



Bear Prints

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In case you forgot, second payments of \$260 are due by August 1st. About 1/3 of members still owe their second payment. August 1 is Friday, so please send it right in or send an email that you haven't forgotten us. We're so busy trying to get the last of the plantings in that I hate to take the time to "remind" members. If you aren't sure whether you paid the whole thing or if you and your share partner paid only half, feel free to drop me an email or leave a message on my cell phone & I'll check for you. Thanks!

Fennel's licorice taste is stronger when raw. It has a crunchy texture & very few calories. According to Marian Morash, Italians eat it at the end of a meal with cheese. Try it sliced and sautéed in butter until brown, then add a little water and steam until tender. Top with cheese or lemon juice. You can also cook it in the microwave for 8-10 minutes. Marian also suggests adding to tunafish sandwiches instead of celery.

Farm News

Rain, rain and more rain. I'm feeling a bit mildewed. I know we needed it, but just an inch a week would be nice for a change. All these torrential downpours set our planting schedules back and lets the weeds get ahead of us. We are doing our best. When we were having a tough time before, Mike told a member he wouldn't complain anymore if the season turned out OK. It did and he's wondering if that member remembers?

The local red fox has been attacking the guinea hens. Three times we've raced outside to rescue them. Luckily they were right next to the house, so we heard them and came running. The mother is missing a few feathers and she lost one baby, but we still have two hens and two babies. The other hen had been setting on eggs as well. The good news is that they have taken to roosting in the oak near the shop now, so hopefully they will be safer and we'll sleep easier.

We moved most of the piglets outside last week. They are in a pen in the field in front of the house (there's a red tractor still there I think). Go visit the happy pigs.

A member was telling us this past week that her son had Lyme disease which affected his heart. He's home now and OK, but I figured I'd remind you all to really scrub when you shower. The deer tick nymphs are really tiny. You don't always get a bull's eye rash, but if you do or all of a sudden start feeling really bad, talk to your doctor. We know a lot of people who have contracted Lyme; it can be pretty bad if left untreated. The guinea hens have been doing a great job eating the ticks for us here— that's why they're loose.

What's New In Your Share This Week

Sorry guys, the arugula bolted in all that hot weather. We'll try another batch soon.

New this week is **cabbage** and **fennel**. The fennel was down in Westford, transplanted from the greenhouse into a long row. It looks beautiful out there all ferny. The soft feathery fronds can be chopped and used as a herb. Cut them off the bulb and put in a glass of water covered with a plastic bag, then put in the fridge. The bulb will last up to a week in the bottom of the fridge. Slice it up and use raw with dip or in salad, or cook it. It is very sweet and tastes like licorice. The tops do, too, and are great in salad or with fish. Since it is so sweet I bet it would be good with fruit as well.

This week it is **green cabbage**, but we should have some small red heads coming soon. A few batches came in all at once. We plant different day length varieties, but sometimes they catch up with each other. Then we are forced to inundate you more than we'd like, or waste it in the fields since it won't hold. That's why we gave out so

much Chinese cabbage. It's been a particularly challenging year with the weather such as it has been.

Luckily, **cabbage** will hold quite nicely in the fridge, so don't worry if you haven't finished it all before you get more. The outer leaves may turn limp & yellow, but underneath should be fine. Fresh **cabbage** just out of the garden is really sweet and crisp. It makes a wonderful coleslaw. After you've used your favorite coleslaw recipe for some of it, broaden your horizons and use a different one. Try a simple peanut sauce, or an oil and vinegar dressing rather than the typical mayo. Fresh **cabbage** is also great boiled or steamed until just tender. Don't overcook and make it mushy! You can also shred it in the food processor and then use it in stir-fry. The possibilities are almost endless! Seth, our webmaster is supposed to put up some recipe links on the website in the near future. Feel free to let us know if you have one we missed.

Bear Hill Farm CSA

Anne & Mike Gagnon

14 Davis Road

Tyngsboro, MA 01879

Phone: 978-692-4224 cell 978-846-4577

Email: bearhillfarm@aol.com

Website: bearhillfarmcsa.com

PICK UP MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, OR
FRIDAY
3 PM UNTIL 7 PM (but you can come late)

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

CSA Since 1998

COME ANYTIME —
THIS IS YOUR FARM!

