

# BROOKFIELD FARM SHOPTALK

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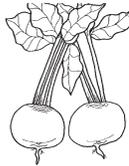
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Distribution Week #4

## WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK

### Early Summer Favorites

**Bunching Beets:** These are delectable beets with their greens on. Or, you could think of them as a bunch of Swiss chard, with a fun surprise at the bottom! Chop up the whole thing (greens, beets, stems) and roast, steam, or stir fry (see recipe below).



**Scallions:** Spring Onions, Green Onions, Bunching Onions, or whatever you want to call them. They are a good substitute for onions and leeks (which can't be harvested until August & September). Use the entire plant to spice up a stir fry or dress a salad. Also, great grilled!! Very mild. We should have a good supply of these through mid- August.

**Chinese Cabbage:** This vegetable *is* cabbage for over 1 billion people. Use the whole head for stir fry, kim chi, etc. It's taking a while ripening all at the same time, but we should eventually have it for 2 - 3 weeks as we have a decent crop this year.

**Collards:** This hearty cooking green needs to be cooked for a while and then it reveals a savory, satisfying flavor. We have a small early crop this year which you should see on and off until a much bigger crop is ready in the fall.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE FARM

### Cruising

Every season begins with dreams. With plans. With hopes. Anxieties. Expectations. And eventually those foreshadows are replaced with realities. With experiences. With memories. Pounds. Facts. Sometimes the before looks like the after. Sometimes not so much. Doesn't matter, really. Eventually, all is revealed. It's the crux of the matter that interests me. When we move from before to after. From controllable to deal-with-it.

This season we had dreams of growing 30 acres of produce. Selling 525 CSA shares. Training 3 apprentices. Hiring a new farm manager. Transitioning two farmers-into-general-managers-getting-some-time-off. The season started rather by-the-book, with all plans made, all staff hired, all seeds ordered, and all apprentices arrived. Then all machines tuned up, all shares sold, all fields plowed, all plants sown in the greenhouse, seeds sown in the ground, rain from the sky. At the end of May, the weather turned cold and wet, and the plants stopped growing. The woodchucks ate a lot of cabbage. And then the rain mostly stopped. The rest of the plants went into the ground. The weather warmed up, the cows went to the correct pasture, and the strawberries ripened.

And look at us now. Where's Zoe? She's got the weekend off! Once a month was part of the plan, and here we are living it. And here I am, writing a newsletter for the first time since last November. It's all the same farm, yet it's all completely different. Just like we hoped. We don't know yet, where this ship is sailing. But we do know that it is now afloat, we have set sail for the distant shore, which we have heard is to be found along this heading. Will we get there? Who will we be when we get there? Unknown. But for now, we know we are just cruising; Tending. Weeding. Watering. Dealing with "pests." Harvesting. We are here; Right between what it could be and what it was.

We hope you enjoy the ride,

Your (other) Farmer,

Dan

(for Zoe, Karen, Abbe, Rebecca, Sunny and Ellen)

### WHAT'S ON THE WAY

CUCUMBERS  
FENNEL

### BULK PRODUCE

SWISS CHARD:  
\$2 / LB

LETTUCE: \$2 / HD

GARLIC SCAPES:  
\$4 / LB

to purchase bulk produce:

**in the farm shop:**  
just come on in and see the  
farm shopkeeper

**in the Boston area:**  
visit our Bulk Produce  
Shop on our website:  
www.brookfieldfarm.org/  
bulk-produce/

### Beet Dip

4 medium beets (1lb), trimmed  
2 garlic scapes, minced  
1 sm red chile, seeded and minced  
2/3 c strained yogurt  
2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil  
1 tbsp pure maple syrup  
1 tbsp za'atar (mideast spice mix)  
2 tbsp goat cheese  
2 scallions, thinly sliced  
salt, to taste, and warm bread, for serving

Preheat the oven to 350F. Put ¼ cup of water in a roasting pan, add beets and cover with foil. Roast for 1 hour, til tender. Let cool, at least slightly. Peel the beets and transfer to a food processor. Add garlic, chile, and yogurt and pulse til blended. (To make strained yogurt: put in cheesecloth and squeeze gently.) Add olive oil, maple syrup, za'atar and puree. Season with salt. Scatter goat cheese and scallions on top.

