



# 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

By Kathy Huckins

I was weeding in the Culinary Herb Garden this morning, moving from the thyme to the French Tarragon and then on to the rosemary and the lemon verbena. Then I came upon the oregano, the marjoram and the summer savoy. I stopped in my tracks. These herbs are so abundant and ready for picking. They are begging you to take them home and use them. After all, they grow for all of us to use. The basil feels the same way, and the cilantro and dill are right behind. All of these plants are flowering, so that's your sign to hurry up and take some home. Snip halfway down the sprig. Then cut off the flowering top. That leaves enough for the plant to keep growing for us during the remainder of the season.

We are fortunate to have the Culinary Herb Garden, designed by Patricia Wilbur-Zucker last year, available for our picking each week. The blackboard by the garden and the red flags in the garden beds themselves let you know which herbs are ready.

So, here's the challenge. Think AHEAD and come up with some recipes that will make use of these herbs along with your vegetable share. Fresh herbs are one of the delights of summer. If you take home some herbs and don't need them that week, hang them up to dry. Then store them in an airtight jar. You will be happy to have them for use during the winter. ☺

## ON THE STAND THIS WEEK

(dependent on mother nature)

ON THE STAND: Garlic, head lettuce, radishes, scallions, beets, carrots; zucchini, summer squash and pattypan; pickling and slicing cucumbers; cabbage

PYO: Blueberries, raspberries, green beans, chard, kale and collard greens; a variety of culinary herbs; tea herbs; a bouquet of flowers; edible flowers; a taste of cherry tomatoes

COMING SOON: peppers, onions, eggplant



## BASIL- ARUGULA PESTO

To help with Kathy's challenge to use our beautiful culinary garden herbs, here is the delicious pesto recipe that Kelly Tessitore made for last Tuesday's pick-up, for all sharers to have a taste.

3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
3 cups (loosely packed) fresh basil leaves  
1 cup (loosely packed) fresh arugula  
1/2 cup grated pecorino Romano cheese  
1/3 cup pine nuts  
2 garlic cloves, peeled  
1/2 teaspoon grated lemon peel  
2 tablespoons lukewarm water

Place 1/2 cup oil and next 6 ingredients in processor. Process to thick paste. With motor running, add remaining 1/4 cup oil and 2 tablespoons water to processor. Blend until smooth. Season pesto to taste with salt and pepper. (Can be made 2 days ahead. Pour thin layer of oil over pesto; cover and chill.)

—From *Bon Appetit* June 2001 ☺



## GARLIC IS HERE!

On Saturday, over a dozen sharers and volunteers came to harvest all of our season's garlic on a hot, humid, 93 degree day. Despite the warm weather, everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. All together, this crew harvested **1,296 pounds of garlic**. Some of this will be used to plant next year's garlic, and some will go to each sharer, to flavor many future soups, stirfries, dips, and pasta dishes. Because we do not have enough room to cure all the garlic, you will be receiving your ENTIRE seasonal share of garlic this week (or next week if you have an alternate share). Use some fresh: it is such a treat. Then take the rest and cure it for longer storage. Don't worry, it's easy. Here's how:

- Brush off some of the soil from the outside-- DO NOT WASH THE GARLIC. Leaving the stalks ON, tie them up and hang them in a COOL, DARK, DRY AND AIRY spot for a couple of weeks. A basement or the back of a garage can work well. When they are dried, cut off the stalks and store the bulbs in a mesh bag under the same conditions until use. Properly cured, they will last for several months. You can also keep cloves in olive oil in the refrigerator for a few months.
- FREEZING: Another option is freezing. Peel and mince the garlic, and then mix it with olive oil. Freeze in ice cube trays. When frozen, pop it out of the trays and place in a plastic container or freezer bag. Then you can take out just the amount you need all winter long. ☺

