



September 5, 2005

# Stone Soup

Stearns Farm CSA • Community Supported Agriculture

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## WINTER SQUASH AND PUMPKIN "PARADE"

This Wednesday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, starting at 9 AM we will be harvesting the WINTER SQUASH AND PUMPKINS at Plimpton field. A group from BridgeHouse will join us with a large van. We need a few other vans and lots of helpers to pick, lift and transport the squash over the three miles to our greenhouse for weighing and curing. If the conditions are wet or raining we will postpone it until Thursday or Saturday. This is an opportunity for sharers to put in remaining work hours. You don't need to sign up ahead of time, but please be on time so the parade can step off on schedule. Thanks.



**WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK:** Carnival, an early winter squash, red onions, Daiken radishes

**PYO:** What you can use of chard, kale, cherry tomatoes, plum tomatoes, hot peppers, field herbs, 24 stems flowers (sunflowers count as 4 stems)

**WHAT'S ON THE WAY:** Storage onions, leeks, potatoes, more corn, raspberries, pumpkins



## FROM THE FIELD By Kathy Huckins, Farm Manager

**CORN:** We have finished our second planting of corn and the third is on the way. Because of the corn worms we have cut off the damaged areas so as not to scare you. They do look ugly. The ripening time of the corn has not always coincided with our pick-up days. Lots of corn and no corn seem to be our two options. The third stand of corn looks great. We'll wait and see when it ripens.

**TOMATOES:** Our large, juicy slicing tomatoes are pouring in each week. The heirlooms are beautiful with unique taste, if oddly shaped sometimes. There are hundreds of plum tomatoes for you to pick this week. This is the time for making sauces and salsa. We can stand straight up to pick the cherry tomatoes now. All the varieties of tomatoes will diminish in the next few weeks as the plants tire of all this production. You would too!!

**HOT PEPPERS:** These are plentiful. We planted 5 varieties, each labeled with a marker on the right side of the bed. I saw a ripe Habanero yesterday. They are the last to come in and are the hottest.

**BASIL:** Basil will be the first plant hit with the frost which can come anytime after the 20th of September, so harvest it now for freezing or drying. Start picking from the back of the field. The plants back there feel neglected.



## DRYING HERBS By Wendy Flaherty Newsletter Editor

If I can do it, you can do it! This is my second year at the farm and I decided to try my hand at drying herbs. A few weeks ago I did a little research on the web about herb drying. To my surprise, it was pretty easy. Although I know there are probably other more "Martha Stewart" ways to do this, I found that this way was probably the easiest for beginning "dryers" like me. The links below are good for visuals of how to bag the herbs and offer more information about the herb's essential oils and when to pick them.

<http://www.four-h.purdue.edu/foods/Drying%20herbs.htm>

<http://gardenhobbies.com/herbs/dryingherbs.html>

### Supplies:

- Bunches of herbs (picked preferably in the morning)
- 12 or more brown paper lunch bags (keeps the dust off and preserves the herb's colors)
- String or rubber bands
- Coat hangar or clothesline
- Ziplock bags or small spice jars (try AC Moore or Michael's)

### Here's how to do it:

- Wash the herbs and dry them out on paper towels or a drying rack until dry (about 2 hours or less).
- Make small bunches of the washed herbs (7-8 stems) and place stem end up into the paper bags.
- Wrap a string or rubber band around the stem end of the bunch.
- Hang from a coat hangar or pin to a clothesline in a cool, dark place with a bit of a breeze for several weeks until dry. (Check after two weeks)
- Strip leaves off and store in Ziplock storage bags or small jars with tight fitting lids.

## HARVEST FESTIVAL AND PENELOPE'S CELEBRATION

Just a reminder, we have two really exciting events coming up. The *Penelope Turton Celebration* will be on September 24<sup>th</sup> at the Friends Meeting House on Edmands. Discover the history of our farm's founder with a historic slide show and pot luck event. Stearns Farm CSA annual *Harvest Festival* is October 2<sup>nd</sup> at noon. It will include a pot luck of our bountiful season, our annual meeting, dedication of a sitting area in the flower garden to former longtime board members Laurie and Dick Daley, activities in the herb and children's gardens, a bee keeper's demonstration, music and wagon rides.

