



Bear Prints

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In case you forgot, second payments of \$260 WERE due by August 1st.

Thanks again to everyone who made their timely payments. We really appreciate your staying on top of it!

SAVE THE DATE
PARTY
SATURDAY
OCTOBER 4, 2008

We got some of those wonderful peaches and nectarines from Brookdale Farm in Hollis, NH last week. As repeat members know, we buy fruit from them wholesale and sell it at the farmers market on Sat. That's OK as long as we label where it's from. They are conventional farmers, but we don't know anywhere around here to get local organic fruit and it sure is tasty. We sell it to the CSA when we have extra, so it's for sale this week. We should have apples later, too.

Farm News

We're not the only ones complaining about the rain and its effects on the tomato crop this year. There was a big article in Sunday's Lowell Sun about how the rain has hurt the vegetable crops this season and that other farmers have had trouble getting their transplants in the ground as well.

Mike did manage to get some stuff in the ground and at 8:30 p.m. he was cultivating beans in the dark at Nashoba. I called him and told him to quit before he digs up all the beans!

Thanks to everyone who offered words of encouragement last week or who emailed in response to Anna's article. I've noticed this year that quite a few members haven't been reading their newsletters. I think a lot of times you figure you'll get it off the web, but "out of sight, out of mind", once you leave the farm. We'd rather you take a copy than forget to read it, since it is really our only surefire way to reach you.

So, as a reminder, we don't have an answering machine anymore. If you need to leave a message, call my cell phone at (978) 846-4577. It's on the back of the newsletters now. The goats and sheep have been moved to their new digs down in the barn yard. We made a huge pen for them to eat down the hillside. You saw how quickly they cleaned out their other pen to the right of the greenhouse. They still love the company so don't forget to visit them. We should also be moving the sows in the barn this week, since three are pregnant. Baby piglets again soon!

What's New In Your Share This Week

Nothing new this week. We still have quite a few veggies, but next week and the week or two after that may get slim. We'll do the best we can. You can read the Lowell Sun article that I referred to above by going to their website, ww.lowellsun.com and searching for 'farmers'. There were a few comments posted that were interesting. One person felt that farmers should know that the weather is unpredictable and that it's just an excuse to raise prices. Obviously, we aren't doing that with a CSA! And yes, we know about the weather, but this has been unusual. We've never had damaging hail in 14 years. More carrots from the same beds in front of the farm stand. I guess technically we have a different type of onion this week. They are regular **round red onions**, (Redwing is the variety) rather than the red long of Tropea you got a couple weeks ago.

We'll also have more basil. Hopefully we will have watermelon again as well. Not sure of the color; they could be red, yellow or a swirled combination.

We'll also have more green cabbage. It lasts a while in the bottom of the fridge. If the outer leaves turn limp or yellow just strip them off and the leaves underneath should still be fine. You can make regular mayo-based coleslaw again or you could try an Asian inspired version with rice wine vinegar, carrots, ginger & sesame oil. Or there is always boiled dinner with kielbasa. Steamed fresh cabbage is also great, just don't overcook it and it's quite sweet. We do have something new this week—**peppers!** We gave them out last week unexpectedly since they were finally ready. The hail set them way back but they are producing well now.

Cheap...and Sustainable: 10 Kitchen Practices for Living Well and Lightly

1. Buy local and in season.

We start with this tip because that's what a CSA is all about. With our abundant harvests—even in a rare “tough year” — joining up with a CSA is a good way to save dollars as well as food miles. But don't forget this tip when winter comes around. I buy *some* tropical fruit in the winter since we'll never be able to buy it locally; but I can't justify foreign strawberries in February when they are so plentiful and cheap here in June.

What can really kill this determination is those beautiful **magazine recipes**. They may be mouth-watering, but chances are the NY food editor has paid no attention at all to what we have here fresh. There are a few exceptions ([Everyday Food's](#) “In Season” column), but in general you should pick a recipe based on what's available rather than those gorgeous photos.

2. Use what you have. This is sort of a corollary to tip #1. Before you run off to the grocery store, take a look at what's in your pantry; you don't want to add wild rice to your list if the quinoa is gathering dust. And, yes, what if the item you have on hand turns out not to be your favorite? Keep experimenting with recipes until you hit on something tasty.

A key example for many this year is **beets**. Lisa Magnuson sent in her favorite recipe for pickled beets, saying, *“I've been trying hard to like beets and find a good recipe. I've tried roasted and steamed but still thought they tasted too much like the earth! However I recently found this pickled beets recipe online and love it. I've made it twice, the first time with just beets, and the second time I cut up and added a Tropea onion. They are delicious! One tip I have is not to prick them to see if they are done when boiling. In my opinion that just lets some of the skin (dirt) taste in. So boil them for about 45 minutes and that seems to do the trick.”*

Pickled Beets

1 bunch (about 4-5) beets
1/4 C cider vinegar
1 TBS sugar
1 TBS olive oil
1/2 tsp dry mustard
Salt and pepper

Remove greens from beets, save for future use. Cut beets to uniform sizes so they will cook evenly. Steam or boil around 30 minutes or until done. (Alternatively, you can roast them by wrapping them whole in foil and cooking them in a 350F oven for about an hour.) A fork easily inserted into the beet will tell

you if the beets are done or not.

