



BROOKFIELD FARM SHOPTALK

P.O. Box 227
Amherst, MA 01004

www.brookfieldfarm.org
(413)253-7991 info@brookfieldfarm.org

August 15, 2020
Distribution Week #11

WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK

New (and Old) Friends

Shishito Peppers: These little peppers are a Japanese heirloom variety with a crisp fruity sweet pepper flavor and just a tiny hint of heat and smokiness that is brought out by cooking them. The appeal of the shishito pepper is simple: it has great taste, and it's small size and thin skin make it easy to work with in the kitchen. *Plus it has a surprise element in that 1 in 10 of these peppers is hot!* And that makes serving it at parties extra fun (see recipe below)! We have a nice big healthy planting and expect to have this for a few weeks at least. This is a new crop for us this year - let us know what you think.



Toscano 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! This crop looks good!

WHAT'S ON THE WAY

BROCCOLI
KOHLRABI

BULK PRODUCE

KALE (GREEN, RED, TOSCANO):
\$2 / LB

EGGPLANT: \$1 / LB

WAKEFIELD CABBAGE: \$3 / PC

SWEET CORN:
\$4 / DZ

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE FARM

Hot. Dry. Heavy.

The blistering heat came on strong Monday morning - one more time. It got hot. And then it got hotter. The harvest rolled along - swelling as the Mercury rose, and then all the melons decided to let loose. Marlee, Anna, Joseph, and Angela piled cantaloupes. Then red melons. Then yellow melons. They looked tired when we call got together for lunch.

In the afternoon we loaded up bins and lugs, and taught Wally (the new guy - more on him later) how to throw a 15lb medicine ball and "bin up" the mornings pilings. We "lugged up" the smaller, yellow watermelons and cantaloupes into black crates (since they stack nice with airflow all around) then chain them onto our little flat bed Fords. Then back to the barn. By the time we were done - so were 90% of the melons.

That was just Monday. We rolled on to Tuesday, into the sweet corn, eggplants, and peppers which were also bumping. It got dry. And then it got drier. The forecast rain disappeared with all of our dreams of relief. So, on Wednesday, after the harvest and pack were done we were back to hauling pipes and water to our now-pretty-wilty crops. This is a little easier in August than in June, since most of the crops are beyond the need for water - they are ripening and we just need to wait til they are done (only a couple weeks til September!!). Still, it took a little while to remember how to do it (and where we left all the tools

and parts). In the end, Ben and Jake watered all of our fall carrots and beets, and Marlee and I soaked the beans. Then Ben got the big traveling reel going on the Brussels' and celery and we were rolling.

By weeks' end the barn was absolutely filled with food, most of the needy crops were watered, and we hit the pillow hard on Friday night.

We hope you enjoy the harvest,

Your Farmer,
Dan (for Karen, Abbe, Ben, Jake, Joseph, Marlee, Serena, Anna, and Wally)



PIC OF THE WEEK
Lugged Melons Ready
For Pickup

Blistered Shishito Peppers

shishito peppers
2 tsp olive or avo oil
lemon wedge
salt

There are tons of recipes for Blistered Shishito Peppers - here's one from "<https://cookie-andkate.com/blistered-shishito-peppers-recipe>"

Wash and pat the peppers dry before starting to avoid any splatters when you frying. Toss the peppers in oil before cooking, rather than heating oil in the skillet. