



# 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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## YOU'D GET A LOT MORE ATTENTION FROM ME IF YOU WERE A VEGETABLE!

By Kathy Huckins

That is what I uttered to my then 12 and 14 year old sons, sometime during my first year at Stearns Farm CSA. It was 1999, and I felt like I was in way over my head. And I was. I was introduced to the farm the previous fall and asked to take on the job of farming this CSA. My experience with vegetables had been limited to my large home vegetable garden. I knew how many plants to grow for my family, but for 65 families? Gosh, how many carrots is that? And what varieties? And how many times do I need to plant them? And you expect more than carrots, maybe 45 other crops? WOW, I'll see what I can do.

What saved me and also exhausted me is my terrific work ethic. I was raised on a dairy farm in the Midwest so I had an idea of what was expected and needed. But even with that background, the task was daunting. I had spent the winter talking to every farmer I could to figure out this puzzle. I got some great advice and an excellent crop plan to follow. The farm had experienced a few sparse vegetable years, so when we had ample vegetables that first year, sharers were thrilled. It was a great place to start. What they didn't know is that I was as shocked as they were. I had no idea I could grow so much and so well. That first year, I got more compliments on the carrots alone than I had gotten all

### ON THE STAND THIS WEEK

ON THE STAND: Head lettuce, salad greens, spinach, bok choy, carrots, potatoes, scallions, salad turnips, celeriac, parsnips, sweet potatoes, cabbage, celery, a variety of winter squash.

PYO: Braising greens of collards, kale and chard; culinary and tea herbs; pea tendrils; a bouquet of flowers.

the years I had spend in my previous profession, raising and homeschooling my sons.

I kept going, and now it has been 10 years! It happened so fast. We have gone from 65 sharers to 160. I started farming about two acres and now we are using four. We expanded Penelope's Herb Garden, created a Children's Garden, a Culinary Herb Garden and a quarter acre PYO Flower Garden. We tripled the rows of raspberries, planted 100 blueberry bushes as well as 80 rhubarb plants. Every spring we put in 1000 strawberries as well. Our fields are amended with minerals and fertilized by compost and cover crops. Our crops are rotated every year, giving them the best soil we have for their success. We plant many varieties, many times to ensure ample harvests all season long.

We started with a walk-behind tiller and a few hoes. THAT made the job almost impossible. We grew into two small cub tractors for bed preparation, cultivation and mowing. We lease a larger tractor and spader to work the soil for planting. It also pulls our compost and leaf spreader, and the front end loader helps build and turn our compost piles. Getting the right equipment made all the difference.

On April Fool's Day in 2000 we put up a greenhouse. As we grew, we moved the pick-up stand from the village to the present location, added a shed in order to have an office without rodents and put up two cover-its for equipment and field supplies. We continue to nurse along our old sheds. Now we are adding a root cellar and a moveable greenhouse to accommodate our first winter share offering.

From the beginning, I realized that standing alone in the field got little done. I NEEDED HELP!! To solve that problem, the sharer work hours and the work-for-share positions were created. When that wasn't enough, I

(con't. from page 1) started hiring healthy, energetic folks, younger than me, who might want to farm someday. Now Stearns supports farm assistants who, as you can see, work very hard for all of us.

Throughout the years, volunteers have played a vital role in keeping us sustainable. A few have been with me for the entire 10 years, most notably my husband Brian. They have worked thousands of hours in the field, watered the greenhouse, constructed buildings, fixed tractors, laid pipe, installed electricity, cooked lunches, delivered produce to shelters, seeded lettuce, helped with children's activities, took down trees, mowed the lawn, took photos, wrote articles for the newsletter and served on our Board of Directors. They have been individuals, school groups, church groups, corporate groups and youth groups. I am sure I am missing at least a dozen other jobs they have done. Their good will and generous spirit has always impressed me.

This job has been a good balance for me. I can use my relationship skills and when I need a break, can always go out and weed the carrots. I get to be outside all the time. What could be better than that? I feel lucky to have this opportunity to manage this farm. Now, if I could just figure out how to do it without the exhaustion. Maybe I will get to that in the next 10 years.

We can all gather at Stearns Farm CSA because Margaret Welch gave this farm to the Sudbury Valley Trustees back in the 1970's. From the 1950's to the 1990's Penelope Turton farmed here organically when it was a word hardly spoken and little valued. She started the first CSA in 1991 with 10 sharers. A few years later the farm was incorporated. So little land is left to farm today. We are so fortunate to have these few acres and we use them to the best of our stewardship abilities.

