



Bear Prints

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This is the last week of pick up!

Thanks again to all of you for joining us this season. Hope you enjoyed your experience with the farm.

I gushed last week, thinking that it would be our “last week”, so look at last week’s newsletter for more heartfelt appreciativeness!

Don't forget we scheduled a work day for **Saturday, October 21st at 3 p.m.** We can take the string off the cherry tomato plants and pull out some of the veggies that have gone by, etc. There's always plenty to do at the farm! Dress warm and bring gloves. We'll postpone to Sunday if it rains.

Farm News

Boy it's cold! We've even broken down and lit the woodstove. We've been lucky this fall with the weather (little rain and cold) but now reality is setting in. Mornings like this, waiting for the veggies (and our hands) to thaw the end of the season doesn't seem so bad. When it's beautiful out it's a lot harder to end it. But, we have to get ready for next season. I'm always asking Mike Sunday night “what do ya got for me?” in terms of the newsletter. Today he said “My mind is a blank slate waiting to fill up with next year.” He's already emptied this year out and is planning which fields will have which crops next season. It may seem early to you, but we have to plant the garlic this fall, so it's imperative to make some of those decisions now.

We sold most of the piglets down the barn. Mike brought them out to the auction in Whately, near Northampton. We kept four of the smallest to raise up. We will be getting a Tunis sheep wether (a fixed male) this weekend. He was a 4-H project and is trained to follow on a halter. He'll keep the goats company. We'll also be getting our chicks soon and selling off our hens from this year. Eggs certainly were popular, especially after that Boston Globe article. We'll definitely get more hens next year. I don't think we ran out at the farm this season, but since you guys get first dibs the farmer's market customers were very envious of you. Now that picking is coming to an end it doesn't mean we retire for the season. We are “pedal to the metal” all season and now we shift gears to all those construction projects we have no time for during the summer. The main part of the house is pretty desperate for a new roof. We also have to get our wood in for the winter. That's all Mike & I heat with and although Michalle has oil, we're putting in a woodstove for her, too. Many projects and lots to do still.

What's New In Your Share This Week +

New this week is **red cabbage**. Use as you would green cabbage, boiled or as a colorful coleslaw. It turns a bit blue when cooked.

We went to a Groton local event last night and had a great red cabbage coleslaw with raisins and carrots in a vinegar dressing.

Mike & I both want to thank you again for joining us. Honestly, you make it possible for us to keep farming. The CSA is the main part of our business now. It enables us to spend more time out in the field actually growing versus driving back & forth to Boston for endless hours in parking lots at farmer's markets.

It is also important to us to get to know our customers. Your positive reinforcement (and occasional goodies) make those hot, humid days more bearable. We've watched kids grow up over the years—some are even off to college now. The end of season party really brings it home for us. During the season we're often too busy to spend as much

time as we'd like visiting with you. But at the party there's really a sense of community, with people mingling and introducing themselves to each other. We are a very diverse group, but still somewhat “like-minded” as one member puts it. Next season will be our tenth as a CSA, as I mentioned last week, and we're really looking forward to it. I don't think we have any members from that first brave group of 16 from our first season, but we have quite a few from the second and third years.

That's pretty incredible! We're looking forward to many more years together as the farm continues to evolve. We may increase the CSA slightly next season, but we know there's a limit as to how much we can do. So join up in a timely fashion when we send your forms out in the Spring. In the meantime, feel free to come visit **Your Farm** (and farmers) anytime.

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!

But a new season's just around the corner.

Whew, what a year, eh? I prepared myself for the worst last Spring, when the rain kept coming and it seemed like it never *would* warm up. And let's not forget the end of July, when temps reached 105 and higher. Somehow, Mike, Anne & Michalle pulled it off, though. I do hope the weather will be more cooperative next year, but who can argue with a season where we're picking pesto — er, I mean, *basil* — in the middle of October? And to think that we're having another pick-up this week: we should all appreciate that as something extraordinary, since the vegetables have been hit by now with the same frost that I had to scrape off my car windows this morning.

This year my own personal life seemed to follow the extremes of the weather. Since last October, when we first put our Groton house on the market (we never sold it, by the way) and purchased a house in Fitchburg (no, we never sold that one either!), the Barker family has been hit with many stressors on the Top 10 list. (I should point out, to be fair, that most of our stress comes from a life well lived, rather than actual tragedy. But, stress is stress.) I can't tell you how many times we ate delivered pizza when we had a fridge full of farm veggies. Just no time!

Now things are looking up, and I find myself again with at least a little breathing room. Too late, sadly, to go back and incorporate this summer's lovely vegetables into my favorite *homemade* pizza (which, by the end of the summer, was even tasting "blah."). But the beauty of the farm is the fact that *there's always next year*. On the farm as well as in the rest of life, each day is new, and each season is another chance to finally get it right. Recently, I found hope from an unlikely source: a little Williams-Sonoma cookbook titled simply *Pizza*. Marinated zucchini pizza! Eggplant and trout pizza! Radicchio and onion pizza! How far from "blah" can life get, and I can't wait to share it with you next Spring! Until then.
— Anna Barker (annabarker@charter.net)

More Fall Soup

My Mom (Babci) convinced my sister-in-law, Laurie, to send this in after she made it for her. Thanks to both! AG

Golden Potato-Leek Soup with Cheddar Toasts

SOUP:

1 TBS butter
3 cups thinly-sliced leeks (about 3 medium)
6 cups cubed peeled Yukon gold potato (about 2 ¼ pounds)
2 cups water
½ tsp salt
2 (14 oz) cans organic vegetable broth
2 thyme sprigs
1/3 cup whipping (or light) cream
¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper

TOASTS:

8 (1/4 inch thick) slices French bread
cooking spray
½ cup (2 oz) shredded cheddar cheese
1/8 tsp ground red pepper

SOUP: Melt butter in large pot. Add leeks, cook on medium heat for 10 minutes or until tender (do not brown). Add potatoes, water, salt, broth and thyme sprigs. Bring to a boil, reduce to simmer, cook uncovered for 20 minutes or until potatoes are very tender. Remove from heat. Discard thyme sprigs. Partially mash potatoes with a potato masher. Stir in cream, sprinkle with black pepper. Serve with cheddar toasts.

TOASTS: Preheat oven to 375. Place slices in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake for 7 minutes or until toasted. Turn slices over, coat with cooking spray, sprinkle with 1 TBS cheese. Bake 5 minutes or until cheese melts. Sprinkle evenly with red pepper.

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'Bye for now!