Drain the beets, rinsing them in cold water. Use your fingers to slip the peels off of the beets. The peels should come off easily. Discard the peels. Slice the beets.

Make the vinaigrette by combining the vinegar, sugar, olive oil, and dry mustard. Whisk ingredients together with a fork. The dry mustard will help to emulsify the vinaigrette. Adjust to taste. Add salt and pepper to taste. Combine beets and vinaigrette in a bowl and allow to marinate for a half hour at room temperature. Serves 4.

Carole Barker shared another beet recipe:

Cranberry Beet Muffins

From Soup Makes the Meal by Ken Haedrich

1 cup dried cranberries (or substitute small fresh blueberries)
4 medium sized beets, tops discarded and scrubbed
2 1/4 C unbleached all purpose flour
1 TBS baking powder
3/4 tsp salt
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
3/4 C sugar, plus extra to sprinkle on top
1 large egg
1 C milk
1/3 C vegetable oil

Put the cranberries in a small bowl and cover with warm water to rehydrate for 30 minutes. Drain and set aside. Boil or roast the beets. When cool enough to handle, rub off the skins. Cut into large chunks and set aside.

Preheat oven to 375F and butter 12 muffin cups. Sift the flour, baking powder, salt and cinnamon into a large bowl; set aside. Put the beets in a food processor and process to a rough puree. Measure out 3/4 cup (save leftover for another use, like adding to a soup or salad dressing). Return the measured puree to the processor. Add the sugar and egg and process until smooth. Add the milk and oil and process again, briefly.

Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients. Add the liquid and stir with a wood spoon just until a batter forms; stir in the reserved cranberries. Divide the batter evenly between the muffin cups. Sprinkle the tops with sugar. Bake the muffins 20-25 minutes. When done, the tops will be springy to the touch and sugar-crusty. Let cool briefly in the pan, then transfer the muffins to a wire rack. (Makes one dozen muffins.)

3. Use it up. There is nothing more wasteful than throwing good food away. Is this starting to sound like plain old common sense? Perhaps, but I bet you're throwing away more than you realize. That little bit of pesto that remains in the food processor after throwing together a batch can be combined with mayo or cream cheese for a sandwich or cracker spread. All vegetable scraps and peelings—carrot peels, zucchini ends, pepper seeds, tomato cores, etc.—can be boiled together to make your own vegetable stock while you sit reading the Sunday paper. (Organic vegetable broth can be heinously expensive!) Ask me if you want details. [Other ideas? Please send them!](#)

(The Money You Save May Be Your Own!)

4. Cook from scratch.

Oh yes, there are tons of organic processed foods. But the key word here is *processed*. Organics have gone through the same manufacturing as any other processed food and have traveled the same distance to the store freezer (powered by expensive electricity, by the way!). And we pay for all the packaging and advertising associated with selling them. I know, your time is not unlimited. So pick just one thing you eat often and could learn to cook. Burritos? Pizza? “Artisanal” bread? (I can’t believe how much it costs from the store bakery!) Don’t kill yourself making small batches over & over; think about making a number of pizza shells all at once, as one idea, and freezing them for future Friday nights. Or stick to making your own of the most expensive items: We love gourmet ice cream (and hate cheap ice cream), but the price just keeps going up! so when I see a quart of cream on sale, I snatch it up to make my own. An added bonus is that I rarely have time to spend my money on other recreational activities, LOL!

5. Store it away.

Oh, the abundance this time of year! Even the most dedicated fruit & vegetable eater may be having trouble consuming it all. Well, don’t forget that you have to eat over the winter, too. Bone up on canning and freezing so that you have access to some BHF vegetables and orchard fruit in those bleak dark days we know are coming. I just love freezing up a bag of farm green beans and serving them at Thanksgiving, along with my prayers of thanks to Mike and Anne. Dianne Kottke sent me her frugal food tip along these lines:

“In order to avoid any waste at all throughout the growing season, think beyond freezing only the “regular” freezable produce like beans, corn, etc, and try freezing all greens that you can’t eat in time, and even radishes, peppers, etc. (You can even cook down the greens first to minimize their “footprint” in your freezer.) In the winter, you can take any of these out to thaw, throw in the food processor, and make a beautiful vegetable soup. (The greens you can even just throw in unprocessed into your soup.) Just add noodles, grains, beans or meat for a hearty soup. The greens would lend themselves well to Mike’s Sausages and Greens recipe in the middle of winter!”

6. Read, read, read.

You’re off to a good start by reading this column! :) Really, though, reading is part of planning ahead. Go to the library and get out all those books in the “600s” (of the Dewey Decimal System). Want to

make food to give as gifts? Want to make your own ravioli? Curious about raising your own chickens? Need some new recipes? You know you’ll find it in a book! Dianne recommends the cookbooks that are organized by season and/or vegetable, like [Serving Up the Harvest](#), by Andrea Chesman. You can even make copies of your favorite recipes using farm produce and store them in a notebook organized by vegetable.

