



Stone Soup

Stearns Farm CSA • Community Supported Agriculture
862 Edmands Road, Framingham, MA 01701 - www.stearnsfarmcsa.org

August 24, 2008 Newsletter

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WINTER SHARES A COMIN'

By Kathy Huckins

It has been my dream for many a year to provide vegetables to people during the winter months. That way, we could all eat healthy, nutrient-rich, local foods all year long. This year we are starting the first phase of this dream by offering a WINTER SHARE for 3 months: November, December and January. Over time we hope to eat off our land every month of the year. Imagine never having to go to the supermarket!

Well, it all sounds too good to be true, and it is if you expect to eat the same diet in February that you eat in August. Eating with the seasons in New England means we have a fair amount of time when crops won't grow outside. So we need to plant more during the regular harvest season and store it in a root cellar for winter use. The crops that allow themselves to be stored this way are primarily the root crops. So this season we have grown extra carrots, beets, leeks, onions, garlic, parsnips, potatoes, sweet potatoes, turnips, and radishes. Winter squash and cabbage are other crops that will store well, so we planted more of them also. And then there's the popcorn.

I am sure you have noticed the sturdiest structure ever to be built at Stearns—our new root cellar—take shape through the design, guidance and consistent labor of Brian Holland with a little help from a few sharers. He worked all winter breaking through ledge, all through the spring laying each cinder block and putting on a roof, and with the summer installed the insulation and the final touches to our new root cellar. We will

ON THE STAND THIS WEEK

(dependent on mother nature)

ON THE STAND: Head lettuce, Asian greens, cucumbers, summer squash, carrots, beets, storage onions, eggplant, sweet peppers; heirloom, plum and slicing tomatoes; celery, sweet corn, and melons.

PYO: Cherry and Juliet plum tomatoes; hot peppers; braising greens of collards, kale and chard; culinary and tea herbs; a bouquet of flowers.

dedicate it at our Harvest Festival on September 28th and start using it in October as we harvest our roots from the field for the winter share.

But we really love our GREENS (lettuce, spinach, a wide variety of Asian greens, dill and cilantro, kale and chard), and how do we grow those during the snowy winter? Well, it turns out that some crops don't mind the freezing cold as long as they have a little sun, some shelter from the extreme frost, and protection from the wind. To this end, we will be putting up a greenhouse in our field, (behind the flower garden) and will be planting greens right in our field beds, during the winter months. We are choosing hardy crops that can actually sustain a few freezes as long as the sun comes out during the day and warms them up. We are fortunate to have this greenhouse donated to us by John Blanchard, who you met in a recent newsletter. We expect shipment in the next week or two and will be putting the frame up in September, planting our crops in October, and covering it with plastic in late October before it gets too cold. We expect to harvest from these beds in December and January. In November we will still be harvesting from our fields.

So, this is the deal. You can sign up for a WINTER SHARE starting this week, with a deadline of September 18th. We have room for 100 shares, so if more than that sign up, we will hold a lottery and let you know by the 26th of September. We are planning to provide approximately 25 pounds of vegetables at each of the three pickups. We have never tried this before, so you will be a pioneer with us in the adventure to grow food during the winter in structures new to us. Come join us. More information and the enrollment form are included at the end of this newsletter. ☺

A POWERFUL COMBINATION

Stone Soup interviews our farmer, Kathy Huckins, on her recent attendance at the Northeast Organic Farming Association Conference, held August 8-10 at UMass Amherst.

SS: What did you find particularly interesting at the NOFA conference?

KH: I very much enjoyed listening to the keynote speaker, Dr. Arden Anderson. He is a farmer *and* a physician—trained in both agriculture and medicine. That combination is powerful to hear.

SS: What did Dr. Anderson have to say?

KH: His speech was about nutrition, a word we often get tired of. But he discussed it in a new and exciting way by making this point: Real medicine begins with the land. Therefore, as farmers, we have considerable power in our hands to affect the wellbeing of people. The fact is that most modern food lacks full spectrum nutrition.

