

BROOKFIELD FARM SHOPTALK

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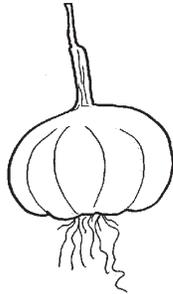
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July 15, 2017
Distribution Week #7

WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK

Flavorful Summer Salads

Fresh Garlic: Our garlic crop is great this year, and we've already sorted out our seed for next year, so we will start distributing some right now. This is fresh garlic, so it is aromatic and flavorful, somewhat mild, but will NOT store well - use it within a week or so (or put it in the fridge).



Cucumbers: These cool crisp delights are starting to come in a little heavier every day. You can eat the picklers fresh or make dills. Our slicing cucumbers should pick up next week, and hopefully we'll have cukes from now through early September.

Dill: Light, feathery herb in the carrot family. Use it to add a great taste to lots of dishes

Radicchio: This purple and white ball is an Italian import which has a bitter flavor. Chop it up to make an excellent addition to a fresh salad or cut it into quarters, brush with olive oil and grill it for a tasty treat. Our first crop is more a lightly bound lettuce - as the season progresses the heads will get denser and heavier.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE FARM

In The Soup

What a difference a year makes, indeed. Last years' newsletter was called "Dry as a Bone" as we were in the clutches of a severe drought; Every day 85F and sunny, irrigating every morning, moving pipe every afternoon, cultivating any day we wanted, and completely out of grass in the pastures. And now look at us....We had a hard time stringing two hours (let alone two days) of sun in a row this week. In fact, nearly every time it DID get sunny, the humidity would spike, and another rumbling storm would thunder through.

For those of you who have been on this journey with us before, you know that farmers have a love-hate relationship with water. We need it desperately (90% of our veggies are just that), but too much can quickly become a something akin to a plant plague. In addition to bringing all nutrients, water is also the transmitter of all nearly all the terrible diseases for plants. Plant pathologists merely count up "leaf-wetness-periods" to predict just how bad its going to be. Right after we are relieved to see our carrots germinate, we start the nightmare worry of wilts and blights.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. It was a wet week. And that was disorienting after such a dry year last year. We were in the soup, for sure, but it's not yet on full boil, by any means. Sure, we couldn't get the cultivators rolling. And the weeds were growing faster than the weeder crew could stoop and bend in the onions. But it wasn't torrential. And it's still early. So, for now - we made the most of it. Rebecca and Zoe renovated the strawberries. Sunny kept the soggy harvest rolling. Ellen painted pick your own signs. Karen cleaned up around the field houses. I did three years worth of deferred road maintenance. And all the while we hoped next week would be sunny. And dry. And warm. There's still time. Fingers Crossed.

We hope you enjoy the harvest,

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

WHAT'S ON THE WAY

HOT PEPPERS
SWEET ONIONS

BULK PRODUCE

GREEN KALE,
SWISS CHARD:
\$2 / LB
LETTUCE: \$2 / HD
BEETS: \$2 / BU

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!!)



PIC OF THE WEEK

The Garlic Harvest Begins

In Memoriam -

Ann Delbridge Cotton Levinger 1931 - 2017

George Levinger 1927-2017

(Long time shareholders and dear friends of the founders of our farm, George and Anne were a familiar presence on our farm for the past 30 years. This is from their son, David)

My father, George Levinger, died on Monday July 3rd, 12 days after the love of his life and wife of 65 years. He was in good health and this was and is a shock to everybody. At 90, he was still full of life, and many people were counting on his friendship, humor and powerful presence for years to come.

After my mother Ann's death, I believe she was becoming healed and rehabilitated in my father's mind. Though she was a joy and ever graceful, over the past few years, her memory loss had become difficult for dad. A stream of powerful loving remembrances poured in from family and friends. We sat around the table late into the nights reading out loud Ann's personal, funny, and deeply insightful writings. We shared pictures from throughout their lives. Her brilliance shined again as bright as ever. At the same time, perhaps the hole where she had been was widened.

Dad & I took a short trip to New York City last week to stay with Hans & Ellie (who were key to his meeting Ann) and then his favorite cousin Bea & Joe. In between, we spent a few hours in Manhattan, visiting his home from when he first immigrated to the United States. I saw places he studied at Columbia, old haunts, and the apartments his family lived in. We walked in Central Park, rode the subway, and took cabs. He beamed.

After we returned to Amherst, us sons, his daughters-in-law, and several grandchildren had a months-ago-planned reunion over the holiday weekend ironically to discuss "end of life decision-making." This became a chance to continue grieving and honoring Ann.

On Saturday night, dad had such a vivid dream that he woke up and called Ed downstairs and asked him if he could come up and check to see if he was alive. A premonition?

Sunday morning at Quaker meeting, dad was moved to rise and spoke in memory of Ann. He described her commitment to working for social justice on both the large scale and the interpersonal level. He related how she championed making people feel more welcomed and included at Mt Toby Friends Meeting through a simple, graceful change in their routines. Many others also stood and shared their memories.

After social hour and a planning session for Ann's Memorial Meeting in September, George was really tired. He asked Angela and me to drive him home. He seemed just plain exhausted, and I thought it was natural that he would finally be wiped out. When he woke from a nap, he ate a bit, but was more worn down than I'd seen him before. When Angela asked if we should go to the hospital, he said no, but that he might want to go to the doctor tomorrow.

Over the course of the evening, he was napping, but unable to truly get comfortable, and Matt ultimately called an ambulance. They determined he was having heart problems and transported him to Bay State Medical Center, which has excellent cardiac treatment. There were signs of a heart attack, but his heart was pumping OK. Brothers Bill & Jim stayed in the room with him, but slept as all presumed he would recover. They woke to alarms signaling that his heart had stopped around 6 AM. According to his expressed wishes, there were no attempts to resuscitate. It truly seemed that he died with a full but a broken heart. (see Broken Heart Syndrome).



Nearly a week later, I am still in a bit of shock from this, but I also feel that this is more of a love story than a tragedy. My mother always spoke admiringly of her grandparents who died in old age two weeks apart. So we are shocked, but not surprised. Sad, but full of love and admiration for two people who leave a big hole in the world. Inspired by their actions and their deep commitments to others and to each other.

A Memorial Meeting will be held in Hadley, MA on Saturday, September 9th at a time to be determined. An obituary will be published soon.