## WILD RAMBLE IN TWO DAYS

It's your last chance to sign up for the Wild Ramble, hosted by expert forager and author Russ Cohen at Stearns Farm. Our foraging adventure will take place this Tuesday, July 22, from 6-8 pm, rain or shine. It is open to the greater community, so feel free to bring your non-sharer friends and learn how to identify, harvest, and eat wild plants and mushrooms. The event is free but donations are encouraged. Sign up for the Ramble by emailing [sarasull@verizon.net](mailto:sarasull@verizon.net). ☺

## PLANT STAND BONANZA

The plant stand at the farm will be coming down for the season very soon, so this week is your last chance to pick up your plants—at the bargain basement price of only \$1 each! ☺

## GUARDIANS NEEDED FOR THE SPECIAL GARDENS

We have five special gardens at our farm, in the front of the fields. They are *Penelope's Herb Garden*, the *Children's Garden*, the *Culinary Herb Garden*, the *Flower Garden* and the *Perennial Garden* in front of the greenhouse. They all need consistent weeding, deadheading and basic tidying up. We are looking for a few volunteers for each garden who would be willing to give an hour or so a week to come and do just that. You can come any time since they are outside the fence. You could come early or stay late on your pickup day. Training is simple and uncomplicated. If you want to be a guardian of one of these gardens, contact Gudrun Baubock or Sara Abramovitz. Thanks!  
Gudrun: [gudrunbaubock@gmail.com](mailto:gudrunbaubock@gmail.com); 508 620-9127  
Sara: [saralarry@comcast.net](mailto:saralarry@comcast.net); 978 443-9747 ☺



## AN ACT THAT AFFECTS YOU

By Kerisa Fitzgerald

*Stearns' Assistant Farm Manager Kerisa Fitzgerald brings our attention to The Community Planning Act, a Massachusetts bill that could dramatically change the way we develop communities and conserve land. She is very encouraged by its bold, progressive language—especially in light of how long it has seemed like "a given" that open space and farmland in Massachusetts will be constantly threatened by sprawl.*

If new residential or commercial developments regularly appall/depress/infuriate you with their disregard for the land and absence of human scale or character, you need to learn about a state bill called the **Community Planning Act (CPA-2)**. Discovering this legislation was like an alleluia from on high for this sustainable land-use advocating Massachusetts lover. CPA-2 is an effective rewrite of the Commonwealth's ineffective land use statute, a statute recognized by the American Planning Association as one of the most antiquated in the country. Indeed, progressive-minded officials in many Massachusetts cities and towns find their pro- smart growth, pro-community planning efforts stymied by laws that protect individual developers. And in an era of rampant development, the damage has been quite evident. Subdivisions full of oversized houses abound, and **over 10,000 acres of farmland and open space are lost to sprawl each year.**

The Community Planning Act, if passed intact, would propel Massachusetts' cities and towns into a new era of sound, community-based land use planning and resource conservation. Here are some of its potent provisions. It would:

- Require every municipality to adopt a master plan, and give teeth to that plan by requiring that zoning be made consistent with it.
- Close zoning loopholes that undermine planning, like the infamous Approval Not Required, which exempts new housing development from local review so long as developers meet minimum frontage requirements.
- Allow cities and towns to regulate development by setting limits on the number of permits granted for new construction each year, limiting the interior area of new single family homes, and installing development impact fees.
- Grant more flexibility in defining what is allowed in a subdivision and in obtaining zoning variances and special permits, thus allowing planners to flex their creative smart growth muscles.

CPA-2 receives little media coverage, and its integrity is threatened by a governor-appointed task force currently pushing a watered-down version of the bill in which cities and towns could "opt-in" on a voluntary basis. In my opinion, this would rob progressive planning power from the places that need it most—places whose town halls are run by development interests. The organizers of CPA-2 stress that the most important action one can take is to contact their local senators/representatives/people of importance and encourage them to support the bill.

Visit <http://www.mass.gov/legis> for contact info for your state senators and representatives. If you need to find out who your reps are, you can enter your address at [http://www.mass.gov/legis/city\\_town.htm](http://www.mass.gov/legis/city_town.htm). You can also search under Background & Information on the CPA-2 website for a list of the bill's legislative sponsors if you are interested.