My 10 year wish? That we use our skills to continue the search for healthy land to farm, that we support farms in our towns and feed our families foods that are grown around us. We act and vote by what we choose to eat. May that choice enhance and support us as we contribute to the beauty and peace of our strong, yet fragile world. Thank you all for the past 10 years. ☺



**Don't forget to finish your Work Hours for the season. Time is running out!**

## GARDEN SHOWCASE: CELERIAC

By Donna Savastio

It may look like just an ugly knobby root, but celeriac



has lots of inner beauty. The flesh of this interesting vegetable is crispy when raw and silky smooth when cooked. It has a lovely, delicate taste which suggests the flavors of celery and parsley with just a slight bit of nuttiness. If you like celery you will like celeriac and, in a word, it is fantastic!

It is unclear when celeriac was first cultivated, but there are references to it dating back to the seventeenth century. Today celeriac is less common outside Europe and Asia. It is popular in France, where it is used in the classic dish, celeriac remoulade, (matchsticks of celeriac in a flavoured mayonnaise) and in Italy, where it is often served with meats and used in stuffings and stews.

A number of vitamins and minerals are present in celeriac, most notably lots of vitamin C, vitamin K, potassium, phosphorus, dietary fiber, vitamin B6, magnesium and manganese.

Be prepared to lose about a quarter of its weight when you peel the celeriac. Refrigerate, trimmed, in a plastic bag (unsealed) where it can keep for a couple of weeks. Scrub well and cut off the skin quite thickly to remove any brown bits and the root channels in the base. You can drop cut pieces into water with a squeeze of lemon juice to prevent discoloration.

Ways to use celeriac include grating or cutting it into thin sticks for serving raw. You can also blanch these sticks briefly for a slightly softer texture if you like. You can cut it into cubes and boil those until tender and then mash them with potatoes, garlic and/or other root vegetables. The easiest and one of the tastiest uses for celeriac is simply to boil one root with your potatoes before mashing, which imparts a lovely rich flavor to the finished product. It can also be roasted in the oven as part of a root vegetable roast or all by itself.

Pureed celeriac also makes a wonderful bed of flavor on which to serve your main course and also works very well in stews and soups as well as alongside roasted meats. Some flavors that go well with celeriac are leeks, winter squash, parsley and herbs, potatoes, apples and pears, carrots, parsnips, fennel and cabbage, just to name a few. Celeriac is really quite versatile, so please enjoy this lovely vegetable, even if it is a bit homely! ☺



## WHY STEARNS?

By Sara Sullivan

Over the course of the season, we have explored the benefits of being involved with a farm like Stearns. Each week we saw a new reason to celebrate the choice you have made to eat healthy, locally-grown food while supporting a working farm in your community. Here they are:

- To know where your food comes from.
- To eat food grown without synthetic herbicides.
- To eat food grown without chemical pesticides.
- Because it tastes better.
- To stay away from the supermarket.
- To be involved in growing your own food.
- Because it's a great deal.
- To say no to genetically-modified food.
- To support a working farm and its farmer, sharing both risk and abundance.
- To avoid irradiated food.
- To support a sustainable local economy instead of a global corporation.
- For the next generation of farmers, growers, and eaters.
- To try new things.
- To enjoy the therapeutic, spiritual, and physical benefits of farm work.
- Because food is an issue of national security.
- To mark the seasons with social events that celebrate your farm and your community.
- To share food with those who need it.
- To share the resources of good recipes and tips for growing, cooking, and preserving.
- To support and encourage the development of other CSAs.

I hope everyone enjoyed *Why Stearns* this season as much as I enjoyed putting it together. And thank you, everyone, for choosing Stearns Farm CSA. ☺

## HERB GARDEN WORK-FOR-SHARE

We are looking to fill a half Work-for-Share position for the 2009 season in our herb gardens. For the past three years, Patricia Wilbur-Zucker has been lovingly tending Penelope's Herb Garden, sharing the position with Ann Bouvier. They were also the designers and implimentors of our new Culinary Herb Garden. We have been blessed with Patricia's vast knowledge and love of all things herbal. Because of work changes, she needs to pass this job on to another. If you have herbal knowledge and experience and would like to take on this job, please contact Kathy at [huckins@charter.net](mailto:huckins@charter.net) or 508-561-3950.

## THE LAST NEWSLETTER

Can it be that 20 newsletters have come and gone? Just as quickly as snap peas turn to tomatoes and sweet corn gives way to sweet potatoes, we find ourselves at the end of a lovely farm season and at the final newsletter.

