



August 21, 2006

Stone Soup

Stearns Farm CSA • Community Supported Agriculture

862 Edmands Road, Framingham, MA 01701 508-371-4310 Vol 7, No 11



CHILDREN'S TEA THIS MONTH!

Join us on Tuesday and/or Friday at 2:30 p.m. for some lemon balm tea and crafts. We will explore what colors we can get from plants growing on our farm. Please come dressed in old clothes, some of these vegetable stains will be hard to remove. If anybody wants to help out by bringing snacks, please let me know! gudrunbaubock@gmail.com



ON THE STAND THIS WEEK: Head lettuce, carrots, beets, cucumbers, summer squash varieties, maybe eggplant and peppers, slicing, heirloom and plum tomatoes, fennel, mild onion, red cabbage, a taste of cantaloupe

PYO: Cherry tomatoes, green beans, braising greens of collards and kale, field herbs of cilantro, dill, basil and parsley, tomatillos, a bouquet of cut flowers, a handful of edible flowers

COMING SOON: celery, diakon radish, red onion, 2nd corn planting



THE CHILDREN'S GARDEN Carrots, Tomatoes, Beans, Etc..... By Gudrun Baubock

It is exciting to see children standing in the bean tipi, picking green beans and finding out what they taste like raw, or seeing children snacking on a cherry tomato picked from one of the vines in 'their' garden. The carrots are still very tiny, if we leave them in the ground a bit longer, they will grow bigger, but if some youngsters have a hard time waiting, they can try to pull one now. Make sure they know that carrots come out of the dirt, so they will need to rinse it before eating! All this harvesting by kids is a valuable experience for them, but the children should also learn, that vegetables are food, that a lot of work goes into growing them, and that they are not to be harvested just for the fun of picking and then to be thrown away. Help your children learn how to treat our food and labor with respect!



FROM THE FIELD By Kathy Huckins, Farm Manager

ONIONS

Onions, those soldiers in the field, standing tall while growing a solid foundation for us to eat; they are ready for us. We planted the onion seeds in February, that's right February. They were watered daily by Chet Pendelton, and planted out in the field the end of April. We have been tending them ever since. Because they do not have a leaf canapé, weeds love to grow around them to keep them company. But the weeds end up being like unwelcome houseguests, sucking the moisture and nutrients as well as the sunlight out of the onions. We weeded between each one 4 or 5 times this season on our hands and knees, (Many of you remember this farm task.)and cultivated the aisles just as many times with our tractor. We did our best to protect them. Now their tops are dying back, telling us they want to be harvested.

We grow three varieties here at Stearns: **AILSA CRAIG**, a Spanish type mild flavored onion best sliced raw. It's great topping a sandwich or diced for salads, salsas or relish. **PRINCE**, a standard winter storage, yellow skinned variety. **MARS**, a purple-red skin color with a well colored interior. It also looks great in salads. This week we will have the mild flavored variety on the stand. We will cure the other two varieties in our greenhouse. You will meet them in the next couple of weeks.

SWISS CHARD

We have cleaned out the Swiss chard beds, removing diseased leaves, pulling weeds and generally giving them more room to breath. They were overcrowded in the second half of each bed because most of us pick from just the first 100 feet. They need a rest, so we will not be picking them this week. Choose kale and collards instead. Thanks.



FARM WINDOW DECALS NOW AVAILABLE! By Malcolm MacNeill

How many times have you said to yourself, "Gee, if I only had a Stearns Farm CSA car window decal, with the farm's logo in green on a white background, die cut in the shape of an oval"?

Well, dream no more. By a remarkable coincidence, we have these very decals available on the stand. They measure approximately 3 x 5 inches, and they are guaranteed to bring with them an element of style and sophistication that your car is currently lacking.

So let the world know where you get your produce, and spread the word about Stearns Farm. The first decal is free to sharers, with additional decals available for the incredibly reasonable price of a dollar per decal.

ONION FACTS

Onions are so familiar that we take them for granted, using them almost daily to lend essential flavor to meats, soups, stews, and grains. As one of the oldest known human foods, onions are a living link to the ways of our ancestors – as in the ancient recipes below. They are in the *Allium* Family, which also includes scallions, garlic, chives, and leeks. The distinctive “burn,” taste, and smell that make these everyday treasures so intriguing to us come largely from sulfur compounds, which onions and their relatives store as a defense against other predators. These compounds also earn onions their health-giving reputation. The pungent, eye-stinging juices and mysterious layers of the “common onion” have inspired poets and philosophers, as well as cooks, for thousands of years.

