



# Stone Soup

Stearns Farm CSA • Community Supported Agriculture  
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## FROM THE FIELD: FUTURE FARMERS VISIT STEARNS

By Kathy Huckins

Last Wednesday afternoon, sixty local Farmers and their interns visited Stearns Farm as part of the CRAFT (Collaborative Regional Alliance of Farmer Training) program in Eastern Massachusetts. CRAFT is a group of local farmers who meet during the warmer months for bi-weekly farm visits to complement on-farm training. We started and ended with food, of course, offering tea, munchies and dips to the hungry travelers as they arrived. Some of the farms represented were the Heifer Project in Holden, Green Meadow Farm in Hamilton, the Food Project, the Blue Heron and Lindentree Farm in Lincoln, The Natick Community Farm, Dover Farm, Powisset Farm and Vangarden Farm in Dover, Heirloom Harvest in Westboro, Rabbits Dance Farm in Cumberland, RI, The Waltham Community Farm and the Belmont Farm. These are all crop farms that grow food organically and market to CSAs, Farmers' Markets, restaurants and grocery stores.

Our tour focused on WHOLE FARM SYSTEMS and to this end we began with an overview and history of our farm, stressing our permanent bed system. Next we met in the greenhouse where Sonya talked about our greenhouse practices. We then went out into the fields where we had positioned two tractors with seeding implements. Kerisa discussed the seeding methods we employ and demonstrated the tractors and their uses. Chris explained our cultivating equipment and practices, driving a tractor with cultivators through a bed as a demonstration. Brian discussed the equipment he has fashioned and other equipment we use at our farm. We ended with Stone Soup, salads, breads and desserts, generously provided by Jim Guinness, Esther Heimberg, Sara Abramovitz and Gudrun Baubock.

## ON THE STAND THIS WEEK (Dependent on Mother Nature)

Head lettuce; greens mix, small beets and greens, scallions, baby carrots, zucchini, summer squash and patty pans, basil.

PYO: Snow and snap peas, garlic scapes, braising greens of collards, kale and chard, herbs (listed at the Culinary Herb Garden), last week of strawberries.

COMING SOON: cabbage, flowers

In preparation, we carved out some time tidying up the place and Salvatore Lampis spent the day mowing. The farm looked great! The weather was perfect and the future farmers were grateful for our sharing. It is inspiring to see so many young folks giving farming a try even though they have no background in this profession. They are choosing hard work with less than generous pay to learn how to grow healthy, hearty crops for market. They are energetic, inquisitive, grateful, and love to be outdoors. They are my kind of people. Thursday morning, as we started our day at the farm, we could still feel the energy of the night before, so much hope and hard work and enthusiasm for growing healthy food. What a gift we were given by their presence.

## STEARNS FARM IN THE NEWS

Framingham Tales and Trivia is a monthly cable TV program featuring local stories, facts, events and trivia about Framingham, sponsored by the Framingham Historical Society. The July program is on FRAMINGHAM GARDENS, and our Farm Manager, Kathy Huckins, will be one of four guests. Earlier this month a video was taken of activities at the farm on a Friday morning. This will be used as background while Kathy talks about Stearns Farm. Look for it July 2nd on Comcast Ch 9, Verizon Ch 43 or RCN Ch 3. ☺

## WHY STEARNS?

By Sara Sullivan

This week's benefit of eating from a farm like Stearns is quite newsworthy. You've undoubtedly heard about the salmonella outbreak that has recently affected our nation's tomato supply, forcing recalls and sending people to the hospital in several states. Listening to the reports, you may have wondered how a bacterium associated with poultry and eggs found its way into tomato shipments. Methods used by conventional agriculture provide some explanation. Water used to irrigate and wash produce can become contaminated with salmonella from chicken feces as a result of proximity, carelessness, and industrial breeding conditions that encourage bacteria growth. Once contamination occurs, long shipping distances give bacteria ample opportunity to flourish and multiply. Traceability is also a factor--the recent salmonella outbreak was eventually traced back to farms in Florida and Mexico, but this took time due to a long supply chain and the massive scale of conventional agriculture.

