



Bear Prints

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Thanks to Matt, Halley and Patrick for all their fantastic help this year. Thanks, too, to Casey our volunteer, who has potential to become a great farmer. Good help is critical to our operation, we certainly couldn't do as much if it was just us, especially now that I'm working full-time off the farm. Please sign up promptly in Feb. We may cut back or expand, it depends on availability of help.

The food at the party was amazing as usual. Bess Libby-Shannon must have spent days creating the most beautiful cupcakes I have ever seen. They looked like marzipan, but the veggies on top were made from colored tootsie rolls! The cupcakes looked like they were covered in dirt, and the rows even had labels! Thanks for all the hard work.

We had everything from apple crisp and pear galette to enchiladas, lasagna, chicken cassoulet and frittatas. Mike cooked our own pork and sausage & we had the fantastic fried mushrooms again, thanks to Pat.

Farm News

Another season come and gone, another huge party, come and gone! Thanks so much to everyone who came and brought some great food, and helped set up, etc. We're a pretty good team. Hope you all had a good time. We did, once underway. The rain made it tough to set up and get ready, but no one seemed to mind being in the greenhouses. I'm sure the kids missed running around in the dark, but the little ones had a blast in Halley's brain child of a hay fort. We set up hay bales in the small greenhouse and the kids had tremendous fun knocking it down and rebuilding, climbing, etc.. They had the whole small greenhouse to carve pumpkins and color in. This was only the 2nd time it rained enough to have it in the greenhouse, but we still have an unbroken record of bonfires. We had a first this year, baby piglets born on the morning of the party! That set things back even further, as Mike and Matt had to move her to another pen and put up a heat lamp. The first babies were cold, but Mike brought them back to life with a bath in warm water. It was also Sadie's first CSA party. We got her last year just after the party. She did great and ate an amazing amount of food.

Despite the wet, cold weather and the hail most members that we've talked to seemed to be happy with their veggies. Most farmers had trouble with blight on tomatoes this year, but we had lots of cucumbers and potatoes. We did the best we could. It was definitely our toughest growing season yet. We are looking forward to next season. Mike has done a ton of work spreading compost and making new fields. So thanks and see you soon!

What's New In Your Share This Week

New this week is **butternut squash**. It is one of the best winter squash for storage. If you keep it in a very cool place they can last all winter practically. As I mentioned earlier, it is the only kind of winter squash we had growing up and it was almost always peeled, chunked and boiled. Peeling winter squash is tough and it can often be as scary as cutting bagels. What a revelation to have baked squash! You still have to cut it, but don't feel you have to keep it in halves the long way. Just cut it safely into manageable chunks, scoop out the seeds and stringy yuck and then roast until tender in a 350 degree oven with other veggies or a chicken, etc... It is so incredibly sweet that way, I couldn't imagine add-

ing any kind of sweetener to it. I love it leftover, too, even cold out of the fridge. OK, I'm much lazier than my Mom, but who isn't?

Some people mash their winter squash once cooked, others leave it in chunks. It is entirely up to you, but you may want to try it both ways to check it out. Personally, I don't like the baby food mashed, but I do love a good whipped potato, so go figure. Speaking of which, I hope all the babies out there enjoy some of the farm produce over the winter. And Moms, if you were too frantically busy with life this summer to freeze stuff, don't worry. There's plenty of winter squash to carry them through. See you next season, we hope.

Bear Hill Farm CSA

Anne & Mike Gagnon

14 Davis Road
Tyngsboro, MA 01879
Phone: 978-692-4224 we have a new answering machine, but we unplug for storms best is 978-846-4577 for now
Email: bearhillfarm@aol.com

*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 once a year...

What a fun party! We got there pretty late, so I'm afraid I missed a lot of people I had been hoping to see. But we *did* get to see those newborn piglets, which was a real treat. A group of us trudged through the mud and stood together for quite a while in the dark, watching the babies sleeping under the heat lamp. One piglet, in particular, worked very hard to make its way across the stall (all of about 2 feet) to get to its mother. The moment truly was special, and I'm glad we got to see it—the kids, especially. (I never really saw a pig close-up until I joined the farm!)

And the bonfire! What luck that the skies cleared enough for the bonfire to be lit. For me, that's always the best part. Here is a photo taken by my bonfire neighbor, Paul. He took it on his Blackberry; then I gave him my email address and he sent it to me on the spot. And I got out my Blackberry and confirmed that I received it. Meanwhile, my 12yo daughter Sophie snuck off to a corner to text her friends that she was at a party with a bonfire (but alas, also with her *Mom*, LOL). It was tempting to get cranky about having electronics there at this quiet place—perhaps interrupting a chance to contemplate—but I sort of appreciated the level of communication that was going on, just in a different way than I am used to. I'm still a fan of screen-free stargazing but at that moment there seemed to be room for both. (And anyway, the clouds covered the stars; only the full moon occasionally peeked through. And Sophie didn't *just* text—she also told me a Native American story about how the night sky came to be.)



Another thing I always love about the end-of-year party is that it gives me something to write about this last week. Otherwise, this page would be covered with my grieving for another summer gone by! Well, it will come again. There is a lot of hot chocolate to drink between now and next spring, I know, but it *will* come again. (Note to self: time to stock up on hot chocolate!) Meanwhile, I will be thinking of you all. Stay well—*wash your hands!* - and send me an email anytime. See you next year! —Anna Barker (annabarker@charter.net)

Recipes: Butternut Squash

It is a time for endings, to be sure, but also another beginning, with the arrival of "butternut squash season." I have been waiting all year to make this recipe again.—AB

Roasted Butternut Squash and Pear Fricassee
From Fresh from the Garden by Perla Meyers

1 large butternut squash
3 medium semi-ripe Bartlett or Bosc pears
3 TBS unsalted butter
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Large pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
2 TBS dark brown sugar
1/2 C chicken broth, preferably homemade

Preheat the oven to 375F. Peel the butternut squash and cut into 3/4" cubes. Peel and core the pears; cut into 3/4" cubes and set aside.

In a rectangular flameproof baking dish, melt the butter over low heat.* Add the pears and squash and season with salt, pepper and nutmeg. Sprinkle with brown sugar, add 1/4 C of the broth, and bake for 1 hour or until tender, adding a little broth if the pan juices run dry. Serve hot or at room temperature.

**[I always melt the butter in the oven while it's preheating.]*

Butternut squash is also excellent in soups. I haven't tried this one yet, but the addition of both rosemary and orange zest looks intriguing.—AB

Rosemary Butternut Bisque
From A Well-Seasoned Appetite by Molly O'Neill

2 medium butternut squash, peeled & cut into 1/2" dice
6 C chicken broth, homemade, or low-sodium canned broth
1 TBS chopped fresh rosemary
2 tsp grated orange zest
1 tsp kosher salt
Freshly ground pepper to taste
2 TBS heavy cream (optional)

Preheat the oven to 375F. Place the squash on a baking sheet and roast until tender, about 25 min. Transfer to a large saucepan and add the broth, rosemary, and orange zest. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Transfer the mixture to a food processor and process until smooth. Stir in the salt and pepper. Ladle the soup into bowls and swirl a little of the cream into each bowl, if desired. Serve immediately.

Energy Saver: You can roast the squash for this soup at the same time that you bake the fricassee. Refrigerate for use later in the week.