RATATOUILLE. This traditional Mediterranean stew with deep summer flavor gets its “base note” from a liberal use of onions and garlic. Serve it warm over rice, at room temperature with crusty bread, or lightly chilled.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 medium eggplant (about ¾ lb) | 1 bell pepper, seeded and chopped |
| 2 small zucchini (or mixed zucchini and summer squash) | 1 large garlic clove, minced, or more to taste |
| 1 medium to large onion, chopped | 2 Tbs olive oil, more if needed |
| 2 or 3 ripe tomatoes, chopped (about 1 lb) | ½ tsp dried oregano, or 1 tsp fresh, or to taste |
| 1 Tbs fresh basil, or to taste | salt and pepper to taste |

Cube eggplant and zucchini. Heat oil in a large frying pan and add vegetables in the following order – eggplant, onion, zucchini, peppers, garlic – gently stirring each addition over medium heat to cook it partway before adding the next vegetable. Drizzle in a little extra oil during cooking if needed. Stir in tomatoes and simmer until tomatoes cook down slightly. Remove from heat and season to taste with chopped herbs and salt and pepper. 4-6 servings.

BUCKWHEAT WITH ONIONS (KASHA). Hearty, wholesome, and fast, this old-fashioned eastern European comfort food is all about the onions.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 cup uncooked whole or large-grain buckwheat (kasha) | 2 Tbs vegetable oil or mix of oil and butter* |
| 1 egg, lightly beaten | 1 large onion, chopped (about 1¼ cups) |
| 2 cups water, preheated almost to boiling | salt and pepper to taste |

In a heavy saucepan with a lid, stir the egg into the buckwheat and toast over medium high heat, stirring constantly until the egg dries and each grain is separate and lightly browned. Remove from heat and slowly pour in hot water (to avoid splatters), stir well, reduce heat to low, cover, and cook about 15 minutes. Meanwhile, in a separate pan, cook onions in oil until brown and slightly caramelized. Add cooked onions to buckwheat, season with salt and pepper, cover, and cook another 5-10 minutes until grain is light and fluffy. Add cooked egg noodles or bow-tie pasta for a satisfying side dish. [*Rendered chicken fat is traditional.] 4-6 servings.

TABOULEH. A tart, cooling salad of grain, herbs, and onions that is perfect for summer – no cooking! Adapted from “How to Cook Everything” by Mark Bittman.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ½ cup fine or medium bulgur wheat | 1 small to medium onion, finely chopped |
| 2 cups parsley, minced | ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil |
| 1 cup fresh mint, minced | 4 Tbs fresh lemon juice, or to taste |
| 2 cups ripe tomatoes, cored and chopped | salt and pepper to taste |

Soak bulgur in water to cover until tender (about 15-30 minutes). Drain well, squeezing to remove as much water as possible. Combine bulgur with herbs and vegetables. Combine oil and lemon juice and toss with grain mixture. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve at room temperature or lightly chilled. 4-6 servings.

BARLEY PILAF WITH ONIONS. Something like this may have fueled the building of the pyramids.

Onions add savor to this under-used and nutritious grain.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 cup uncooked barley (use pearl, hulled, or hullless**) | 1 large onion, chopped (about 1¼ cups) |
| 2 Tbs olive oil | about 3-3 ½ cups of water ** |
| salt and pepper to taste | parmesan cheese (optional) |

Heat oil in a heavy pan with a lid and sauté onion until translucent. Add barley and continue to cook over medium heat, stirring, until onion is lightly browned and barley is golden and beginning to brown. Add water and salt and pepper to taste, bring to a boil, reduce heat, stir, cover, and simmer 1-1½ hours**, until barley is fully cooked. Adjust seasonings before serving. Serve warm, with grated parmesan cheese if desired. Or chill and add chopped herbs, such as basil and parsley, grated carrots, and a squeeze of lemon for a filling salad. [**Amount of water and cooking time will vary according to type of barley used. Consult package for recommendations.] 4-6 servings.

If you have a favorite way of using Stearns Farm veggies, please consider sharing it. Send recipes, tips on storage or food preservation, or other suggestions for this page to Sarah Blair Shonbrun at sarah@cornmuffin.com and you might see them in upcoming newsletters. Thanks.