

## **CSA Newsletter –Week 3**

### **Full and Half Share members pick up this week**

Dear CSA friends,

First I want to apologize if you didn't receive our newsletter last week. I figured out late in the week that we had a glitch in our gmail and most or all of the email I sent was never delivered. So I'm trying to combine both newsletters here...without being too wordy.

I think we have all had the weather on our minds this past week. With the several very heavy storms that rolled through the Chicago area, we hope everyone stayed safe and dry. We heard from several of you that homes, basements and yards flooded and we hope no one incurred substantial damage.

Whether by design or luck, our old 1867 farmhouse sits on high ground so while we watched our normally very slow creek rise up into the yard, almost over the driveway, it came nowhere near the house and other than some ground water seepage into the basement which was sump pumped out, we were safe from flooding. We are also lucky that our fields are on a slight incline towards the creek so that they also don't flood, although they did certainly get more water than they needed. Suffice it to say we have not had reason to irrigate our fields much this summer! However, while our fields are pretty safe from flooding, all the rain is not great for the crops. When the plants don't get a chance to dry out between rains and they remain constantly in mud, they are prone to develop root rot and mildew problems that can damage the veggies. We haven't see this happen so far but we are keeping an eye out and fingers crossed and hoping for a bit of a dry spell to come our way.

### **What's coming up for harvest?**

Before the season started, when just the strawberries and head lettuces were ready for harvesting, we invited our members out to the farm to get both. Many of you took us up on that offer and we're glad you did. We're also glad we were able to have head lettuces in the boxes for the first two weeks of the season. Unfortunately the remaining head lettuces bolted (flowered and went to seed) which leaves them bitter and pretty inedible. We pulled almost 500 heads out of the ground this past week and had to feed them to the animals (who didn't complain one bit). But it was a heartbreak for us. Scott reseeded another round of lettuces and if the weather stays within normal Chicago summer temps you should see more lettuce in your boxes in the coming weeks.

Other veggies are starting to come along. We've seen the first tomatoes and cabbages and our Thursday members were the first to see summer squash of the season. The garlic scapes are almost over for the season which means we will soon be harvesting the garlic and hanging to dry and cure. It looks like we are going to have bumper crops of potatoes and onions this year so I will be sharing tips on how to make the best use of the abundant crops – from storing, freezing, drying and preserving to a variety of recipes so that nothing goes to waste and with luck you'll have some veggies to use after the season is over.

It looks like we will also start thinning out the carrots, which means you may start getting baby carrots in your bags/boxes. Beets are starting to grow bigger, sugar snap peas are appearing on the vine and as always, kale is abundant so I hope everyone is enjoying is an finding creative ways to use it every week.

We have not opened the farm stand yet, but hope to in the next week or so once there is more variety to offer non-CSA members.

### **Potatoes last week, this week, every week?**

We planted ten rows of potatoes this year – down from our usual 16 rows, and it looks like we will still have a very plentiful crop. Just the fact that we had potatoes for Week 1 – which has never happened, is a sign of the abundance. We planted three varieties – reds, whites, and (my favorite) Russets. I think potatoes is one of those veggies that you can't roll your eyes at seeing in your box every week (like kale?) because who doesn't have potatoes for dinner at least once a week? And luckily potatoes are one of those veggies that if stored properly will last weeks. So, what is the best way to store potatoes? They do not need to be refrigerated (and shouldn't be). Ideally, find a dark environment at about 45-50 degrees. At warmer or more humid temperatures they may start sprouting or getting mushy. Mature potatoes (those we dig up once the potato plants die) will last longer than the "new" potatoes. You probably noticed that the skins on the potatoes you received the past two weeks had a very thin skin that peeled off when you washed them. That's because we harvested them as new potatoes. As the weeks go on and the potatoes continue to mature the skins will be thicker and storage will be easier. If when you get your weekly potatoes they feel damp (because we dug them out of the mud because of all the rain), take them out of the plastic bag and let them dry out on your counter – unless you're going to use them right away. If you have a cool temp basement, store your potatoes in a brown paper bag and store there. Once you've received several weeks of potatoes I'll start sharing some recipes, and winter preservation ideas.

## **Week 3 Recipes**

### **Two-Bean Soup with Kale – use amounts to create as much soup as you want**

#### **Ingredients**

Olive oil

Onion – chopped

Carrots – chopped

Celery – chopped

Garlic

Vegetable or chicken broth

Kale

Canelloni beans

Black beans

Salt & Black pepper to taste

Red wine vinegar

Rosemary

#### **Directions**

Sauté chopped onion, celery and carrots in olive oil until tender. Add garlic, broth, kale, and beans. Add seasonings to taste and add red wine vinegar one tablespoon at a time to taste. Simmer on low heat to warm through and to cook the kale. This is such a simple recipe because there are not set amounts of ingredients. If you love beans – add more. If you love kale – add more.

You can also add cooked chicken if you like meat in your soup or pasta to give it more volume!

### **Healthiest French Fries Ever**

#### Ingredients

Potatoes

Spray canola or olive oil

Sea salt

#### **Directions**

Cut potatoes in half (lengthwise), then cut each half into two or three wedges. Place standing up (standing on their skins). Spray with oil and sprinkle with salt. Bake in 400 degree oven for about 45 minutes or until potatoes brown and are soft (test with toothpick).

## **Weekly boxes, 5 week shares still available**

Tell your friends and family we still have weekly boxes (\$40.00) and 5 week shares (\$180) available.

Have a great week, and as always, thank you for your support of locally grown food and family farms!

Farmer Scott & Kathy