added a touch of olive oil, but it wasn't necessary. It heated great the next day for lunch. Mike had his with home-made spaghetti sauce & liked it, too. Why eat pasta?! You could sauté vegetables (cherry tomatoes, pepper, onions) & garlic and toss them with the squash, or top with a white clam sauce, you name it. Also new this week or next is an Asian green called **happy rich**. It looks like broccolini to me. Use it just as you would regular broccoli. We'd like to wait until next week to give it out, but some of it may be ready to harvest now. We'll rope off the rest so it doesn't get trampled on Saturday.

Check out 2 of my favorite cookbooks if you are looking for recipes for winter squash: The Victory Garden Cookbook by Marian Morash & Vegetarian Times Complete Cookbook by the editors of VT. Great for kale, kohlrabi....

## 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!

## Pick Your Own...Pesto!

I could be wrong, but I think this is the first year that basil has been opened up at the end of the year as pick-your-own. I think this is a great idea: some people probably can't even look at it anymore, but I know many of us can't get enough — at least judging by the parade going up the hill last Friday, plastic bags and scissors in hand.

Now, you know that you can add basil to your tomato soup, pizza, and pasta, etc. But chances are the majority of your basil is going into pesto. Am I not right? It freezes well, of course: freeze it in extra ice cube trays and you can pull out 2 TBS worth at a time. Get that food processor whirling and picture yourself over those bleak winter months, eating bright green pesto almost weekly!

Bleak, yes. If your mood in February matches mine, even the lovely pesto will start to seem monotonous by then. Think ahead and create a variety of pesto now. If you have mint in your garden, replace a cup of basil with a cup of mint to make pesto for serving over fish or with steamed potatoes. Or add a few tablespoons of dried tomatoes. (Oven-dried cherry tomatoes: Slice tomatoes in half, place on foil-lined pan coated with olive oil, and leave in a 275° oven for about 2 hours. Keep your eye on them and toss occasionally to keep them from sticking & burning.) Replace the walnuts — I, for one, can no longer afford pine nuts — with pistachios. Or try making creamy pesto by adding ricotta cheese.

But wait, there's more! Don't limit yourself to pasta with pesto. Spread it over pizza. Add it to mac & cheese. Make a cracker spread by adding pesto to cream cheese (using the food processor will combine it well and also whip it up nicely). Mix some in with mayo to liven up your sandwich spread. Use refrigerated roll dough to make pesto pinwheels. ...I do hope for warm nights so this basil bonanza will last into Friday. If it does, maybe I'll see you on the hill. — Anna Barker (annabarker@charter.net)

## Recipes: Tomatillos

*Speaking of pick-your-own, have you tried the tomatillos yet? No? Perhaps you need a recipe to inspire you. Here's a nice one from Recipes from America's Small Farms. It is my fervent hope that you'll bring a batch to the party on Saturday. :) - AB*

### Tomatillo Taco Casserole

(from Clay Brook Farm, Jericho, Vermont)

- 1 pound ground beef, turkey, or soy substitute
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1-2 small hot peppers, chopped (optional)
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 6 C lightly crushed tortilla chips
- 2 C cooked black or kidney beans
- 1 1/2 C halved small tomatillos
- Salt and freshly milled black pepper
- 1C grated Cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 C sour cream
- 1 C prepared salsa

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly oil the bottom of a 13x9" baking pan. Brown the meat in a large, heavy skillet over medium heat. Add the onion, hot peppers, and garlic; cook until tender.

Spread the tortilla chips in the bottom of the baking pan. Top with the meat mixture. Combine the beans, the tomatillos, and 1/2 C water in the skillet used for the meat. Simmer gently

until heated through, about 10 minutes; add salt and pepper to taste. Pour the tomatillo mixture over the meat layer in the pan. Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 20 minutes.

Uncover and sprinkle with the cheese. Return to oven and bake, uncovered, until the cheese melts. Serve with sour cream and salsa as toppings.

*Most tomatillo recipes are for salsa, and most of the salsa recipes call for cooking the tomatillo first. This version is adapted from Sylvia Thompson's The Kitchen Garden Cookbook.*

### Salsa Verde

- 1 1/2 pounds tomatillos (about 16 large or 32 medium)
- Cool water barely to cover
- 3 fresh Serrano chilies or 1 small jalapeno, roasted, seeds removed and peeled [yikes! I'll just use a little raw]
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- At least 2 cilantro sprigs
- 2 medium-small ripe tomatoes

In a non-reactive saucepan over medium-high heat, bring the tomatillos and water to a boil, turn the heat to low, and simmer just until the fruits feel soft with the side of a spoon (long before they break open), 5-10min. Lift into a bowl. In a food processor grind the chilies, garlic, and cilantro together; then add tomatillos and tomatoes. Puree, leaving small bits for texture, then season to taste. Serve at room temperature.