7. Make a list.

Are you a list-maker? Sometimes I think it’s a genetic trait. If so, I must have gotten it from my Dad because my Mom never made a grocery list. And you guessed it, she often came home from the store to find she either had two of something or was lacking a key ingredient. (Trips back to the store for “just one more thing” can be so expensive, because who ever gets just one thing?) I’ve said it before but I’ll say it again: plan your meals, make a list, stick to it, and avoid those costly impulse buys!

8. Clean on the cheap.

I’m struggling with this one anew now that I’ve discovered method brand’s cucumber-scented all purpose cleaning spray! Delicious! *and* “naturally derived!” Still, the most effective and most sustainable cleaning products are also very cheap: baking soda and vinegar. For more information, go to frugalliving.about.com and search for “cleaning tips and recipes.”

9. Keep a paperless kitchen.

Seriously, I have virtually eliminated paper towels and napkins from my kitchen. I started with cloth napkins—so easy! Then I moved to cloth dish rags. (Throw it in the laundry *before* it gets funky.) Eventually those get old and then I use them for more general cleaning. And I use the truly old, old ones for cleaning up gunk where I want to just throw it all away. Even old socks are useful for this. ...Are you using paper towels just to dry your hands? Oh dear!

10. Budget and track prices.

All of these tips are really just about paying attention. How much do you spend now and where is your money going? How does that compare with what you can actually afford? Write it all down and see where you can do better. Put your budgeted amount in cash in an envelope; when the money’s gone, you’re done for the month! And be sure to pay attention to unit prices so you don’t get taken in by fake discounts. ■

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What I won't do to save money on food.

I always feel a pinch in my wallet around this time of year. I don't do as much freelance work over the summer, while at the same time I'm spending more on recreational activities with the kids. Then right when the bills start coming due it's time to take the kids back-to-school shopping! Yikes. And I know I'm not alone, because the drone of "high gas prices, adjustable rate mortgages, inflation" seems like just about all I hear these days. I'm a diehard tightwad, and proud. It gives me great satisfaction to find good value, and I feel like there's a direct link between laying off my wallet and living lightly on the earth. I like www.frugalliving.about.com for good tips on staying on budget, www.newdream.org for inspiration about why it matters, and [Mother Earth News](#) for do-it-yourself ideas...as well as my old favorite, Amy Dacyczyn's [Tightwad Gazette](#) series, originally published in the early 1990s.

All of my sources say that budgeting for food is an ideal first step to living within your means, since it is generally a household's largest discretionary expense. On the other hand, I don't recommend following every piece of advice you ever read about cutting the food budget. This stuff goes into our bodies and becomes a part of who we are, so there has to be a balance here. I won't go to the scratch-and-dent store, for example, to buy cans of food with no labels on them and make them into a "mystery casserole." (Truly! This was suggested!) I won't buy meat from factory farms, no matter how much it saves to buy bulk at Costco. I won't tell my kids to cut back on fruit and fill up on white-bread carbs instead. I won't buy products that are made cheap by adding high fructose corn syrup, and I will *never* fall for the fast food "value meal."

Luckily, there's plenty that can be done with the food budget while still keeping a handle on our souls. So we've decided to devote this double issue to cost-cutting measures you can easily take without sacrificing the good fresh food we've gotten used to as CSA members. Take a peek online. Hope it helps.—Anna Barker (annabarker@charter.net)

Recipes: Cabbage

Making homemade coleslaw is one example of how you can be frugal and eat well at the same time. Why do we only get a little cup of coleslaw with our restaurant grilled cheese? Why does it cost so dang much at the deli? I make a big batch and expect we'll be eating it all week, yet the family polishes it off at one sitting. Still, you probably don't need a recipe, so here instead is one from Deborah Madison's [Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone](#). It's a cabbage gratin, but you can add significantly to its value by using the French name given here.—AB

Pain au Chou

Butter and freshly grated Parmesan for the dish

1 1/2 lbs green (or Savoy) cabbage, diced in 2" squares

1/3 C flour

1 C milk

1/4 C crème fraîche or cream

2 TBS tomato paste

3 eggs

3 TBS finely chopped parsley or dill

Salt and freshly milled white pepper

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Butter a gratin dish and coat the sides with the cheese. Boil the cabbage, uncovered, in salted water for 5 minutes, then drain. Rinse, then press out as much water as possible. Whisk the remaining ingredients until smooth, add the cabbage, and pour the mixture into the dish.

Bake until firm and lightly browned, about 50 minutes.

To make a loaf: Bake the cabbage in a loaf pan lined with lightly buttered parchment paper, until firm and lightly colored. Let it rest for a few minutes, then unmold and peel off the paper. The bottom, which is now the top, will be very pale, so either turn it over or cover it with minced herbs or browned bread crumbs.

Can be served with a sauce: Sour cream flavored with mustard, horseradish sauce, a curry sauce, or tomato sauce with cream.

This Week: Special Double Issue FRUGAL FOOD

With prices continuing to rise and a looonng winter ahead, how do we save up enough money to feed our families well while still living sustainably?

Check online for
recipes and tips!

www.bearhillfarmcsa.com