If you are a Winter Sharer, you will receive three montly newsletters giving you pickup details, recipes, and information about your share. But for everyone else, this will be it for the year! Have a wonderful winter, and thank you for being such loyal readers. I have very much enjoyed getting to know you, receiving your recipes, and hearing your feedback on the newsletter articles.

I would like to thank those people who contributed to the newsletter this year—Sarah Shonbrun, who gives us great and tasty recipes without fail each week, Donna Savastio, who provided fascinating Garden Showcases for us all season, Janet Carlson, who formatted the first half dozen newsletters, and those who contributed with interesting and useful articles, reviews, or poems: Gudrun Baubock and Amanda McClure, Patricia Wilbur-Zucker and Ann Bouvier, Nomi Sofer, Carol Conway, Natalie DeNormandie, Nadine Salisch, Sara Abramovitz, Sonya Ciavola, Diane Kelzer, Eric Van Bean, Emre Tezduyar, Kerisa Fitzgerald, Scott Cleveland, and Brian Huckins. Thanks also to those who contributed beautiful photos from time to time: Lisa & Alyssa Mattei, Claudia Gustafson, and Wayne Hall. I would also like to thank our farmer, Kathy, for her insightful columns and her excellent work managing Stearns. See you all next year!

☺ —Sara Sullivan, Newsletter Editor

## OUR SEASON ISN'T QUITE OVER

Kathy, Chris, and Sonya would love help putting the fields and gardens to bed for the winter. Please come by and help if you are able to. We will work each day Tuesday through Saturday until November 17th. We'd welcome help and chocolate and help and coffee and help and good will and labor and sometimes a sandwich. When the water is turned off, we can no longer make stone soup for lunch.

## THANK YOU, STEARNS COMMUNITY!

By Gudrun Baubock

### *Work-for-Shares*

As all of you know, Pickup Days happen regardless of weather. Even if you think it might be too hot, too cold, or too rainy to spend time outdoors, your vegetables are harvested, and the farm stand is ready for you by 2 pm. It takes a lot of determination and commitment (and good rain gear) to be a work-for-share in the fields. Other work-for-shares spend their time taking care of the herb and children's gardens, and edit this newsletter. Thank you **Sara Abramovitz, Patricia Zucker, Ann Bouvier, John and Betsy Varga, Cathy Briasco, Emre Tezduyar, Linda and Nick Clayton, Sara Sullivan, Iris Ferrecchia, Marlene Seymour, Mark Kelly, Nadine Salisch, Diane Kelzer, Amanda McClure, Al Kutenplon, David Ferrini, Lynsey Vanderbeck, and Gesa Lehnert.** Together with Kathy and her assistant farmers you are the core group that makes this farm run smoothly!

### *Volunteers*

Some volunteers take on jobs that need to be done regularly throughout the year. One of these jobs is the delivery of surplus vegetables. Every Saturday morning, volunteers come to the farm, weigh the surplus, package it, and then drive around to deliver the vegetables to area shelters. Thank you to **Beth Ackroyd, Nicolette Blanco, and Linda Cohen** for taking care of this on a regular basis!

### *Recipes*

Every single sharer has at some point tried one of the recipes on the last page of each of our newsletters. It is not easy to come up with a good selection on a regular basis: there should be some general information about a vegetable, at least one rather quick and easy recipe, probably another recipe that appeals to those who like to spend more time and effort in the kitchen....**Sarah Shonbrun** has been consistently supplying the newsletter with those recipes for the last few years. Thank you, Sarah, your recipes are a great inspiration for how to use our vegetables!

I'd also like to thank Malini, Shawn, Gert, Elin, and Sue for starting to add recipes to the Angino Farm recipe wiki. It is growing steadily and promises to be a great resource for all of us. Since we have six years worth of newsletter recipes to add (probably roughly around 500 recipes), there is plenty of work to go around. If you would like to help with this task, please contact me: [gudrunbaubock@gmail.com](mailto:gudrunbaubock@gmail.com). You do not need special computer skills, and you choose how much time you want to spend on this.