“Bear Hill Farm for the Future of the Earth”

Ah, rain on a summer Sunday! I didn't welcome it any more than Mike & Anne did yesterday, but I was able to take advantage of the gloom by lying around re-reading Gardening for the Future of the Earth, by Howard Yana-Shapiro and John Harrisson (a Seeds of Change book). “The masters of organic gardening show you how to create natural bounty in your own backyard and help save the planet one seed at a time.”

Lazy summer reading? No, nothing less than saving the planet for me! I hadn't really picked this book up since the first time I read it after it was published in 2000. I wish I'd kept it closer at hand, as I've done a lot of planting around the yard since then, and it's packed with useful tips I probably could have been taking advantage of—everything from how to save seeds for annuals and how to grow perennials that will do the work of gardening for you (sort of), to planting trees in a location that will keep your house cool during the summer.

So I've missed a few opportunities in my home garden over the years, but at least I had the foresight to join up with a CSA that uses sustainable agricultural practices. Mike & Anne practice a lot of the methods discussed in this book. By rotating their crops, using compost, growing nitrogen-rich cover crops, using a pond for irrigation, etc., they've made harsh pesticides and chemical fertilizers unnecessary. Our veggies taste great, we have a wide variety to choose from, and we know there are “no nasties” in them. The farm invites natural helpers such as bees and dragonflies, and the rich soil supports a whole ecology of its own. And just think about the impact on our local ecosystem as these methods spread to the BHF plots in Westford and Littleton.

Sure, “the key to the future of the world lies in gardening”... as long as that includes being part of the farm. (I do recommend the book, though!) —Anna Barker (annabarker@charter.net)

Recipes: Beets and Fennel

A couple of people have written to me asking for suggestions for using up our beets. And since fennel, introduced this week, is unfamiliar to many, I thought I'd dig up some recipes that use both. They go so well together! Here is one from www.drgourmet.com.—AB

Roasted Beet and Fennel Salad

2 large beets
1 pound fresh fennel [or less, depending on our share]
1 tsp olive oil
1/4 tsp salt
Fresh ground black pepper to taste
1/2 tsp ground cumin
1 ounce feta cheese

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Cut the stem and tip ends of the beets. Scrub well and wrap in aluminum foil. Place in the oven and roast for 45 minutes. Remove and let cool. (This may be done in advance and the beets placed in the refrigerator overnight.)

Remove the leafy ends from the fennel and any stalk that appear too tough. Slice very thinly. Place the olive oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Add the sliced fennel and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 15 minutes. Remove and let cool. Remove the beets from the aluminum foil, slip off the skins, and cut into 1/2" cubes. Mix beets with sautéed fennel and remaining ingredients. Chill well.

Salad Variations: Add some orange sections to your salad—they also go well with beets & fennel, as do chives and tarragon (but a little goes a long way!). Substitute goat cheese for the feta. Serve with rye bread.

Beet and Fennel Soup

Thoroughly adapted from a Gourmet recipe on epicurious.com.

Roast **3 medium beets** as directed in previous recipe. Let cool and slip off the skins. Cut 1/2 of 1 beet into 1" long matchsticks for garnish and chop remaining beets.

In a large heavy saucepan heat **2 TBS vegetable oil** over moderate heat and cook **1 large sliced onion** with **1/8 tsp fennel seeds**, stirring, until softened (about 15 minutes). Add **1 large thinly sliced fennel bulb** along with **1/4 C water** and cook, covered, stirring occasionally, until fennel is very soft (about 15-20 min). Stir in chopped beets and broth and simmer, uncovered, 15 minutes. In a blender puree soup in batches. (Soup may be prepared up to this point 2 days ahead and chilled, covered.) Reheat soup until hot, thinning with water if necessary. Stir in **2 TBS orange juice** and salt and pepper to taste. Garnish soup with beet matchsticks and fennel leaves and serve with breadsticks.

*Or try a **stir-fry** with fennel, shallots, mushrooms and frozen peas. Toss with roasted beets, green onions, parsley, thyme, and a little balsamic vinegar.*