**FRESH BASIL CONSERVE**[www.cooks.com](http://www.cooks.com)

Fresh basil leaves  
 Extra-virgin olive oil  
 Kosher salt

If you have a lot of basil in your garden at the end of summer, this is a good way to use it just before the frost. Harvest your basil at the end of a warm dry day. Allow to sit for about one hour. Use small jars if you have them, otherwise canning jars will do.

At the bottom of each jar, add 1/4" kosher salt to the bottom and cover this with olive oil. Leaving basil leaves on the stem, layer them into the jar, pressing with the back of a spoon. Sprinkle each layer with a quarter inch of salt, and pour oil over each layer, repeating until the jar is full and packed tightly with basil. End with a layer of salt and cover with oil. You may add one or two whole cloves of garlic, and a tiny hot pepper. Store jars in the warmest section of your refrigerator. This will keep for several weeks. The basil leaves will become dark green and wilted, but the flavor will intensify and they will make a wonderful addition to your sauces, stews, and salads.

**TOMATO & BASIL SOUP**[www.cooks.com](http://www.cooks.com)

1 medium onion  
 1 tbs. olive oil  
 A dozen or so fresh roma and hothouse tomatoes  
 4 cups chicken broth  
 6 sprigs basil tied with string

1 tsp. minced shallot  
 2 tsp. balsamic vinegar  
 1 cup heavy cream  
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
 Basil leaves sliced in thin strips

Sauté sliced onion in olive oil in a heavy bottomed pan and cook over medium heat until soft, about 7 minutes. Tie basil together with twine (or just slice into strips). Add tomatoes chopped in large pieces, basil, chicken broth, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, lower heat and reduce soup by 1/4. Remove basil bunch and puree soup mixture. Heat soup, add balsamic vinegar and stir in heavy cream. Serve with a basil garnish. Also delicious served cold!

**BASIL, TOMATO PASTA SALAD**[www.cooks.com](http://www.cooks.com)

3/4 lb. fettuccini or spaghetti

**DRESSING:**

1/3 c. extra virgin olive oil  
 1 clove garlic, minced  
 Salt & freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
 6-8 tbsp. chopped fresh basil

1/2 cup minced parsley  
 2 tbs. chopped green onions or 1/4 med. red onion sliced  
 3 tomatoes, sliced

Combine oil, garlic, salt and pepper in bowl, mixing well. Add basil, parsley, onions and tomatoes. Set aside for 30 minutes for flavors to blend. In boiling salted water, cook fettuccini according to package directions or until al dente. Drain well. Toss with dressing. Serve immediately. Tips: Do not make dressing too far in advance or chopped basil leaves may darken. For an interesting taste treat, substitute whole wheat spaghetti for the fettuccini. Cook 15 minutes in boiling salted water. Drain well.

**BASIL AND LEMON CHICKEN**[www.cooks.com](http://www.cooks.com)

1 (3 1/2 lb.) chicken, quartered  
 1/2 cup fresh lemon juice  
 1/2 cup light clover honey  
 1/4 cup olive oil

2 cloves garlic, chopped  
 1/2 cup finely chopped fresh basil  
 1/2 tsp. coarse black pepper

Clean chicken well. Remove back bone, then flatten breast bone. Place chicken quarters in glass dish. To make marinade, combine lemon juice, honey, oil, and garlic in blender. Process for 30 seconds. Remove to a bowl, stir in chopped basil and pepper and pour over the chicken. Cover and refrigerate at least 6 hours or overnight, turning chicken a few times to coat. To cook, remove chicken from marinade. Place legs and thighs 3-4 inches over medium-hot coals and grill for 10 minutes, turning once. Add breasts to grill and cook 30 minutes, turning and basting every 10 minutes. When crisp, remove and serve with fresh basil on side.