Stearns Farm's juicy tomatoes won't be ready for a little while yet, but when they are, you will have in-person assurance of their quality and safety, as you do with all Stearns produce. When you come each week to pick up your food, you also get to know the exact patch of land in which it was raised, its growing conditions, and the people involved in bringing it from seed to maturity. You're even able to harvest some of it yourself. Why Stearns? To know where your food comes from. ☺

## FRUIT SHARES

We have again partnered with Autumn Hill Orchard [www.AutumnHillsOrchard.com](http://www.AutumnHillsOrchard.com) in Groton to offer fruit shares. They specialize in Integrated Pest Management; organic fungicides and no herbicides are used. (It is difficult to grow apples organically in New England.) The 8 week share will include 1/2 peck bags (approximately 5 lbs.) of mostly apples, many varieties unique to New England farms. We may have peaches and plums also. It will begin the first week of September and run until the last pickup in October. An 8 week share is \$66.00 for Full sharers and a 4 week share is \$35.00 for Alternate sharers. There will be envelopes for sign up at the stand this week. The deadline for sign up is August 1st. ☺

## GARDEN SHOWCASE: SCALLIONS

By Donna Savastio



Scallions are part of the onion family, which is part of the lily family, and are also known as green onions or spring onions. They have a small white bulb at one end of their hollow green stems. Trim off the root and a bit of the green end, and you can use the whole scallion- the white and green parts- for a lovely mild onion flavor. Scallions are endlessly versatile and go well with so many things. They can be used raw or cooked and are a great addition to a crudité platter, salads, salsa, egg dishes, sprinkled raw onto cooked vegetables, added to noodle dishes, used in a stir fry, and also a fantastic way to punch up a sauce near the end of its cooking time.

All onions, including scallions, are low in calories and high in anti-oxidants. Anti-oxidants are believed to help delay or slow down damage to cells and tissue in the body. It is also believed that they can help prevent heart attacks and reduce the risk of gastric ulcers, cataracts, cardiovascular disease and cancer! They also contain a chemical called organosulfur compound. This compound has been linked to lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels. ☺

Thank you for not using your cell phones at the farm. We appreciate the quiet peaceful environment at Stearns, and the plants thank you too!

## WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A WORK-FOR-SHARE By Nadine Salisch



When I joined Stearns Farm as a Work-for-Share in the spring of 2006, I didn't do it, like many sharers, out of the desire to find a place full of peace, reconnect with nature, or watch the magic of ladybugs doing their fantastic job. I joined out of a very selfish reason, I have to admit: I felt the deep urge to eat tasty vegetables again. I moved from rural Germany to the Metro West area in September 2005 to work on my dissertation in Immunology and experience a bit of a change for a while. Some six months later, a co-worker who had been a sharer at Stearns for many years, found me in the kitchen of our institute, somewhat listlessly chewing on the waxy corpse of a pre-cleaned, irradiated, stone-old root of some kind, deceptively carved into the shape of a baby-carrot, out of a plastic bag. By that time, my skin had acquired a healthy shade of marble from working in an office in the basement, and my mood reflected that tone. What made it all worse was the fact that this co-worker seemed to know a source for fantastic vegetables and herbs, as he always conjured up the most amazing creations out of his lunch box: summer squash curries or fish soup with eggplant that filled the room with an aroma only fresh ingredients can produce. While I forever tried to steal his lunch, he revealed the secret source of those wonderful ingredients to be a CSA farm very close to my home. "Community-supported agriculture" was a concept I had never heard of before. Didn't that sound creative, spontaneous and slightly crazy? Sure did - and I instantly liked it.

In addition to replacing the hoax of food with actual food, I expected a good opportunity to get my hands dirty and my skin exposed to sunlight again. Isn't it nice to see your expectation vastly exceeded? I got more than I asked for, a whole basket full of opportunities! For example, the chance to interact with people who do not exclusively

communicate in scientific or business-related acronyms. To work with people who have decided to live with the piece of our planet they occupy, not just on it or from it; who have chosen to reject a path of maximum convenience and who are willing to work a little harder in order to be a beneficial part of our ecosystem. People who are serious and enthusiastic about not being wasteful and living out the idea of adjusting our wishes to our needs.

