

BROOKFIELD FARM SHOPTALK

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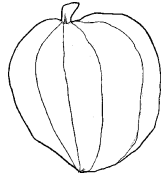
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September 12, 2009
Distribution Week #15

WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK

Fall Is Here

Acorn Squash: We distribute squash in the reverse order in which they keep (in other words, the squashes that don't store as well, we will distribute first). This week we've got acorn for you and then comes carnival, delicata, pie pumpkin, buttercup, cheese, and butternut. This variety looks great this year - The flavor & color are excellent. We should have squash through Thanksgiving.



Toscana Kale: This dark green crinkly cooking green is also called "Lascinato" or "Dino" Kale. For many it is the tastiest treat of the late summer and early fall as its leaves make a great addition to stir fries and other dishes as well. Use it like any other cooking green - steam or fry and eat it while it's hot!

Red Onions: These are beautiful, tasty onions They are sweet enough to be eaten raw and taste nice when you cook with them as well. We'll have these through October when we'll start the yellow storage onions.



WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE FARM

Harvest Time

With the sun shining bright yet again, we checked the crops to see if it was time. The onion tops had shriveled and died back on half of the field. And the squash vines were dying back on the early varieties. Everyone was at a Labor Day picnic. Obviously, this was our time to get busy.

To the barrels! Fill the white flat-bed truck with empties and head for the onion field. Pull the onions. Throw them in the barrels. Drag the barrels. Pull the onions. Throw them in the barrels. Drag the barrels. Again. Again. Drive them to the greenhouse. Dump them on the upside-down tables. Repeat until tired.

Half the crop is done. Go to sleep.

Wake up! To the potatoes! Attach the digger & picker to the tractor. Load the bags to the back of the picker. Cover your ears. Dig them taters. Fill them bags. Lift them bags. Drive to the barn. Load them pallets. Down to the cellar. Repeat until tired. All blighty varieties picked. 1/4 of crop done. Go to sleep.

Wake up! To the squash! Grab the clippers. Find the early varieties (delicata, acorn, and carnival) in the weeds. Clip all squash and toss gently into a row. Do that for 700'. Turn around and do it again. And then again. And then one more time. Go to sleep.

Wake up! To the wagons! Find eight good bins. Load them onto two wagons. Attach two tractors. Drive them out to the fields. Two people in the bins catching. Two people throwing.

One driving. Throw the squash. Catch the squash. Fill the bins. Repeat until full. Drive wagons back to farm. Unload bins to greenhouse. Place them in the greenhouse where its' warm and dry. 1/3 of the crop picked and stored. Go to sleep.

Listen to the rain falling on the metal roof. Remember the 11,800 lbs of food stored safely in the barn. Big fall harvest week done. Two more big ones to go. Go back to sleep. Sleep like a baby.

We hope you enjoy the harvest,

Farmer Dan (for Karen, Abbe, Adan, Kerry, Lisa, and Brigitte)

**WHAT'S
ON THE WAY**

*CAULIFLOWER
RED POTATOES*

**BULK
PRODUCE**

*SWISS CHARD, TOSCANO
KALE, COLLARDS: \$2/LB
CARROTS, BEETS,
EGGPLANT: \$1 / LB*

Winter Squash, Onion, and Saffron Risotto

- 5-6 c chicken stock
- 1/2 tsp saffron threads, pulverized
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 c finely chopped red onions
- 1 1/2 c arborio rice
- 2/3 c dry white wine
- 2-3 c cooked, pureed winter squash
- 1 c grated parmesan
- salt and pepper

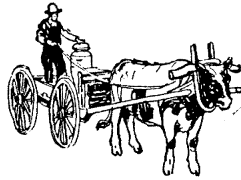
Bring stock and saffron to simmer in saucepan. Heat oil in heavy saucepan. Add onions; cook several minutes. Raise heat to medium high and stir in rice. Keep stirring for 2 min, then add wine. Stir and cook until nearly all the wine has evaporated ~ 2 min. Add two ladlefuls of hot stock (enough to barely cover the rice); stir frequently until nearly absorbed. Risotto is done when rice is barely tender and mixture is creamy - 25-35 min. Stir in squash during last 10 min. Fold in most of the grated cheese. Season to taste. Serve immed. with a little more cheese on top. Makes 6-8 servings.