## GIVE THE GIFT OF FLOWERS

With the holidays coming up, don't forget the perfect gift—Stearns Flower Gift Certificates. Gift certificates are \$20 each, and entitle the recipient to three large bouquets of 24 stems each that can be picked from July 15 to Sept 15 of next year. Recipients simply insert the coupon in the tin can at the flower kiosk after picking. Consider this gift for all of the year's occasions as a way to give something unique to friends and family while supporting Stearns Farm too! To order, contact Janet Carlson: [janet@stearnsfarmcsa.org](mailto:janet@stearnsfarmcsa.org) or by phone 508-309-7777. ☺

## CHILDREN'S GARDEN

We all had fun playing in the Garden this season, but now it is time to get it ready for winter. On the very last Pickup Day, this **Friday, October 24th**, we will start at **10:00 am**. We will pull up annuals and the pea trellis, do one last round of weeding, harvest the Job's Tears, sort through the sand toys, and generally clean up. If time permits and we have enough leaves, we will also start mulching the beds to protect them during the winter. Please let me know if you can come and help with these tasks! [gudrunbaubock@gmail.com](mailto:gudrunbaubock@gmail.com)

## 2008 STEARNS SURVEY

There is a 2008 survey attached to the newsletter email, and there will also be copies available at the stand. Now is the time for your voice to be heard! Kathy and the farm staff really want to hear your comments and suggestions in order to ensure that Stearns Farm continues to develop and adapt to your needs. Please take the time to complete the survey. On your last pickup day, plan a little more time and take advantage of this valuable opportunity to provide feedback. Thank you!

## THANK YOU, KERISA FITZGERALD!

As the Stearns Farm 2008 Season draws to a close, we would like to take time to thank the farm staff who have made the season possible.



This week our thanks go out to Farm Assistant Kerisa Fitzgerald.

Kerisa lives here in Framingham with her husband Keith and their two sons, Tom (3) and Jack (1). She first became involved in farming after reading an article about a farm in Weston. At the time, she was doing environmental work for the city of Springfield, and loved the philosophy but not the bureaucracy

and paperwork. She started farming in 2001 and never looked back.

Kerisa's ultimate goal is to run a farm of her own in the very center of a town that is torn about whether or not they want to preserve their land, to put the reality of community farming right in the public eye. She believes agriculture is a tool for bringing people together around community issues, and for creating community where it may be floundering or non-existent. As she notes, development has scattered and isolated people, and farms help bring people out of their houses and cars.

When asked what strikes her most about Stearns, Kerisa observes that it is an organic farm in every sense of the world. People are allowed to get involved here, and you can almost feel everybody's fingerprints on our farm.

As she puts it, every element of the farm, not just the food, is thought about, well-loved, and home-grown.

Her favorite crop at Stearns is the lettuce. It's a great crop to study for information about loss and growth rates, and she also loves how they look marching down the rows. Shelling peas are also a favorite, especially as they're the only vegetable that her toddler will eat right now.

In Kerisa's free time, she loves to devour magazines, from farming ones to *Oprah* and *Martha Stewart*. When asked the one thing she would like to communicate to all of our sharers, Kerisa says not to be afraid to ask questions. She saw a lot of new faces this year, and recognizes that there is a learning curve when you join a CSA. Just jump in and ask, and it gets easier and better every year.

We would like to thank Kerisa for answering all of those questions so helpfully and for her hard and dedicated work at the farm this year. Thank you, Kerisa! ☺

## 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

Tuesday, October 21	Last pickup for Full and Alternate 2 Tuesday Sharers
Friday, October 24	Last pickup for Full and Alternate 2 Friday Sharers
Saturday, November 1	Last Day for Sharers to complete or pay for work hours
Friday, November 7	Last Day for Winter Sharers to complete or pay for work hours
Friday, November 7	Winter Share pickup (first Fridays group) 12-4 pm
Friday, November 21	Winter share pickup (third Fridays group) 12-4 pm

### 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.	saralarry@comcast.net 978-443-9747
Sara Sullivan	Newsletter Editor	sarasull@verizon.net 617-953-5841
Tom Yelton	Webmaster	webmaster@stearnsfarmcsa.org 978-443-5138

Stearns Farm CSA is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

## LATE WINTER SQUASH

Late winter squashes come in a beautiful variety of sizes, shapes, and colors and they are equally versatile in the kitchen. Bake or roast them alone or with other vegetables for a hearty side dish, steam or stew them in chunks, purée the cooked flesh for creamy soups or silky pies, or use them as edible containers. With their hard shells and thick, dense flesh, they keep for months when stored in a cellar or other cool, dry spot. Though you can use a vegetable peeler on some of the thinner-skinned varieties, such as butternut, and a plain kitchen knife on smaller squash such as acorn, getting into an enormous, heavy squash such as a Hubbard or a pumpkin can be difficult, even dangerous, so work carefully. A heavy chef's knife or cleaver and a rubber mallet can help. To make squashes easier to cut or peel, try piercing the skin all over with a sharp knife, placing in a baking dish or on a cookie sheet and cooking at about 350 degrees for half an hour or so. Cool until safe to handle and then proceed to peel, chop, or slice. Here's a link for more prepping tips: [www.recipe-tips.com/kitchen-tips/t--830/all-about-winter-squash.asp](http://www.recipe-tips.com/kitchen-tips/t--830/all-about-winter-squash.asp).

