



# BROOKFIELD FARM SHOPTALK

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August 31, 2019  
Distribution Week #13

## WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK

### A Whole New Look!

**Leeks:** A subtle and buttery member of the onion family, they can be used in soup, stews, and main dishes. To use leeks, cut off roots and the thin green leaves. Slice in half, and wash thoroughly. Chop up and use like onion. We expect to have a good quality & limited quantity crop available thru November.

**Red Potatoes:** We dug our first spuds yesterday and found abundance. These thin-skinned, creamy tubers are great for mashing or roasting (and bake up okay as well). We should have a great crop all fall.

**Brussels' Tops:** In order to grow a great sprout, you've got to take off its top. This stops the plant growing upward, and encourages all the little sprouts on the side to grow big. Luckily the tops taste incredible, so we present them to you this week. Use them like collard greens - delicious.



## WHAT'S ON THE WAY

RED ONIONS  
GARLIC

## BULK PRODUCE

GREEN KALE,  
RED KALE,  
SWISS CHARD,  
TOSCANO KALE  
BRUSSELS" TOPS:  
\$2 / LB.

EGGPLANT,  
TOMATOES: \$2 / LB

CUCUMBERS: \$1 / LB

## WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE FARM

### August Is Gone

When August begins, it's hot and muggy and the melons are threatening to ripen. The cucumbers are in full swing, the fieldhouse tomatoes are loaded, and the new sweet onions are ready to bunch. As the month wears on we bring in bins and bins of watermelons, then the eggplants size up, the peppers get some color, and the field tomatoes start to come on. We harvest for long days, and still find time to seed the fall lettuce and spinach. At the end of the day we go for a swim, and then fall asleep, dead in the pillow.

Then, somehow, the month comes to an end. We find ourselves on the last succession of sweet corn. And after picking it, we drive back to the farm and

see kids standing on the corner waiting for the bus to school. The weeder crew goes to college or to high school, one by one, until they (and all of the weeds in the fall carrots) are gone. Then the tomatoes vines start to die back, and before you know it its time to dig a row of potatoes, and just like that, this summer is over.

This week, to add to this usual disorientation, one more exclamation point let us know that next week will be very different. Our apprentice, Lia picked her last eggplant of the season on Friday, and on Sunday is heading back to NYC to finish grad school at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. She has given incredible energy and strength to this every aspect of this job and we are happy that she is planning to come to the Harvest Dinner in November so we can give her a real public end-of season thank-you.

We will miss her, like we will miss the weeders and the melons and corn, as they will fade from our current view. We will remember and appreciate all they have given as August gives way to the big fall harvests of squash, potatoes, carrots, and cabbages to come.

We hope you enjoy the harvest,

Your Farmer,  
Dan

(for Karen, Abbe, Ellen, Ben, Lia, Marlee, and Will)

## SPECIAL THANKS

### Super Harvest Volunteers

A big thanks to Ben's mom Paula, Lia's friend Aaron, and our daughter Anna who all helped a bunch with the big harvests this week!!



## Leek, Red Pepper and Potato Soup

- 2 red peppers
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 2 leeks (washed thoroughly and diced)
- 8 cups potatoes (peeled and chopped)
- 5 cups chicken broth
- 1 sprig thyme
- 1 cup heavy cream
- Salt and pepper
- Chives

Roast red pepper under broiler until skin is blackened. Place in bowl and cover tightly with plastic wrap. Wait ten minutes then peel off skin. Remove seeds. Chop up. Add peppers leeks and sauté w olive oil for 5-10 minutes, til soft. Add potatoes, broth and thyme. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Cool 10 min, then puree. Place over medium-low heat. Heat heavy cream on low til steaming. Add warm cream to soup and stir. Season with salt and pepper, sprinkle w/ chives.

*This recipe is from the book "Vegetables" by the Culinary Institute of America.*

## HOW WE FARM

### Fall Harvest & Curing

In late August we start 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").

Next week we will harvest 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 3000 lbs of squash; Three of us do the job in 30 minutes. 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 nifty digger that lifts the spuds out of the ground and drops them onto the the ground. Then we scrounge around and pick them up into buckets. 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 (except spaghetti 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 removed to the cool dry barn and replaced 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 and sweet potatoes, 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!



### PIC OF THE WEEK

**Lia digs the first row of potatoes as the crew picks up her winnings**

### SPECIAL EVENT

#### Art Behind the Barn

*Saturday, September 21, 2019 - 8am - 1pm - shine or rain*

For more information, contact Rosie Pearson -  
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