- From 'Asparagus to Zucchini' - a guide to making the most of your CSA share - now available in the farm shop.

HOW WE FARM

Fall Harvest & Curing

This month we started the process of bringing in the fall storage crops. While most of our spring and summer crops are harvested within 24 hours of distribution, the fall crops are sometimes more of a project that is done in one fell swoop (we call that "bulk harvesting").



This week we harvested the first winter squash which involves clipping every squash and then piling them in long windrows. We then bring wagons with large wooden bins to the field and throw the squash, "binning them up" into 1000 lb. lots. We can make quick work of 4000 lbs of squash; Five of us did the job in 1 hour. Then we drive the wagons, loaded with full bins to the greenhouse on Hulst Rd. where they are stored for distribution through the fall.

Our potatoes are dug with an old *digger* (if you haven't seen it work - come to the potato harvest party in October) that lifts the spuds out of the ground and then another that trails behind (the *picker*) where you can stand and ride along while you clean the debris from the spuds. The potatoes then fall into the bags held onto the back. The carrots and parsnips are lifted with a clever bottom blade that loosens them in the soil so they can be picked up easily. The other roots (celeriac, beets, turnips, radish, rutabagas) are simply pulled by hand. All of these roots are then put into 5 gal. buckets (what would we do without them?) and then two buckets are dumped into a burlap sack and brought on a truck to our root cellar in the bottom of the barn.

This cellar is designed to keep the crops that like moisture (all the roots and cabbage) in the mediating temperature and moisture of the earth; protected from frost as well as the warm air. We let cool air in through a fan at night and close the air off

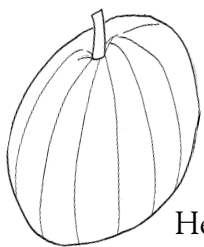
during the day. We fill this root cellar during early October and November and distribute the crops through March with our Winter Share.

While many vegetables are best used straight off the field, there are a few that actually are more like fine wine and need to be cured before they achieve peak flavor or storage quality.

Sweet potatoes and winter squash just don't taste good if you cook them up right after harvest. We have tried this over and over again since they look so inviting, but they're just not ready. Instead they need to be put into a place which is about 80F for a couple of weeks and then slowly have the temps brought down to 55F and low humidity. After this two week curing period their sweetness comes out and stays for good.

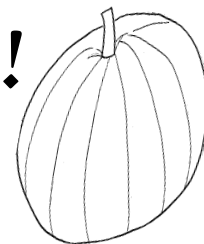
The curing process - which takes starches and turns them to sugars - is a vital part of this process of winter harvest. Our greenhouse serves as a curing house in Late September. After the onions, which are pulled green, have dried for two weeks, they are joined by the squash, in mid-September and the sweet potatoes, in early October. The greenhouse is kept at 50F at night (to ensure that condensation is kept to a minimum) and around 80F during the day. By the middle of October they are all fully cured and then we try to keep the greenhouse at 50F all the time. In this dry space, we can then hold sweet squash, sweet potatoes, and storage onions through Thanksgiving. At that point, we turn off our walk-in cooler (making it a "walk-in warmer") and they have a nice, frost-free, and *low-moisture* environment where they store well through the winter.

All through the fall we will be transforming our hard work into loads of vegetables for you and your families. This is time of year when we work hard, but we have lots of rewards for our labor right in front of us. To see the greenhouse & root cellar filled up is one of the great comforts of the year. It's also a constant reminder of how much we can coax from the earth with a bit of work, skill, and luck. If you'd like to come give us a hand, we're always happy to share the fun!



Pumpkin Harvest Party!

Saturday, Sept 26, 10:30 am



Help us harvest all of our pumpkins from the patch from 10:30 -11am, (don't be late, this goes very quickly with lots of people!)

then pick out your pumpkin and take a wagon ride around the farm.

A fun time for all ages, especially little ones

Please note this year we will be very short on pumpkins as one of our varieties didn't produce any pumpkins at all. Since we will only have half of a crop, we will only be able to give one pumpkin per family.....

When Does Regular Distribution End?

We'll should have beautiful crops and continue the same schedule thru Thanksgiving

When Can I Renew My Share?

In two weeks!

We'll be giving you a renewal form at the farm or sending it in the mail (if we miss you!).