



# Stone Soup

Stearns Farm CSA • Community Supported Agriculture  
862 Edmands Road, Framingham, MA 01701 - [www.stearnsfarmcsa.org](http://www.stearnsfarmcsa.org)  
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## FROM THE FIELD

Kathy Huckins



Photo by Eric Van Bean

**It is that colorful, tasty time of year when strawberries and peas are both ready for picking.** Each of these crops has a short window for production which makes them all the more precious to us.

We spend an entire year weeding, watering, fertilizing, and winter mulching, to savor just 3 weeks of scrumptious strawberries. This week the strawberries were watered using our drip irrigation to help them fill out and stay juicy. We are growing 3 varieties of strawberries: 1,000 Earliglow plants that produce a small, sweet, early fruit, 1,000 Cavandish plants that produce a larger meatier, mid season fruit, and 400 Sparkle plants that produce a light, full tasting fruit. No matter which variety you pick, all three aim to please and they do a perfect job of it. Our strawberries take up a lot of space for their short stay, but we think they are worth it. I hope you enjoy the pleasure of early summer that only a fresh, naturally grown, sun warmed strawberry can provide.

Last week you got a taste of peas with the pea tendrils that we had on the stand. Now the sugar snap peas are ready for picking. Pick them carefully, holding the plant with one hand as you snap off the pea pod with the other. Their root systems are shallow and an unconscious tug can uproot an entire plant. The sugar snaps will be followed by the flat snow peas and then the shelling peas. Peas also take up a lot of space, but after they complete their cycle, they are turned under to be replaced by another crop. This year, they will be replaced with the moveable greenhouse. Pea plants do not like the heat and they let us know by drying up in mid July. Appreciate them while they last.

## ON THE STAND THIS WEEK

**(Dependent on Mother Earth)**

Head lettuce, spinach, salad mix of leaf lettuce and Asian greens, young cooking greens of collards, kale and chard, scallions, the beginnings of zucchini

PYO: Sugar snap peas, strawberries, garlic scapes, herbs of oregano, summer savory.

COMING SOON: summer squash, patty pans, beets, carrots, basil.

## Planting Alert

Wednesday and Thursday we will be transplanting 3,600 corn plants, 3,500 winter squash plants and 1,000 pumpkin plants. WE NEED YOUR HELP PLEASE. It is an incredible number of seedlings to plant in such a short period of time but they are ready NOW. They will all be planted at the Parkland (one and a half acres that we farm half a mile up the road.) Please sign up and be part of this heroic event. You will be thankful every time you bite into a succulent ear of corn or a delicious roasted butternut squash. ☺

## GARDEN SHOWCASE: SNAP & SNOW PEAS

**Donna Savastio**

Peas are divided into two categories- those with edible pods and those that must be shelled. Both snap and snow peas fall into the edible pod category. They provide an excellent course of protein, fiber, carbohydrates and vitamin C. Eat them as soon as possible because their sugar begins to turn to starch shortly after picking.

The fresher the pea the quicker it will cook! Some people boil or steam them very briefly, for just a few minutes, and then submerge them in ice water before adding them to their recipes. This method will set their absolutely gorgeous green color. Snow peas are ideal for stir fries and go very nicely with ginger, garlic and hot chili peppers. Snap peas are good flavored with butter, salt, chives and fresh mint. Enjoy! ☺

## WELCOME TO THE HERB GARDEN

Patricia Wilbur-Zucker

The herb garden coordinators for this season are me, Patricia Wilbur-Zucker and Ann Bouvier. This is our third year in this role and we are very happy to be tending the magical, delicious and healing herbs.

The culinary maze garden will remain as a picking garden for culinary herbs and will include your favorites from last year (basil, parsley, thyme, sage, lemon verbena, rosemary, oregano, and marjoram) along with a few new plants, such as lovage and French tarragon.

Penelope's garden is experiencing a major transformation and has a whole new look. The theme in the garden this year is: Simplify, Simplify, Simplify. Each of the beds contain just 1 to 3 herb varieties. This change allows us to successfully grow more herbs that are useful to the sharers and also helps with maintenance. Last week many hands worked hours weeding, planting, and restructuring the garden beds. A fantastic job was done placing stone borders around the existing beds. Additionally, a seating area has been added to the garden. The new design is definitely taking shape, so be sure to come by and check it out.