He also discussed the practice of farming itself. For a physician, taking the history and physical of a patient is 90% of the diagnosis. To understand how nature operates, farmers need to do the same thing. We need to observe how the plants are growing, what diseases are present, what insects, what weeds, how the soil feels. We need to take the time to walk the fields and see what we are looking at. You need to be familiar with biology, chemistry, and physics. If you don't understand your soil, you can't farm.

SS: What parts of his speech might hold special interest for our sharers?

KH: Dr. Anderson is scared to death about the impact of Genetically Modified food (GMOs) on health. He stated that their pollen alone has human health consequences, such as increased rates of asthma. He also made the point that "organic" is a start, but it is not enough. We need to grow healthy soil and take the nutrient value of our food to the next level, as we are attempting to do at Stearns. He discussed "brix," a measure of food nutrition and plant health that helps us know when we are on the right track. We have many health issues in our society because we think that we are eating nutritionally-balanced food, and often we are not.

SS: What else did you do or see at the conference?

KH: I attended several interesting workshops, enjoyed the dancing and the local beer in the evenings, and appreciated my tour of Red Fire Farm in Granby. Farmer Ryan Voiland, a very genuine, ethical man, has put together a really neat farmstand and a beautiful farm. It is always wonderful to see someone else's farm, and it was also nice to see that he has weeds too! ☺

GARDEN SHOWCASE: BELL PEPPERS

By Donna Savastio

Bell Peppers, also called sweet peppers, are a cultivar group of the species *Capsicum annuum*, *Capsicum* meaning "box." Green peppers have a fresh, sharper



flavor, while the other colors are sweeter. Possible colors include red, yellow, orange, white, purple, blue, brown and, of course, green. Like tomatoes, bell peppers are

fruits that in a culinary context are considered to be vegetables. This type of pepper contains a recessive gene that eliminates capsaicin, the compound responsible for the "heat" found in other types of peppers, like our Stearns hot peppers.

Nutritionally, sweet peppers are excellent sources of vitamin C and vitamin A through their concentration of carotenoids such as beta-carotene (twice the vitamin C of citrus fruits!). Their antioxidant power effectively neutralizes free radicals which travel through the body and cause damage to cells. Helping with atherosclerosis and heart disease, bell peppers contain B6 and folic acid. These vitamins are very important for reducing homocysteine levels, as high levels have been shown to increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. In addition, sweet peppers also provide dietary fiber that helps to lower cholesterol, another risk factor for heart attack and stroke. Bell peppers also have been shown to have protective effects against cataracts, osteoarthritis, and colon and lung cancers.

Choose peppers that have deep, vivid colors and taut skin, free of blemishes and darkened areas. Store your unwashed peppers in your fridge, washing them right before using them in your favorite recipes. Bell peppers are very versatile and can be used in so many dishes. Nothing makes a raw vegetable platter more beautiful than an array of colored bell peppers. They are fantastic roasted in the oven and tossed with herbs and balsamic vinegar, stuffed with meat and/or rice and other grains, steamed, sauteed or grilled. Peppers can be easily frozen for the winter months as no blanching is required before freezing—simply freeze pieces of pepper on a cookie sheet and put the frozen pieces into a ziplock bag, letting out any extra air in the bag before sealing. ☺

WHY STEARNS?

By Guest Columnist Brian Huckins

E.F. Schumacher wrote *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* 35 years ago this year. He was concerned that the increasing dominance and power of large corporate industry was consuming the world and harming people, places and the planet in the process. As global corporations expand their reach, almost every indicator of human and planetary health suffers. Air quality, water quality and availability, food quality and availability, family stability, cultural vitality – all are in decline. The gap between the rich and the poor expands globally.

This happens because corporations seek only profit, largely ignoring any other concerns. Global corporations are the poorest possible stewards of human culture and the environment, much as absentee landlords are the poorest choice for attentive management and effective building maintenance. Global corporations are more or less incompatible with sustainability.

Today, as the WTO tries to tear down the last barriers to global corporate power, an urgent problem emerges – how to bring planetary damage under control and create economic systems that favor people and the places they live? The best thinking I know of concerning this question keeps coming back to the necessity of a strong preference for *local economy*: local production by local people of goods and services for local consumption. Local economies are at the core of sustainability because, in practice, only at the local level are people responsible stewards of culture, resources, and their environments.