Along with this wonderful crowd, I also got the opportunity to face some of the forces of nature one doesn't typically meet on a Sunday afternoon stroll through the state park. For example, hand-picking an invasion of potato beetles from all the nightshades growing at the farm (we grow a lot), which is a delicate, challenging task involving a lot of fine motor skills and a sturdy stomach. Or weeding a whole cornfield, yanking out amaranth plants higher and stronger than the corn plants, on a sunny day with 90 degrees and no breeze. Or some of the more subtle forces like harvesting salad greens for a whole morning, on our knees, separating the tender arugula leaves from the similarly shaped and textured, tender leaves of the weeds that grow in between and that we don't kill with herbicides. All this makes the eggplants, the corn and greens taste even better! In addition, I also get to enjoy the peacefulness of Stearns Farm, especially in the morning. I am able to reconnect with nature and sometimes, if Kathy isn't watching, to sit down for a while and, yes, observe the magic of ladybugs.

In my eyes, the biggest strength of Stearns Farm is the huge variety it offers to its sharers, variety in many different respects. We benefit from a large choice of vegetables, herbs and fruit, which sometimes challenge us to be creative in our cooking habits and gives us the chance to experience new tastes and textures. But in addition to that, we also benefit from the variety of people who form the community that supports Stearns Farm, which is just as diverse as the choice of produce we grow. As a matter of fact, we are just as colorful as the things we put into our stone soup: single, parent, old, young, teacher, student, engineer, settled, adventurous, shy, extrovert - everyone has a characteristic and a set of experiences to contribute. In this way Stearns Farm gives us the chance to enrich our lives with new perspectives, if we wish, offering an alternative to monotony in crops, food and thoughts.

So what is it like to be a Work-for-Share? Well, for me it is just great. It's my third season now, and should the day ever come when I finish my thesis and leave Massachusetts, I'll cherish the memory and hope to find similar places wherever my career will lead me. But in the end, you'll have to find out for yourself what working at the farm means to you. So come and join the harvest crew for a morning! ☺

## A WILD RAMBLE

## CHILDREN'S TEAS

By Gudrun Baubock and Amanda McClure



As in previous years we will again offer Children's Teas on some Tuesdays and Fridays during pick up. For those of you who are new this year: a tea consists of a farm or nature related activity that is appropriate for most ages, and a light snack. To recover some of the material costs we ask for a donation of \$1.00 per child. Parents of youngsters under 6 should participate with their children. We will announce the exact time and the planned activity here in the newsletter. Rain always cancels. The first children's tea will take place on Friday, July 4th at 2:30pm. We will make one of a kind flags to decorate the sandbox enclosure. ☺

Later this summer, the Stearns Farm community will have the opportunity to experience something quite original. The Sudbury River Valley is home to over 100 species of edible wild plants, many of which are even more nutritious than their cultivated counterparts. Russ Cohen, expert forager and author of *Wild Plants I Have Known...and Eaten*, will be taking us on a two hour ramble through Stearns Farm and the adjacent woodlands to learn about more than two dozen species of edible wild plants. Pending favorable weather conditions, several edible mushroom species may be encountered as well. Keys to identifying each species will be provided, along with information on edible portions, seasons of availability and preparation methods. Russ will also give us general guidelines for safe and environmentally-responsible foraging. The ramble will take place on the evening of Tuesday, August 22, and sign-ups will take place closer to the date. You won't want to miss out on this unique adventure! ☺

### UPCOMING FARM EVENTS

Friday, July 4 <sup>th</sup>	Today will be a regular pick-up day.
Friday, July 4 <sup>th</sup> -2PM	Possible Pitchfork Brigade March around the farm
Tuesday, July 15 <sup>th</sup>	Date by which half of your work hours must be completed or paid for.
Saturday, July 19 <sup>th</sup>	Garlic Harvest
August 8 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup>	Annual NOFA Summer Conference at Univ. of MA in Amherst, MA.
Tuesday, August 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Wild Ramble with Russ Cohen
Sunday, September 28 <sup>th</sup>	Harvest Festival

### FARM CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact	Position	Email/phone
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Stearns Farm is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

### 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.

## GARLIC SCAPE FACTS

Garlic scapes, the curly flower stalks of hard neck garlic, are stunning worn around the wrist as bracelets. And they taste good too. What luck! Removed to improve the head's growth, garlic scapes have a mild garlic flavor and bright green color. Thinly sliced, they're an interesting replacement for garlic cloves or scallions in omelets, frittatas, stir-fries, and pasta recipes. Add finely chopped garlic scapes to softened cream cheese to spread on bagels or dark bread. Chop them into sour cream to top baked potatoes, stir them into mashed potatoes, or sprinkle them over pizza. Cook them gently and briefly to preserve their taste and color and prevent toughness. Whole scapes will last in the refrigerator for several weeks or more. Remove the pod-like bulbils and tips before chopping the long, smooth green stems.