Another plan in the works for this year is to create a "tea" picking garden where sharers can pick more of their favorite tea herbs such as spearmint, peppermint, lemon balm, yerba buena, apple mint, lavender, and bee balm. ☺

## SHELLY'S RHUBARB DREAM BARS

Thank you Shelly Jung for making these bars to celebrate our first pick-up!

### Crust:

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- ¾ cup powdered sugar
- 1 cup unsalted butter

### Filling:

- 4 eggs
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp salt
- 4 cups chopped rhubarb

Combine flour and sugar. Cut in butter. Press in bottom of pan. Bake at 350 degrees F for 15 minutes. Blend eggs, sugar, vanilla, flour, and salt. Fold in rhubarb. Spread on hot crust. Bake 40-45 minutes at 350 degrees F. Cool. Cut into squares.

## CHILDREN'S GARDEN

Amanda McClure and Gudrun Baubock



This Friday will be the last day that the home schooling group will meet with Anna Goering. They have done a lot of work and thanks to them the garden looks beautiful. Now it is our turn to keep the plants happy and growing. All of the plants, especially the little climbing flower vines around the tipi, need regular watering. When your children are playing in the garden, encourage them to use our new small zinc watering cans and give the plants a drink. Our peas are doing well. Check out how tall they are getting. If you and your children see any that are long enough, gently hook the longest tendrils around the strings of the trellis to encourage them to climb up. And while you in the garden, you can always pull any weeds that are growing. ☺

## PLANT SALE AT STEARNS

Each year at Stearns we grow thousands of seedlings for our fields. What we don't need, we sell to our sharers and the general public. This year we have lots of hot and sweet peppers, eggplant, herbs, perennials, cut flowers, and some tomatoes. All of these plants have been grown in healthy soil with natural fertilizers. Our stand is self-serve, open every day and is located near the entrance of the farm. Take some plants home and try them out!

## WHY STEARNS?

Sara Sullivan

Last week we discussed how Stearns produces food without toxic herbicides. **This week we will explore the second benefit of Stearns which is to eat food grown naturally without chemical pesticides.** Chemical pesticides are another harsh ingredient common to conventional farming, which are used to create a sterile landscape wiped clean of living creatures. Their use results in negative health effects which are well-documented.

Instead of spraying the fields with pesticides, our farmer manages insect populations by treating the farm as a living, diverse whole. Rather than creating an unnatural, insect-free zone, we honor life by recognizing that “pests” are simply creatures attempting to survive like the rest of us living beings. Although they can be a nuisance, insects have information to share about plant health and are part of the farm’s full and varied world. Insects are generally drawn to plants that are in a weakened state, tipping our farmer off to imbalances that need to be addressed. When insects lay eggs, they normally do this all together on one leaf. Subsequently when they hatch, if the environment is perceived as safe, they will fly off and disperse widely into the larger environment. If the insects feel threatened they will stay close to where they hatched, creating an imbalance and causing crop destruction. One of the conditions that creates a sense of safety for insects is plant diversity.



In order to minimize crop losses, Stearns employs a variety of gentle methods to keep insects from making an all-you-can-eat buffet of our fields. These include beneficial insects, vegetable oil sprays, and hand-picking of insects. Perhaps most importantly, Stearns Farm grows an abundant variety of crops. Unlike monoculture farming, in which insects can easily establish a stronghold, diversity helps protect the farm by attracting many different kinds of creatures that help keep each other in check. Diversity also means that even if infestations occur, there will be other unaffected crops to choose from and we will all still be able to eat. As recent studies have shown, growing produce without pesticides results in higher nutritional value in the food and reduced chemical exposure for you and your family. Although “organic” food is currently getting a lot of attention, it is worth noting that Stearns has been using natural growing methods for decades, long before they became widely popular. 🌱

### Mission Statement

To preserve the historic Stearns farm as a sustainable all-natural garden, providing locally grown food in partnership between the land, the farmer, and the community

- by using the CSA model
- by providing fair compensation, adequate working conditions, and support to the farmer
- by practicing good stewardship
- by donating excess food to the needy
- by encouraging the community to actively participate in the farming process
- by providing learning opportunities
- by fostering relationships between the CSA and the wider community and
- by providing a beautiful place that is nourishing to body and soul

#### FARM CONTACT INFORMATION

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**YOUNG GREENS: Chard, Kale & Collards**

When kale, collard greens, and chard are still tender and mild, they can be used stem and all. Toss them raw in green salads or try them as an edible bed beneath prepared salads, such as coleslaw or potato salad. Slice them thinly for a green garnish. Add minced young greens to beaten eggs before scrambling, or tuck them inside an omelet with grated cheese. Drop them into soups and stews at the last minute, or stir into casseroles. Collards and kale keep for several weeks loosely wrapped in the bottom drawer of the refrigerator. Chard lasts up to a week. Rinse thoroughly just before use and trim off any woody parts of the stems.

