



BROOKFIELD FARM SHOPTALK

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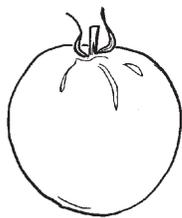
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July 23, 2016
Distribution Week #7

WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK

Summer For Real!!!!

Tomatoes: Our early crop is ready and looks great.



The fruit are a little smaller than our main season crop, but so far they look disease free. This first week will be limited and then looks abundant for many weeks to come.

Hot Peppers: We grow a mix of spicy peppers to add some zest to your cooking. They range from mild (jalapeno) to hot (habanero). This week there are mostly poblanos and jalapenos. We should have these through September.

Eggplant: We grow black Italian, pink Italian, and purple Asian varieties which usually give us an early blast in late July and then keep going strong through September. Use them all the same way, but the slender ones are a special treat to grill.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE FARM

Dry As A Bone

How dry is a bone? I really have no idea. But it must be pretty dry to have a saying about it. In any case, if a bone is that dry, we are definitely as dry as that. Definitely. With the constant sun and (mostly) heat beating down on our little farm, and then a near-but-total-miss for a thunderstorm on Monday, we are left with plants that are starting to show signs of stress, even soon after they are watered. The lettuce and summer squash in the sandy Snyder field needs to be watered every 4 days or else they begin to wilt. And the crops that can't be irrigated are starting to be counted as total losses. The first two plantings of sweet corn are only a dream. The russet potatoes are marble-sized. Even the winter squash, in the typically wet North Field at Small Ones Farm is starting to wilt in the afternoon.

Beyond that, and more ominously for our fall crops, our water sources are showing signs of stress as well. The Snyder pond, only 12' when it was originally dug in 1995, is down about 4'. So low that Zoe needed the whole crew to move the pump so that the inlet hose would reach the receding water.

Still, with all of that, nearly everywhere we turn, towards crops that have been kept alive for these past 7 dry weeks, we find bumper after bumper. First we nearly drowned in cucumbers on Monday. On Wednesday, the beets and carrots really hit their stride. And on Friday the tomatoes and eggplants showed themselves to be possible champions of the summer.

So this, season's story continues as it began: When will it rain? Who knows. When will we be done harvesting? Never.

We hope you enjoy the harvest.

Your Farmer,
Dan
(for Karen, Abbe, Zoe, John, Rebecca, and Sunny)

WHAT'S ON THE WAY

RED CABBAGE
CIPPOLINI ONIONS

BULK PRODUCE

SUMMER SQUASH,
PICKLING CUKES,
SLICING CUKES:
.50C/LB

GREEN KALE,
COLLARDS,
SWISS CHARD:
\$2 / LB

BEETS, CARROTS:
\$2 / BU

Farm Tour

Friday August 12, 4 - 5:30 pm

This will be a general overview of our Pick Your Own operation. Our Assistant Manager Zoe Abram will be giving this tour.

Cold Cucumber, Barley, Yogurt and Dill Soup

1 1/2 cups cooked and cooled barley or spelt berries
(cook 3/4 cups of barley in 1 3/4 cup water by bringing to boil, turning down to simmer with lid on and cooking until done - approx. 40 minutes)

1 cucumber, roughly chopped

1 clove garlic

1 Tablespoon fresh dill, chopped fine

1 cup plain yogurt

3/4 cup water or cold vegetable stock

hot pepper (optional)

salt and pepper to taste

Puree cucumber, dill, hot pepper (if desired), yogurt and water or stock until smooth. Add salt and pepper to taste. Stir in barley and chill for at least an hour for best flavor (though you can serve right away). Place a few slices of cucumber and a sprinkling of dill on just before serving.

Where does Karen come up with these? I don't know, but it is delicious!! (check the website for more!!)

HOW WE FARM

Harvesting

After all of the crop planning, seeding, planting, and tending of crops is done hopefully there's something out there to harvest! It's time to get the harvest operation in gear – we load up the knives, 5 gal buckets, and the big black & red barrels and head for the field.

We make use of pickup trucks and wagons for all of our harvesting since our fields are sometimes up to 3 miles away from the harvest shed. One person (a manager at first, but an apprentice as the season moves along) is designated the harvest manager for the week. It is their responsibility to make sure we have a plan for the week (what we need to harvest when to make sure all of our 500 shares are filled to the brim with fresh veggies!) The harvest manager moves the crew (our apprentices and a few stray teenagers are the harvest crew) to the field and back, ferrying people, buckets, and vegetables from field to harvest shed and back again.

Once in the cool of the shed, vegetables are washed and cooled in our well water and then packed in re-usable plastic lugs and into the walk-in cooler where they sit as close to 36F as we can get them. In this way we ensure maximum freshness for all of our perishable crops. Some crops (onions, winter squash, potatoes, etc) are not washed, but brought to the greenhouse or root cellar for curing & storage.

We generally harvest on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Starting at 6am to make sure the greens & lettuce still have



no "field heat" we begin cutting as the sun comes up. Brassicas (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kale) comes next as they like it cool, but can be more tolerant of heat than lettuce. Roots (carrots, beets, turnips, etc) come next along with slightly heartier green veggies like scallions, fennel, celery, and leeks to round out the "wet crops" that want to be picked before 10 or 11am.

After those, we start on the fruiting crops, which want to be picked when they are dry so as to avoid moving plant diseases around the field. In the early summer that's zucchini, summer squash and cucumbers. As summer rolls along we add in peppers and eggplants. In the afternoons we pick tomatoes or whatever other fruits we haven't gotten to in the morning. In the spring we might harvest from 6am until about 10 or 11 and by early summer it takes us until noon. By the time August rolls around, we need almost the entire day to finish the harvest as we sort the tomatoes in the cool of the farm shop and finish by 5pm. By the end of the day, at the height of the season over 2000 lbs of vegetables are packed and cooled and ready for distribution the following day. Then we wake up the next morning (Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday) we pick sweet corn at 6am so that it has peak flavor and is ready for our CSA distribution later on that same day.



BIKE TO BROOKFIELD: A fundraiser for the Rail Trail

SUNDAY, AUGUST 21st, 3 to 7 PM

Bike to Brookfield Farm (24 Hulst Rd., Amherst) for live music by the No Nos! Food from Wheelhouse Farm Truck! BYOB!

No cover. Donations optional. All proceeds benefit *Friends of Northampton Trails and Greenways*

Questions? sean@spedandsprocket.com

Presented by:

