



Stone Soup

Stearns Farm CSA • Community Supported Agriculture
862 Edmands Road, Framingham, MA 01701 - www.stearnsfarmcsa.org
September 1, 2008 Newsletter Vol. 9 No. 13



Photo by Lisa Mattei

THE COMINGS & GOINGS OF SUMMER

By Kathy Huckins

We're starting to turn the corner from summer to fall. Our prolific cucumber crop (some days we harvested over 550 pounds of them) is tired, as are the harvesters, and the summer squash crop has been declining the past few weeks. Our other vining crop, the melons, came in so sweet and strong, mostly all at once, so they have passed also. What a wonderful treat though! Our beans got consumed by the bean beetle. We'll try again next year using some beneficial insects. It is too late for this year.

The "roots" report is stepping up. The carrots and beets of late summer have been slow, but the fall crop is looking strong. We harvested an ample crop of onions and have just finished the wonderful sweet summer variety and the red slicing for salads. More storage onions to come. Our potatoes, the first full crop ever, thanks to Chris, are coming in strong, and you'll be seeing about five varieties of them over the next month or so. Our leeks are ready, and the parsnips are not far behind.

We're starting our fall salad greens and soon will have small turnips to include. We planted the fall spinach a few weeks ago. Bok choy was transplanted last week. Our fall head lettuce is liking the weather. The sweet and hot peppers are turning more colors as time goes on, and our eggplant crop is the best in years. The tomatoes, having been set back by the rain, are rebounding, with our late tomatoes starting to ripen last

ON THE STAND THIS WEEK

(dependent on mother nature)

ON THE STAND: Head lettuce and salad greens; sweet peppers, eggplant; heirloom, paste and slicing tomatoes; some cucumbers and summer squash; celery, potatoes, leeks, and fennel.

PYO: Sungold cherry and Juliet plum tomatoes; 6 varieties of hot peppers; braising greens of collards, chard and kale; culinary and tea herbs; a bouquet of flowers. Coming soon: raspberries.

week. We will have an ample crop, not a bumper crop this season.

Our sweet corn has been quite tasty, although some animal damage has lessened the quantity. We have one more rotation of corn to harvest. Our winter squash and pumpkins are looking great, and we are hoping to harvest our first in a few weeks—a sure sign of Autumn.

Our strawberries were very productive. Our blueberries were exceptional, our most fruitful year yet. We had a few tastes of raspberries this summer, but the fall crop is looking full and almost ready.

Our culinary herb garden is going strong. There is still ample basil for all to make pesto. It will be the first to be hit by the frost, so don't tarry. Our garlic chives are in full bloom. The parsley is weak, but a great substitute is lovage. They are relatives. And our tea garden, new this year for the picking, is beautiful and easy to use.

Our sunflowers are full and inviting. (One sunflower equals 4 stems when counting.) The flower garden is a peaceful, colorful haven to visit and roam. Don't forget about the cosmos, the amaranth, the torch tithonia and the ageratum in the back area surrounded by sunflowers. They want to grace your bouquet also.

Yes, new crops are coming in, some crops are going out. So much color, texture, flavor and life. What a summer it has been. Now we have the fall to look forward to. We are lucky to have so many varieties of vegetables, fruits, herbs and flowers to choose from. Keep up your fresh food eating. It seems to go by so fast. ☺



Reminder: the Fruit Share starts this week and will run for 8 weeks until the end of pickups.

GARDEN SHOWCASE: GARLIC

By Donna Savastio



Don't forget about all that delicious Stearns garlic that has been curing in your kitchens and cellars the last few weeks. Garlic, or *Allium sativum*, is a close relative of the onion, the shallot and the leek. Garlic has been used throughout recorded history for both culinary and medicinal purposes. It is grown all over the world with China being by far the largest producer, growing about 23 billion pounds annually. The U.S. is in fourth place for garlic production, which is grown in every state except Alaska.

Garlic has long been eaten as food—used by the Israelites, the ancient Greeks and Romans, as well as the laborers who built the pyramids. It is used, of course, for its pungent flavor which varies in intensity and aroma based on the cooking method. Generally, the longer it is cooked, the sweeter and milder the flavor becomes.

Garlic has also long been used for medicinal purposes. It was felt to be palliative against the effects of sun and heat, was thought to be a treatment for smallpox, and in the 20th century was used to treat pulmonary tuberculosis. It is also alleged to help regulate blood sugar as it helps to lower homocysteine levels in the blood. (Diabetics should not use medicinal doses of garlic without consulting a physician.) It is also believed to help prevent heart disease, including atherosclerosis, high cholesterol and elevated blood pressures. Many also believe that it can prevent and fight the common cold.

Garlic has had a long history in superstition and mythology, and has been regarded as a force for both good and evil. There is a Christian myth that says when Satan left the Garden of Eden, garlic rose out of his left footprint and onion rose from his right footprint. In Europe, garlic was believed to provide protection, and could ward off demons, werewolves and vampires. It was worn around the neck, hung in windows and rubbed on chimneys and keyholes. This association with evil spirits may be based on the antibacterial and antiparasitic values of garlic.

Store your garlic warm and dry, which will help to keep it dormant and prevent it from sprouting. It is extremely versatile and can be used in so many ways—sautéed with vegetables, meats, fish and poultry, added to marinades, roasted in the oven and slathered on bread or crackers, added to all kinds of sauces and soups, used in stir-fries and to flavor oils. Eat it often and keep those vampires away! ☼


ARE THESE TOMATOES RIPE?


You have been seeing a variety of tomatoes at the stand the past few weeks. Let me help you identify them. We have grown two types of slicing tomatoes, Jet Star and Big Boy, and three varieties of plum tomatoes, Amish Paste, Hog Heart and the small fruit of Juliet that you can pick yourself.


Our heirloom varieties are the more curious because of their colors. **GREEN ZEBRA** is a delicious, tangy salad tomato, ripe just as the green fruit develops a yellow blush, accentuating the dark green stripes. **BRANDYWINE** has a deep pink skin and smooth red flesh, with a distinctively spicy and rich flavor. **JUBILEE** is a sunny orange fruit with a meaty interior and few seeds. **STRIPED GERMAN** is a large, many-lobed red and yellow tomato with a marbled interior that looks great sliced. New this year is **BLACK PRINCE**, a mahogany brown fruit with a distinctive, rich flavor. If you want to impress your family or friends, cut up one of each of these colorful heirlooms and put them together in a salad with olive oil and basil. You'll be pleased you did!! ☼


PUTTING IT BY

If you're receiving more food in your pickup each week than you can eat, don't forget now is a great time to put some by in order to enjoy the taste of summer later on. Some tips:

 Bake sungold cherry tomatoes in the oven at low heat for a few hours to turn them into delicious dried treats.

 With needle & thread, string up a row of hot peppers to dry—they can brighten your chilis & stews all winter.

 Make spaghetti sauce that will taste amazing on an icy night—any extra tomatoes, peppers, and herbs can simmer down for a couple of hours and then go in a freezer bag. Find tons of easy recipes for sauce online.

 Just cut up bell peppers in pieces and pop in a freezer bag—no need to blanch them first. Grab them out of the freezer next time you make a soup or stirfry. Corn also freezes beautifully—cut the kernels off the cob first.

Other ideas? Please email to: sarasull@verizon.net ☼



WHY STEARNS?

By Sara Sullivan

One of the happiest sights to see at Stearns is all the kids running around the farm on pickup days. A few things become immediately obvious: their enthusiasm for learning about the farm, their excitement at being outside, and their sincere interest in this method of obtaining food that doesn't involve the supermarket. When child experts warn about the prevalence of TV and video games in modern life, or the lack of fresh air and exercise, I think of these moments and am aware that Stearns is offering a fabulous alternative.

Our farm has made a point of being welcoming to children. This is most evident in the creation of the Children's Garden, lovingly maintained by Gudrun Baubock and Amanda McClure, a place kids can call their own where great activities are put on all season long. There are many benefits to introducing children to a farm like Stearns. In addition to encouraging their natural enthusiasm about living, growing things, the farm gets kids involved in food—the best way to get them to try and to enjoy new things. It is amazing to see how much kids enjoy weighing out the proper amount of carrots, selecting the perfect tomato from the stand, picking their own blueberries and sungolds, and even growing things themselves during Children's Garden mornings and the Stearns Summer Camp.

We talk earnestly about the importance of sustainable agriculture, local economy, and the need for consumer education—meanwhile, we may not realize that one of the most powerful ways we are enacting these goals is by simply bringing the next generation to the farm, where they can absorb these values and experiences themselves. **Why Stearns? For the next generation of farmers, growers, and eaters.**

UPCOMING FARM EVENTS

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

ROASTED GARLIC, POTATO, LEEK & FENNEL SOUP

The perfect recipe to make use of your pickup this week:

- 1 cup whole garlic cloves, peeled
- 4 tbsp olive oil, divided
- 4 leeks, sliced thin
- 1-2 fennel bulbs, diced
- 8 cups vegetable stock
- 1 lb potatoes, peeled and diced
- 2 tbsp fresh thyme leaves, chopped fine
- 2 bay leaves
- salt and pepper to taste
- sour cream or yogurt (optional)

Place garlic cloves in small baking pan; add 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and stir to coat well. Roast at 325 F for 20 minutes or until golden. In large heavy saucepan, heat remaining 2 tbsp oil over medium heat. Add leeks and fennel; saute until mixture begins to color, about 10 minutes. Add stock, potatoes, roasted garlic, thyme and bay leaves; bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 40 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Remove bay leaves and discard. Puree soup, in batches, in food processor or blender. Return to sauce pan and heat through. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve with a dollop of sour cream or yogurt. Serves 6 to 8. ☺

Source: Howard Mann, Vancouver Sun, February 22, 1995

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.

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