



Bear Prints

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July 20, 2009

Another reminder—people who paid half at the beginning - the other half (\$265) is due no later than August 1st. That is basically in next week, so don't procrastinate please! I start reminding early, since some weeks people are away and/or don't read their newsletters. It is tough enough right now without having to call people. Thanks to those of you who already sent it in!!!

One of the reasons we've lasted as farmers (aside from Mike's amazing astuteness as a farmer) is our ability to adapt and try new things. Even when it isn't necessary, Mike is always trying new stuff. Sometimes it's important that he did, like when we can no longer get our favorite variety of a certain veggie. One of his new things this year was grafted tomato plants. Yes, folks you can graft one variety of tomato onto the root stock of another variety, just like trees. He used tiny little plastic clips & it worked. What will that boy come up with next?

Farm News

Ah, nothing like the sunshine to make the world seem like a better place! Weeks of gloomy weather affects everyone's mood, so you can imagine it affects us worse (livelihood and all). Weeding carrots all day Sunday and having to wear sunscreen was pure bliss. Yeah, I got sore, but it was a pleasure to be out doing what needed to be done in the sun!

Mike and Matt spent the day at Nashoba on tractors. They were getting ground ready to transplant into. Believe it or not, the big push is on for the last of the major plantings of the season. We'll still be planting lettuce every week for a while and sundry other quick growing veggies, but this week is it for the longer growing stuff. The front of the greenhouse should clear soon and then we can focus on harvesting and weeding.

We planted another batch of tomatoes on the top of the hill. Yes, it is late for them, but when the first planting starts going down the theory is that these will kick in. At least that's how it works in a normal year. Hopefully the fall will be warm and long. Take a walk around the farm when you come. It looks great! Try to figure out which plants are which and who will be ready next.

There's more pork in the freezer if you haven't checked it out yet. The cheese has been selling fast, too.

What's New In Your Share This Week

New this week are **Swiss chard** and **red gold potatoes**. **Swiss chard** is a staple green of summer, like the kale. We start it in the greenhouse and transplant it out. When it is big enough we start harvesting the larger outer leaves and keep harvesting all season. Unlike corn where we seed it, transplant it and then harvest one ear per plant and it's gone! Or as in the first planting, it starts to try to produce when it's only a tiny plant and we don't get anything. Swiss chard is more tender than kale and milder in flavor (I think cooked it is milder than spinach). You can eat the lovely fleshy stems, too, either with the leaves as we do or separately. It is great sautéed with olive oil and garlic, or just steamed. It is very

versatile and can be used to hold a stuffing (like cabbage leaves) or sandwich filling. Just blanch whole leaves by placing in boiling water until just tender, then placing in cold water to stop the cooking. Leaving the lid off while cooking helps to keep the leaves bright green.

Red gold potatoes are just that; red on the outside, gold inside. Potatoes keep best in a cool dark place, but the fridge is too cold. I like to keep mine in a paper bag to keep them from getting green. Try roasting these chunked & spritzed with olive oil and salt & pepper, or in potato salad or just boiled, or boiled in stock then mashed... the choices are endless!

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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!

Taking a Closer Look at That Menu

Back from Ohio! It was another happily uneventful trip. We went out to lunch and to the movies (Harry Potter), but most of the visit was spent hanging out and chatting. My Mom also likes to cook and we share tips, but she has very Mid-western tastes (read: no vegetables!). She shared with me her stack of Taste of Home magazines and I went through all the recipes in Family Circle...ugh, if I see *one more recipe* that calls for 8 ounces of cream cheese...!

On the way, I made reservations at the Embassy Suites Hotel, which advertised “free breakfast made to order.” I got a laugh thinking of what their reaction would be when I said, “*I’ll have my eggs scrambled, from chickens raised in humane conditions, please.*” That would be a shocker in Syracuse! (I didn’t get a chance: I had made reservations for the wrong week and we ended up at the Holiday Inn.) Seriously, though, how much could we improve the US agricultural system by asking pointed questions at our favorite restaurants? *Can you tell me if your tomatoes were harvested by Florida slaves?* (More on that later.) *Excuse me, did this pork come from a CAFO (Confined Animal Feeding Operation)? Sure, I’d love coffee with my dessert, but only if it’s Fair Trade.* The door to the kitchen would be swinging like mad, but we might eventually find some acceptable choices when we go out to dinner.

After one becomes immersed in this whole “local sustainable agriculture” thing, it gets almost too tedious to order from a standard restaurant menu. At chain restaurants, they have scientifically tested techniques for getting us to overeat; google David Kessler’s book The End of Overeating for more on that. But I find myself thinking more about the *sources* of what’s on the menu, and it turns my stomach. No more hamburgers, that’s for sure! Yet omelettes are out because I’m not happy about “factory” eggs, and even the broccoli was probably grown in Mexico among the raw sewage. Sigh! I’m exaggerating a little...and don’t worry, I don’t make my friends at the table miserable with my rants. But I do sort of cross my fingers when I place an order, and I certainly wish there were more options since it’s so much fun to go out to eat. Maybe someday...

Meanwhile, I’m back home and looking forward to picking up my share this afternoon. Food we can trust, hooray! - Anna Barker (annabarker@charter.net)

Recipes: Potatoes

In addition to sharing her magazines, Mom let me go through Dad’s shelf of organic gardening books. Among them I found this gem, Your Kitchen Garden, by George Seddon and Helena Radecka. Here are some potato recipes from this find.—AB

Potato Salad au Vermouth

1 lb small new potatoes

Salt

1/3 C chicken stock

2 TBS dry white vermouth

4 TBS thick mayonnaise (preferably homemade)

2 TBS chopped chives, scallions, or shallots

1 TBS finely chopped parsley

Freshly ground black pepper

Wash the potatoes and boil in salted water or steam. Mix the chicken stock and vermouth in a pitcher. Peel the hot potatoes* and slice them thickly. Put them into a bowl, moistening each layer with stock and vermouth. Set aside until the potatoes are quite cold and have absorbed most of the dressing.

Carefully drain off the excess liquid—it may be used to fortify a soup. Fold the mayonnaise and herbs in carefully to avoid breaking the potato slices, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Chill until ready to serve.

*I may skip peeling our beautiful new potatoes.

New Potatoes Baked in Foil

1 1/2 lb small new potatoes

4 TBS butter

2 springs fresh mint or dill

Coarse salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Wash the potatoes in cold running water, rubbing off the skins with your fingers. Alternatively, the skins may be left on. Dry the potatoes well. Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Cut a double thickness of foil large enough to wrap the potatoes up in a package. Distribute a few small pieces of butter over the center of the foil. Put the potatoes on top, burying the sprigs of herbs among them. Sprinkle the potatoes generously with salt and pepper, and dot the rest of the butter over them. Wrap the potatoes up, tightly sealing the edges of the foil. Put the package on a baking sheet.

Bake for 1 hour, or until the potatoes feel soft when squeezed gently through the foil. Protect your hand with a cloth.

Undo the package carefully. Transfer the potatoes to a heated serving dish. Discard the herbs and pour the buttery juices in the foil over the top.

Potatoes love herbs! Chives, mint, dill, rosemary, sage, thyme, oregano...