**CHARD WITH GARLIC, PINE NUTS & RAISINS.** Raisins and rich, spicy nuts intensify the subtle tart-sweetness of chard. The interplay of sweet and savory makes a fine accompaniment to grilled meats. For a quick pasta sauce, add a little extra olive oil and a bit of the chard cooking water. Adapted from *How to Cook Everything* by Mark Bittman.

- 2 lbs chard, washed, trimmed
- 2 Tbs extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbs garlic, minced
- ½ cup pine nuts (pignolias)
- ½ cup raisins, soaked in warm water 10 minutes
- salt and pepper to taste

Chop chard roughly. If using older or tougher greens, separate stems and leaves and chop separately. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and add a scant handful of salt. Cook young chard 1–3 minutes or until tender. For older chard, cook stems first 3–5 minutes, then add chopped leaves. When barely tender, drain chard and plunge into cold water to stop the cooking process. Drain again and squeeze gently to remove most of the water. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-low heat. Add garlic and cook, stirring, until garlic begins to color—about 5 minutes. Stir in pine nuts and cook another minute, then add chard and drained raisins. Season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring gently for about 2 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature as a side dish or over cooked pasta. About 3–4 servings.

**KALE BRAZILIAN-STYLE.** Young greens are perfect for this fast and flavorful dish. Kale is traditional, but collards will do just as well. Adapted from *How to Cook Everything* by Mark Bittman.

- 1½ lbs young greens, washed and dried
- 3 Tbs olive oil
- 1 Tbs garlic, minced
- salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice or to taste

Make sure greens are well-dried—a salad spinner is good for this. Chop greens into pieces 2" square or smaller. Place a large skillet or wok over high heat for a few seconds. Add oil to hot pan and wait a few seconds more, then add greens and garlic. Cook over high heat, stirring almost constantly until greens wilt and soften—3–8 minutes. Season with salt, pepper, and lemon juice. Taste and adjust seasonings and serve immediately. 3–4 servings.

**“SNEAKY” SOUTHERN COLLARD GREENS.** Collards are traditionally cooked long and slow with a ham hock or bacon, but vegetarians don’t need to feel deprived. This smoky-tasting “mess of greens” owes its savor to subtle, entirely meatless seasoning. Adapted from *The Lee Bros. Southern Cookbook* by Matt and Ted Lee.

- 4 cups water
- 1–2 dried chiles or ½ Tbs crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 tsp kosher or sea salt, or more to taste
- 2 lbs collard greens, washed, cut into 1" wide strips
- ½ large onion, peeled, quartered
- ½ cup fresh ripe or canned tomatoes, crushed
- 1 Tbs extra virgin olive oil
- 1½ tsp balsamic, sherry, or red wine vinegar
- ½ tsp *pimentón* (Spanish smoked paprika) or regular Hungarian paprika
- 2 small cloves garlic
- 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper

Bring water to a boil in a large pot. Add chiles and 1½ teaspoons of salt, reduce heat and simmer about 10 minutes. Add greens by handfuls, stirring as they soften, until all the greens are added. Reduce heat to low, cover and allow greens to simmer gently while you continue the preparation. Combine onion and tomato in a small bowl, add oil and vinegar, ½ teaspoon salt, paprika, and pepper and toss to coat. Transfer to medium-size cast iron or other heavy, oven-safe skillet and add unpeeled garlic. Place skillet under broiler set on high and watch closely until vegetables are lightly charred—3–6 minutes. Set aside on stovetop to cool. When garlic is cool enough to touch, peel cloves and place with the rest of the vegetables into a blender or food processor. Process until smooth. You will have about ¾ cup of puree. Use a ladle to remove about 3 cups of liquid from the collards and reserve for later use in soup (it can be frozen). Add puree to collards, return to slow simmer, and cook for a total of about 1 hour from the point when you first covered the pot of greens. Check occasionally, stir, and add a little of the reserved liquid if things seem too dry. Greens will be dark green and tender in a pale red gravy. Serve with cornbread or biscuits to sop up the sauce. 3 servings. Recipe may be doubled.

*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 to [sarah@cornmuffin.com](mailto:sarah@cornmuffin.com). Thanks*