For more information, visit [www.massmunilaw.org](http://www.massmunilaw.org) or contact Coalition for Zoning Reform Coordinator Don Keeran at [dkeeran@apcc.org](mailto:dkeeran@apcc.org). ☺

## GARDEN SHOWCASE: BLUEBERRIES

By Donna Savastio

Originally known as star berries, blueberries are one of only three fruits native to North America. (The other two are cranberries and grapes.) They were used



extensively by Native Americans, and it is documented that they were served to Lewis and Clark in a hearty dish of smoked venison studded with wild blueberries. Most of the blueberries that we eat today are larger in size

and cultivated. Maine is, of course, renowned for their blueberries which grow wild, are smaller in size and more intense in flavor.

It turns out that these wonderful berries are a powerhouse for antioxidant phytonutrients. These phytonutrients have been shown to stimulate enzymes that protect against cancer. Researchers at Tufts University analyzed 60 fruits and vegetables for their antioxidant capability, and blueberries came out on top. Blueberries also contain lots of tannins which promote urinary and gastrointestinal tract health, can

help nighttime visual acuity, protect against macular degeneration, and help reduce the effects of age-related conditions like dementia.

For the most benefits, pick the ripest fruits. Fresh berries are fragile and should be washed just prior to use. If you know the source (as we all do!), many folks don't wash them as the whitish protective bloom on their skins is also good for you. They are so good out of hand that it's difficult for me to save them for something specific; however, they are a wonderful treat added to muffins or quick breads, stirred into pancakes, on top of your morning cereal, mixed with yogurt or blended into smoothies. They are also great as a sauce base for rich meat like duck or venison. They can be frozen for a mid winter treat—simply extend your cooking time a bit to accommodate the frozen berries. You can also minimize the grayish color that they can create in your batter by dusting the frozen berries with flour before adding them to your recipes. It's a nice thought, but I know that mine won't last nearly long enough for freezing! ☺

### 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



### WHY STEARNS?

By Sara Sullivan

One reason to be involved with a CSA like Stearns is to be involved in the labor of growing your own food. Each of you contributes not just with a yearly fee, but also with a commitment to work a certain number of hours on the land itself over the course of the season. Although some of us may have little or no farming experience, this arrangement gives us the opportunity to learn a bit about agriculture and, significantly, to use the labor of our own bodies to help feed ourselves. Spending an hour on hands and knees carefully weeding delicate, budding rows of carrots helps us understand what it takes to grow food, and I think it makes that food taste even better.

The majority of people in industrialized nations are not involved in the growing of their own food. This is the first time this has happened in human history. Many Americans have no idea what a bean plant looks like, or whether tomatoes grow below or above ground. Being involved with a CSA makes sure that we do know those things, and gives us a chance to experience the satisfaction of working up a sweat to help bring some of our own produce to the table. The mid-season work hour deadline is past, but the Farm needs you more than ever. We can all keep taking advantage of this wonderful opportunity. **Why Stearns? To be involved in growing your own food.** ☺

### UPCOMING FARM EVENTS

- Tuesday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>-6-8PM Wild Ramble with Russ Cohen  
 August 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Annual NOFA Summer Conference at Univ. of MA in Amherst, MA.  
 Sunday, September 28<sup>th</sup> Harvest Festival

### FARM CONTACT INFORMATION

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

## CUCUMBER FACTS

Just when it seems like the days can't get any hotter, cucumber vines start pumping out crisp, green fruit. Their mildness contrasts with sharper flavors in salads, quick relishes, and chutneys, and cuts the richness of cold yogurt or cream-based dips and sauces. "Pickling cukes" are usually small and thin-skinned varieties, while "slicing cukes" tend to have thicker skins and better keeping qualities. Shippers often wax commercial cucumbers to protect them from the rigors of long-distance transport and storage, but ours aren't waxed, so enjoy them with their skins on and use them as soon as possible. Store in the bottom of the refrigerator. To seed cucumbers, cut in half lengthwise and scoop seeds out with a spoon. For a real summer cooler, toss thin, slightly crushed cucumber slices into a frosty pitcher of ice water and garnish with a few sprigs of mint or lemon verbena. Then look for a hammock in the shade.

**AGUA FRESCA.** Melons and cucumbers are distant relatives, and their cooling powers are even more potent in combination. Adapted from *Local Flavors* by Deborah Madison.

1 cup water	zest and juice of ½–1 lime
1 cup sugar	scant handful of mint, chopped
2 cups ripe cantaloupe cut in chunks	1 cup water or more to taste
1 small cucumber, peeled and chopped	whole sprigs of mint for garnish

To make simple syrup, combine water and sugar in a pot and heat slowly until sugar dissolves and liquid is completely clear. Refrigerate until needed. Using a blender or food processor, process melon and cucumber briefly to a coarse purée. Pour melon mixture into a large pitcher and add lime zest, juice, and chopped mint. Stir in water and sweeten to taste with simple syrup. Chill well. Taste and add more water, lime juice, or simple syrup if needed. Serve over ice, garnished with additional mint. Variations: Replace cantaloupe with all cucumber or try honeydew or watermelon. Replace mint with lemon verbena, pineapple sage, or borage flowers. 2–3 servings

**CUCUMBER & PEPPER RELISH.** Here's a fast, fresh relish to serve with cheese or spoon over baked fish or chicken. Adapted from *Local Flavors* by Deborah Madison.

1 or 2 cucumbers (about ¾-lb), diced	2 Tbs dill, chopped
1 small bell pepper, diced	1 Tbs cilantro, chopped
3 scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced	½ Tbs rice wine vinegar or white wine vinegar
	Salt and pepper (preferably white pepper) to taste

Toss all ingredients together, seasoning to taste. Let stand in the refrigerator for 30 minutes before serving. Keeps for one or two days in the refrigerator. About 2–3 cups.

**COOL-AS-A-CUCUMBER SOUP.** Keep your cool with this refreshing, velvety purée—no cooking involved. Adapted from *Farmer John's Cookbook* by Farmer John Peterson.

4 cucumbers, peeled, seeded, and chopped (about 4 cups)	3–5 fresh mint leaves
1–2 cups water	2 Tbs fresh dill
2 cups plain yogurt or use ½ yogurt and ½ sour cream	1 Tbs honey
1 clove garlic, peeled and smashed	1 tsp salt, plus more to taste
	2 scallions, trimmed and finely sliced

Combine cucumber with 1 cup water, yogurt, garlic, mint, dill, honey, and salt in a blender or food processor. Purée, adding more water until soup reaches the consistency you prefer. Taste and add more salt to taste. Chill for several hours and serve in individual bowls garnished with scallions. 4–6 servings.

**BAKED CUCUMBERS WITH CREAM.** Warm cucumbers may seem surprising, but they are easy to make and even easier to love. Adapted from *Farmer John's Cookbook* by Farmer John Peterson.

1½ Tbs red wine vinegar	2 Tbs unsalted butter, melted
1 tsp salt	1 scallion, minced
¼ tsp sugar	1 cup heavy cream
4–5 cucumbers, peeled, seeded, cut in 1-inch slices	3 Tbs fresh basil leaves, chopped
	Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Combine vinegar, salt, and sugar in a glass or ceramic bowl. Add cucumber, toss, and set aside for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 375 F. Drain cucumber and pat dry with a clean napkin or dishtowel. Arrange cucumbers in a shallow baking dish, drizzle with melted butter and add scallion, tossing to combine. Bake, stirring occasionally, until tender—about 45 minutes. While cucumber bakes, slowly heat cream in a small pot just until it starts to boil, then cook, stirring often, until reduced to ½ cup—about 20 minutes. Stir in basil, remove from heat, and let steep until cucumbers are done. Pour cream sauce over cucumbers and sprinkle with salt and pepper. 4–6 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!*