**BAKED SQUASH WITH ORANGE.** When baked or roasted, the flesh of winter squash caramelizes on the outside and becomes dense and creamy within. Adapted from [consciouschoice.com](http://consciouschoice.com).

½ cup Italian (flat leaf) parsley  
2 half-inch strips of orange zest (orange part of peel)  
2 garlic cloves

1 large butternut or 2 small acorn squash  
2 tsp olive oil  
salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Finely chop parsley, orange zest, and garlic together. Cut squash in half, remove seeds, and cut into 1-to-2-inch slices. Arrange squash slices in a large baking dish. Drizzle oil over squash. Sprinkle with parsley mixture and season with salt and pepper. Cover dish with foil. Bake until tender—about 45 minutes.

Variation: Combine 1 tsp EACH ground coriander and sweet paprika, ½ tsp ground cumin, ¼ tsp caraway seeds, ¾ tsp salt, ½ tsp sugar, and a pinch of cayenne pepper. Skip salt and pepper and brush or rub the oil all over the cut sides of the squash slices, then sprinkle on the spice mixture before baking. Serves 4.

**SQUASH SOUP WITH GINGER.** Serve this smooth soup in small cups to start an elegant autumn feast or in bowls with hearty bread and a salad for a light, but filling casual supper.

Adapted from [consciouschoice.com](http://consciouschoice.com).

3 Tbs + 1 tsp vegetable oil  
2½ cups chopped onions  
8 cups (about 3 lbs) peeled winter squash, in 1" pieces  
2 Tbs peeled, minced fresh ginger root

4½ cups low-salt chicken or vegetable broth  
2 Tbs tomato purée  
Pinch cayenne pepper  
1 Tbs EACH cumin and mustard seed

Heat 3 tablespoons of oil in a heavy pot over medium-high heat. Add onions and sauté until slightly golden—about 8 minutes. Add squash and ginger and sauté 5 more minutes. Add broth, reduce heat, and simmer until squash is tender—about 35 minutes. Working in batches, purée squash in a blender, then return mixture to the pot. Add tomato purée and cayenne. Season with salt and pepper. Simmer about 10 minutes to reheat, adding more broth if needed. Just before serving, heat remaining oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add cumin and mustard and stir until fragrant—about 2 minutes. Ladle soup into bowls, top with seed mixture and serve. Variation: Garnish each bowl with a dollop of plain, whole-milk Greek yogurt and/or a few fresh cilantro (coriander) leaves. Serves 4–6.

**SQUASH CLAFOUTI.** Clafouti is basically a sweet, baked pancake. This seasonal version is creamy, but light. Adapted from *The Last Course: The Desserts of Gramercy Tavern* by Claudia Fleming.

1 4–5 lb butternut or Hubbard squash  
5 large eggs  
¾ cup + 2 Tbs sugar  
½ cup milk  
½ cup heavy cream  
½ cup chopped toasted hazelnuts or walnuts

1 tsp vanilla extract  
Pulp scraped from a 1" piece of split vanilla bean  
Pinch of salt  
¼ cup all purpose flour  
1 Tbs unsalted butter, melted

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Halve squash and scrape out seeds. Place cut side up on a baking sheet and bake for 1½ hours. When cool enough to handle, scrape flesh into a food processor and purée. Line a sieve with a double layer of cheesecloth or a clean kitchen towel and place over a bowl. Spoon purée into the sieve and drain in the refrigerator overnight. Next day, press the drained purée through a fine sieve or strainer or whirl in a blender or food processor to yield about ⅔ cup fine purée (save additional purée for soup). Place eggs, ¾ cup sugar, milk, cream, vanilla extract and pulp, and salt in a blender or food processor. Pulse about 30 seconds. Add squash purée and blend well. Add flour and pulse until well combined. Press batter through a fine sieve to remove any lumps, then let rest at room temperature for about 30 minutes. While batter rests, preheat oven to 425 degrees. Brush 9-inch pie plate with melted butter and sprinkle with remaining sugar, then with chopped nuts. Pour batter over nuts, bake clafouti for 15 minutes, then lower heat to 375 degrees and bake until center is just set—about 12 minutes. Serve immediately cut in wedges and topped with whipped cream or ice cream if desired. Serves 8.

*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.*