**GARLIC SCAPE PESTO.** This pungent emerald sauce is fast and easy. If the garlic flavor seems too strong, mellow it by adding mayonnaise or sour cream to taste. Adapted from [www.maryjanesfarm.com/SimplyMJ](http://www.maryjanesfarm.com/SimplyMJ) via [www.moscowfoodcoop.com](http://www.moscowfoodcoop.com), where you can find more garlic scape recipes.

¼ lb (or more) garlic scapes, trimmed, cut in 1" lengths	3 Tbs fresh lime or lemon juice (or to taste)
½ cup olive oil (more if needed)	salt to taste (if needed)
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese (or to taste)	

Combine garlic scapes and olive oil in a blender or food processor and whirl or process to a smooth paste, adding more oil if needed to process. (You can also use a mortar and pestle for a coarser, more authentic pesto.) Scrape into a bowl and stir in the cheese. Season with lemon juice to taste and add salt if needed. Spread on crackers, top a baked pizza crust, or brush it over a warm, crusty Italian loaf — instant garlic bread! Freeze extra pesto in ice cube trays. When frozen, wrap each cube individually in plastic wrap and, place in a freezer bag. The cubes will keep, frozen, for months. One cube will perfume several servings of next winter's pasta with the essence of summer.

**BEAN DIP WITH GARLIC SCAPE.** Garlic scape recipes were featured all over the internet and the print world this week — proof of their seasonal popularity (and our good fortune). This pale green version of hummus is adapted from a column by Melissa Clark in *The New York Times*. It takes just fifteen minutes to make. You can read more about Melissa's personal "garlic festival" online at [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) (search on "garlic").

1/3 cup sliced garlic scapes	Black pepper to taste
1 Tbs freshly squeezed lemon juice, more to taste	1 can (15 oz) cannellini or white beans
½ tsp coarse sea salt, more to taste	¼ cup extra virgin olive oil, more as needed
Fresh herbs, such as thyme leaves or snipped basil or chives for garnish (optional)	

Place garlic scapes, lemon juice, salt and pepper in the container of a food processor and process until finely chopped. Drain and rinse beans, add them to the garlic scapes mixture, and process to a rough puree. Slowly pour olive oil through the feed tube with the processor running, until the mixture is smooth. Add 2 or 3 Tbs water, or more as needed, pulsing briefly with each addition, until the dip is the consistency you like. Taste and add more salt, pepper, or lemon juice if desired. To serve, spread dip evenly on a large plate, drizzle with more olive oil, and sprinkle lightly with coarse salt and chopped herbs, if desired. Serve with toasted crusty bread, crackers, or carrot and celery sticks. Variation: replace white beans with chickpeas. Yields 1½ cups dip.

**GREENS WITH DOUBLE GARLIC.** Juicy young garlic cloves give this hearty side dish its initial punch, then garlic scapes step in for color, texture, and a sweet grassy echo of the garlicky refrain. Adapted from *How to Cook Everything* by Mark Bittman..

1 lb greens – collards, kale, broccoli rabe or chard	salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
¼ cup olive oil	½ cup chicken, beef or vegetable stock
¼ cup thinly sliced garlic, about 5 or 6 cloves	or water
½ tsp crushed red pepper flakes, or to taste	1 Tbs sliced garlic scapes, more to taste
	Lemon wedges

Wash greens thoroughly, cutting off any woody stem ends. Coarsely chop greens. Heat olive oil in a large, deep saucepan over medium-high heat. Add garlic, pepper flakes, salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, for about a minute. Add greens and stock or water. Cover and cook over medium-high heat for about 5 minutes, until greens are wilted and just barely tender. Uncover greens and continue to cook, stirring, until liquid has almost evaporated and greens are very tender. Taste and adjust seasonings adding red or black pepper and salt as needed. Add garlic scapes and cook 1 minute more. Serve with lemon wedges. 3–4 servings.

*If you have a favorite way of using Stearns Farm veggies, please share it. Send recipes, tips on storage or food preservation, or other suggestions to [sarah@cornmuffin.com](mailto:sarah@cornmuffin.com). Thanks.*