One of the key elements in a local economy is food production. At Stearns, you are participating in an intensely local form of agriculture, the CSA model for food production. This choice protects people, land quality, and our resources. **Why Stearns? To support a sustainable local economy instead of a global corporation.** ☺

To learn more, read:

- ✦ *Alternatives to Economic Globalization: A Report of the International Forum on Globalization* by Cavanagh, Mander, et. al.
- ✦ *When Corporations Rule the World* by David Korten
- ✦ *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* by EF Schumacher



CHILDREN'S GARDEN

By Gudrun Baubock & Amanda McClure

With all the rain, the vines on our flower tipi have been growing much more vigorously than we expected. The original "entrance" is completely overgrown, but one of the strings broke, thus forming a new entrance to the tipi. The problem with this is that the structure is no longer balanced, and we are afraid that it might all come down in the next storm. If you are handy with this sort of thing and would be willing to take a look at it and figure out a way to fix this, could you please email me at gudrunbaubock@gmail.com?

Also: children keep asking if they are allowed to play with the animals (stuffed and plastic) that they find in the children's garden. All of these things have been put in the garden for the children to enjoy and to give them more ideas and ways to play in this environment. If you can help them pick up things and put them in order before you leave, that would be great. ☺

FRUIT SHARE UPDATE



We had a wonderful response for fruit shares this season. Pickups will begin the first week in September, and you can pick up your fruit along with your regular share. Please contact Janet Carlson if you have any questions. ☺

SHARER RECIPE: WATERMELON & CUCUMBER GAZPACHO

Submitted by Sara Abramovitz

5 cups watermelon
1 cucumber, diced
1 red pepper and 1 yellow pepper, diced
1 jalapeno
3 inner stalks celery
1 cup diced red onion
¼ cup mint
3 T. lime juice
2 T red wine vinegar
¼ tsp salt

Puree 4 cups watermelon in blender. Add remaining 1 cup of watermelon, diced, and next 10 ingredients. Or simply put all ingredients into the blender and puree.



CHICKEN TRACTOR AVAILABLE

The Stearns Farm chicken tractor, written about last week by Eric Van Bean, can be yours for the cost of materials (\$150). Contact Janet Carlson (janet@stearnsfarmcsa.org) if you are interested in buying it.

BOARD TREASURER NEEDED

The Stearns Board of Directors is looking for a new Treasurer to serve on the board. The right person will have some bookkeeping experience in order to keep the farm's financial statements up-to-date, although no fancy accounting experience is required. This position is one of the most important on the board and is crucial to the successful running of Stearns Farm. Board meetings are once a month on Sunday evenings, and the bookkeeping work should take no more than 1-2 hours per week. Please contact Board President Scott Cleveland if you might be right for this job: s.cleveland@verizon.net. Thank you. ☺

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

UPCOMING FARM EVENTS

Sunday, September 28th Harvest Festival
Saturday, October 18th Garlic Planting

FARM CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact	Position	Email/phone
Stearns Farm	Main phone	contact@stearnsfarmcsa.org 508-371-4310
Kathy Huckins	Farm Manager	huckins@charter.net 508-561-3950
Janet Carlson	Administration	janet@stearnsfarmcsa.org 508-309-7777
Gudrun Baubock	Volunteer Coord.	gudrunbaubock@gmail.com 508-620-9127
Sara Abramovitz	Volunteer Coord.	saralary@comcast.net 978-443-9747
Sara Sullivan	Newsletter Editor	sarasull@verizon.net 617-953-5841
Tom Yelton	Webmaster	webmaster@stearnsfarmcsa.org 978-443-5138

MATURE GREENS: Chard, Collards & Kale

Sturdy, nutritious, and reliable, greens are equally useful in a stuffing, as part of a hearty soup or stew, or wrapped around any number of delicious fillings. And they are just fine on their own, quickly sautéed with a hint of seasoning or braised, long and slow, with deep, savory flavorings. These homey, everyday treasures are well worth a second look, especially as evenings cool down. When temperatures fall, greens come into their own, offering their goodness long after the rest of the garden gives up. I've even rummaged under the snow to find collards, crisp, green, and only the sweeter for the chill. They may not be as sexy as ripe tomatoes, or as exciting as sweet corn, but the grown-up greens of late summer and fall are glorious in their own way. They promise lasting satisfaction, mature and well rounded ... like true love.