*Recipe from Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi, Jerusalem.*

## HOW WE FARM

### The Spray Rig

We always feel a bit strange when the spray rig is riding around the farm like it will be on Monday.

It just seems odd to be running the sprayer around an organic farm. The sprayer stands as one of the ultimate symbols of conventional farming - disparaging comments about "nozzle-heads" spraying the crops to protect from weeds and bugs. But, using biological materials and applying them through water is practically as old as farming (think manure slurry applied to crops in ancient China, etc), and spraying continues as an important part of organic farming as well.



This week marked an important milestone on the farm - the emergence of the young larvae of the Colorado Potato Beetle (CPB). The striped adult beetle has babies (larvae) which grow and have a voracious appetite for potato plants. If we did nothing they would surely eat our entire crop. We deal with the beetle first by crop rotation. By moving our potatoes (and other related plants in the Solanaceous family - tomato, eggplants, and peppers - the "deadly nightshades") each year we make the beetles search for our plants instead of having their dinner table set for them. Then we scout the fields. If the populations are significant (more than 10% of our plants have larvae) we control them with a bacteria called spinosad. This is a natural bacteria which was originally found in the Caribbean by a vacationing biologist at an abandoned rum distillery, and is now multiplied in fermentation tanks. When eaten by the potato beetle larvae, it causes them to lose the ability to eat (then they starve and die). It is specific to these larvae - so no other insects are killed in the process. It also breaks down into harmless elements after a few hours. So when we find our populations in the potato (and eggplant) field to be above the threshold, we will spray the bacterium on the plants. We may have to do this again a week later and then the solanaceous crops are usually all set.

The other milestone we have reached this week is that many of our plants have grown and are now standing tall in the field. This is the time for us to use horn silica. Introduced by Rudolf Steiner in the early 1920s (as part of what later became known as "Biodynamic Agriculture), this substance helps plants photosynthesize and convert nutrients into plant tissue. It is quartz crystal that is crushed and put in a cow horn. Then the horn is buried in the ground during the summer months. When the horn is dug up, the silica is diluted in water and stirred for an hour. That material is then sprayed on all plants that are more than 4" tall. In the spring we spray one other Biodynamic preparation (horn manure) which helps to stimulate the life-giving element in the soil.

So the next time you see one of us running the sprayer through the fields, hopefully we'll know, that you know that we're just helping our plants along a bit, using materials that are at worst harmless, and at best perhaps a bit useful.

## PICK YOUR OWN

### Senior Shares Car Access

*New this year* - folks with **Senior Shares** are entitled to **use their personal vehicles on farm roads on Sundays** (following signs for clues as to traffic flow). We'd like to keep accidents to a minimum by ensuring that no other personal vehicles are driven around farm roads. *If you do not have a Senior Share*, please park in the parking lot and then walk to the fields.

## SPECIAL EVENT

### How To Grow Mushrooms At Home (and more!) with Fungi Ally

*Thursday, June 29th, 5-5:30pm*



General introduction to mushrooms and how to grow shiitake and oyster mushrooms with Emma Hayes, from Fungi Ally

Emma will be available in the farm shop from 4:30-6:30pm and will have recipes available. She will also be selling mushrooms, mushroom tinctures and mushroom growing kits.

*Fungi Ally is a mushroom farm in Hadley MA that grows shiitake, oyster, and lions mane mushrooms. They also provide spawn and ready to fruit kits to commercial mushroom farms. Their mushrooms are grown using agricultural waste products like straw and sawdust. Their mission is to reveal the power of mushrooms so more people can benefit from working with fungi and they are committed to developing sustainable growing practices that improve the health of customers, community, and environment.*

## HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

### Tuesday 4th of July Distribution

*The Farm Shop will be open as usual - 2-7pm!*