

The Morning Star

News, Information & Recipes for Morning Star Farm CSA Members
Volume II, Number 16 * Published Biweekly * October 20/22, 2009

Melinda's Farm News

Wow, is it really the last week of regular season CSA? And what about the great weather we are having? It is hard to remember why all the pumpkins sitting on the back porch are not really ripe, but thinking back, that 24-degree night back in September damaged many pumpkins that are still out in the field.

Thank goodness the late greens got by the weather! I sure enjoyed the last crops of arugula, bok choy, radishes and other greens—and I trust you did too. Farming would be a lot easier if I could control the weather, but then again, I am glad I cannot, as it might be a bit too much like King Midas with his golden touch.

This, my second year running the farm alone, has been a challenging time for me. The economic situation hit me a lot harder than I had anticipated. In addition, the weeds, weather patterns and crop yields all presented problems that have affected both my stress levels and the bottom line. Coming into this winter, I will be considering many different options for the farm.

First, I must get some better machinery to use on the farm. My 30-year-old rototiller just cannot do the jobs I need done. There are many improvements in implements that cannot be operated using my tiller. Moreover, many of these implements have made tillers easier on the operator's body, which is an important consideration, given my size and age. Also, timing for getting crops into the ground is critical to my success, and the old tiller is causing delays.

Second, as I've previously mentioned, I think another solution would be to purchase or trade for certain crops, freeing up space here for crops that I can grow well. For example, I know two farmers further north, in a different microclimate, who grow great broccoli. If I could

obtain broccoli from one of them, rather than continuing to struggle with it, I could use two additional beds for head lettuce, which we never seem to have enough of. I could consider the same approach for the cauliflower and the sweet corn, perhaps even the winter squash, which would free up a lot of field space.

In closing, it occurs to me to once again express my gratitude to you, the consumer, for being

willing to make the effort to eat local food and support local farming. The chain of events that you set in motion when you spend your food dollars in this way reminds me of a favorite Gandhi quote, "We must become the change we wish to see in the world." Thanks again for helping to make Morning Star Farm possible.



Current—and Coming

For our final regular season pickup:

- Baby spinach
- Bell peppers
- Bok choy
- Cabbage
- Garlic
- Onions
- Pumpkins*
- Tomatoes
- Winter squash



*Note that the pumpkins are a mixture of orange and green, since that early frost found them not quite ripe on the vines. Have a variegated Halloween!

Winter Season Preview

As our regular share season comes to a close, I hope you've been enjoying the gorgeous fall colors as well as the veggies. I also hope you'll be sticking with the CSA for our second winter share season. Weather permitting, the crop supply looks a lot better for the winter shares this year, including more beets, cabbage and winter greens. The newsletter will go monthly, starting with November 4 and continuing on the first Wednesday of December, January and February—assuming that the vegetables hold up as Melinda hopes they will. I'm busy searching for satisfying winter recipes that use farm produce. **Liz Gilbert** has already sent in a vegan pumpkin pie recipe that I plan to feature in November. Please share your favorite winter recipes!

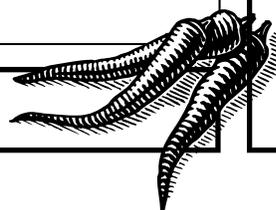
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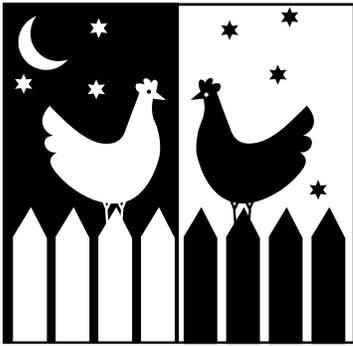
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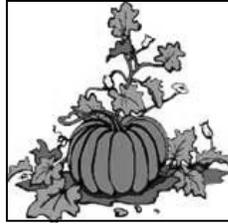
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Recipes: Over the Back Fence



It's time to shift our focus to warm, satisfying dishes that can heat up a chilly evening. For now, my winter squash are displayed in a bowl, too beautiful to cook, but after Halloween I plan to use them in harvest soup and pumpkin pie. In the meantime, I'm headed down to the kitchen to try Melinda's beet burgers—not exactly the classic cheeseburgers to accompany this week's non-stop baseball, but I'm sure we'll enjoy them on toasted whole-wheat buns with a dab of mayo, accompanied by coleslaw or sautéed beet greens. Batter up!

Savory-Sweet Rutabaga Pudding

Somewhere between a fluffy ricotta dessert and mashed potatoes, this pudding will surprise you in many ways. Its taste and texture are delicious, so you can expect compliments all around the table. While the dish pairs exceptionally well with lamb, it's also great for dessert. Adapted from *Farmer John's Cookbook*. Serves 6-8.

- 1 large rutabaga (about 2 pounds)
- 1½ teaspoons salt, divided
- butter for greasing the baking dish
- 2 eggs plus 1 additional yolk, beaten
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- ¼ cup dried bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup (Grade B is best)
- pinch freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/3 cup raisins (optional)
- freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons butter

Bring a large pot of water to boil. Peel the rutabaga and cut into 2-inch (or smaller) dice. Add the rutabaga and 1 teaspoon salt, partially cover, and cook until the rutabaga is very soft, 30-45 minutes. Drain, reserving ½ cup of the cooking water. While rutabaga is cooking, preheat oven to 350 degrees and coat a 2-quart baking dish with the butter. Beat eggs in a medium bowl. Stir in the cream, bread crumbs, maple syrup and nutmeg. If you plan to use raisins, plump them in hot water for 15 minutes. When rutabaga is soft, drain (remember to reserve some of the cooking water) and mash well, using a potato masher, food mill or food processor. If the mixture seems too dry, add a little of the reserved rutabaga water. Add the egg mixture, drained raisins, remaining ½ teaspoon salt and a few grindings of pepper; stir to combine. Transfer to the prepared baking dish. Smooth the top and dot with butter. Bake until light golden on top, about 45 minutes. Serve hot.

Sautéed Beet Greens

Adapted from simplyrecipes.com. Serves 4.

- 1 pound beet greens
- 1 strip thick-sliced bacon, chopped
- ¼ cup chopped onion
- 1-2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 2-3 tablespoons cider or sherry vinegar

Wash greens and cut into ribbons. Cut stems into 1-inch pieces. In a large skillet, sauté bacon pieces until lightly browned. Add onions and beet stems; sauté until onions start to soften. Add garlic, beet greens, sugar and red pepper. When greens are crisp-tender, stir in vinegar.

Melinda's Baked Beet Burgers

If you still have carrots, use them along with the beets. If not, just use more beets. If you prefer, the burgers can be fried instead of baked. Makes 12 patties.

- butter for greasing baking sheet
- ½ cup sesame seeds
- 1 cup sunflower seeds
- 2 cups peeled, grated beets (about 2 medium beets)
- 2 cups peeled, grated carrots (about 4 carrots)
- ½ cup minced onion
- 2-3 cloves crushed garlic
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup cooked brown rice
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup finely chopped fresh parsley
- 3 tablespoons flour (I prefer garbanzo flour, but any flour will do, e.g., rice or wheat flour)
- 2 tablespoons tamari or soy sauce
- cayenne pepper



Preheat oven to 350 degrees; lightly coat a large baking sheet with butter. In a small heavy skillet over medium heat, toast sesame seeds until lightly browned and fragrant, about 3-5 minutes, stirring often and watching closely to avoid burning them. Transfer toasted seeds to a dish to cool. Return skillet to heat and repeat the process with sunflower seeds. Transfer toasted sunflower seeds to the dish with the sesame seeds. Combine beets, carrots, onion and garlic in a large bowl. Add the remaining ingredients (use ⅛ to ¼ teaspoon of cayenne pepper, or to taste) and mix until thoroughly combined. Hands work best here! Also using your hands, shape mixture into 12 patties and arrange them in rows on the prepared baking sheet. Bake the patties until they are brown around the edges, about 20 minutes. Unless you make oversized, thick patties, it should not be necessary to turn them. Serve on buns (hint: shape the patties to match the buns you plan to use) or alone.

Elegant Beet Soup

Adapted from cooks.com. Serves 4 as a first course.

- 2 cups beets, peeled and grated
- ½ cup carrots, peeled and grated
- 2 cups beef bouillon or broth
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- sour cream and fresh dill for garnish

In a saucepan, partially covered, cook vegetables in bouillon or broth until they are soft. Stir in vinegar. Purée using an immersion blender (or in a blender). Ladle into soup bowls and top with a dollop of sour cream and chopped dill. This time of year, it is great served hot, but it can also be chilled.