CHARD BUNDLES WITH RICE. These warm, chard-wrapped balls of creamy rice and cheese were adapted from Mark Bittman's *Minimalist* column in *The New York Times* and based on a dish from *La Zucca Magica* (The Magic Pumpkin) in Nice. You can find a video showing how to create this dish at www.nytimes.com.

6 cups vegetable broth, more as needed	½ cup grated Parmesan cheese, more for garnish
1 cup arborio (risotto) rice	Salt and pepper to taste
Large pinch saffron threads	6 very large chard leaves
2 lemons	½ pound mozzarella cheese, cut into 6 pieces
2 Tbs butter	Olive oil for drizzling

Cook rice in vegetable broth as for risotto—starting with one cup of broth, stir in a cup at a time, using about 3 cups total and cooking until the rice is tender and liquid absorbed. While rice is cooking, peel and reserve the zest (the colored part of the lemon peel) from both lemons and juice one of the lemons. Crush saffron into the lemon juice and add to the rice along with butter, Parmesan and half of the lemon zest. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Allow rice to cool slightly. Recipe can be made up to this point an hour in advance, but do not refrigerate. Bring about 2 cups of the remaining broth to a simmer and plunge chard leaves into broth for about 30 seconds to soften. Remove leaves, drain on clean dishcloth, and cut away the woody lower part of the stems. Reserve cooking broth. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Moisten hands and form rice into 6 balls about 2–3 inches across. With finger or wooden spoon handle, poke a hole in each rice ball and insert a piece of mozzarella, pressing the rice around the cheese. Wrap each ball securely in a chard leaf. Place bundles in a tightly fitting casserole or pan, adding enough reserved broth to come about ½-inch up the sides of the bundles. Bake 15 minutes. To serve, moisten with a little more warmed broth and garnish with additional lemon zest, grated Parmesan, and a drizzle of olive oil. Serves 6.

COLLARDS OR KALE WITH POTATOES. This is my favorite combination. Yellow-fleshed or red-skinned “new” potatoes are best. If you don't eat bacon, just leave it out; the dish will still be delicious. Adapted from *Local Flavors* by Deborah Madison.

1 lb collards or kale or mixture of both	2 Tbs olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste	½ onion, finely diced
3 medium potatoes, scrubbed and roughly diced	2 large garlic cloves, minced
3 or 4 strips bacon, cut into small pieces (optional)	Hot pepper sauce or cider vinegar for serving

Rinse leaves very well and cut off any woody parts of the stems. Bring several quarts of water to a boil in a large pot, add a tablespoon of salt and the greens, and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove greens with tongs and set aside to drain and cool. Add potatoes to the same cooking water. Simmer 7–10 minutes, until tender. While potatoes are cooking, brown bacon in a large, heavy skillet over medium heat. Drain bacon on paper towels, remove fat, and wipe out skillet.* Return skillet to heat, add oil and, when it's hot, add onion. Cook for 5 minutes over medium-high heat. Coarsely chop the cooked greens and add them to the pan along with the garlic and the pepper flakes. Carefully, to avoid splatters, add a little of the potato cooking water to the pan once or twice during cooking so the mixture stays moist. Cook until greens are soft. When the potatoes are tender, drain them and add to the greens. Add the bacon and toss together. Season to taste with pepper and additional salt if needed. It's okay if the potatoes dissolve a bit into the greens at this point. Bring pepper sauce or vinegar to the table so that diners can add them as they like. Serves 2 to 4. *Hard-core bacon-lover's variation: Forget about the olive oil. Leave 2 tablespoons of bacon fat in the skillet and proceed with the cooking from this point.

Storage and Tips: Leave greens unwashed until ready for use. Wrapped loosely in the bottom of the refrigerator, collards or kale may stay fresh for a week or more. Use the more delicate chard leaves within a few days. To add quick color and crunch to omelets, fritatas, and casseroles, roll rinsed leaves tightly and cut crosswise into very thin strips, then toss them in. Many tips for getting the most out of greens came from Natalie DeNormandie's spring handout derived from *Greens Glorious Greens!* by Johnna Albi and Catherine Walthers. Natalie likes her collards “Parboiled, then lightly fried with a little pancetta. Add a sprinkle of diced olives and wow!” Thanks again, Natalie.

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. Thanks.

WINTER SHARE OVERVIEW

It is an exciting time as we prepare to offer winter shares for the first time at Stearns Farm.

Winter Share Details:

- The cost for a winter share is \$120.00.
- There will be three pickups, one per month in November, December, and January. The Winter 1 group pickup will be the first Friday of each month: November 7, December 5, and January 9. The Winter 2 group pickup will be the third Friday of each month: November 21, December 19, and January 23.
- The pickup time is 12:00pm to 4:00pm. Due to the challenging nature of winter weather, there is no flexibility with this. Any food not picked up during the specified time will be donated to charity. Come to the greenhouse to pick up your share.
- There will be approximately 25 pounds of food included with each pickup. The share will be comprised of roots from the root cellar, greens from greenhouse, and some crops left in the field. A typical pickup will include about 3 pounds of cabbage or broccoli, 15 pounds of roots such as parsnips, leeks, potatoes, carrots, beets, celeriac, turnips, sweet potatoes, scallions, onions, shallots, garlic; 4 pounds of winter squash, and 3 pounds of greens including spinach, Asian greens, kale, lettuce, Bok Choy and herbs. The food will be pre-bagged for each sharer.
- There is a **FOUR HOUR WORK COMMITMENT** as part of the share which must be fulfilled before November 7. We need your help harvesting the root crops for storage. You can sign up for your work hours using the online system you have used all season. There will be a clipboard in Kathy's office for you to check off your hours. There is also the option to pay \$8.00 per hour in lieu of working in the fields. If you choose this option, please pay for your hours (\$32) when you sign up, for a total of \$152.00. That way we will know how many people to expect in the fields.

Enrollment Process:

- Enrollment will open on August 26. You must be a current Stearns Farm member in order to enroll. The enrollment form is included on the next page of this newsletter and also available at the table in the pickup tent.
- Send (or drop off at the farm) your enrollment form along with a check for \$120.00 so that it arrives at the farm by September 18. **We must have your enrollment and payment in hand on September 18 in order for you to qualify for a winter share.**
- The maximum enrollment is 100 sharers. If there are more than 100 people that sign up, a lottery will be held on September 19.
- You will be notified by email no later than September 27 regarding your status. Pickup dates will then be assigned.

We appreciate the phenomenal effort that took place in order to make this opportunity available to the Stearns Farm community!

Stearns Farm CSA 2008 Enrollment Form: Winter Share

Print this form and mail with your check to: Stearns Farm CSA, 862 Edmands Rd, Framingham, MA 01701. Please make checks **payable to Stearns Farm CSA. We must have your form and check in hand by Sept 18.** The maximum enrollment is 100 sharers. If there are more than 100 people that sign up, a lottery will be held on September 19.

Payment Method:

Full payment of \$120 with 4 hours of field work: \$

Work Commitment:

I understand that I am expected to provide a minimum of 4 hours of field labor. Work hours must be performed by November 7 or paid for now. I wish to pay a field hand to work those four hours in my place for \$8 per hour (\$32), for a total payment of \$152: \$

Friend of the Farm:

With a tax-deductible contribution of \$25 or more you will support Stearns' mission, and receive our weekly e-mailed Newsletter, *Stone Soup*. (Sharers do not need to contribute to receive the newsletter).

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$ E-mail address:

Sudbury Valley Trustees Membership

Our land is leased from the Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT). We encourage you to join SVT; see www.sudburyvalleytrustees.org

I am a member of SVT

Preferred Pick-up group:

Please Pick One:

- Group 1: First Friday of Nov, Dec, and Jan - OR -
 Group 2: Third Friday of Nov, Dec, and Jan - OR -
 No preference

Additional Volunteer Opportunities:

In addition to my 4-hour work commitment, I would love to help with:

Fundraising Supervising volunteers/ guiding tours Writing, artwork, photos for newsletter

Odd jobs (like plumbing, machine repair, carpentry, grounds upkeep)

Other:

Name(s) (only **one** last name, please):

Address:

Phone: E-mail: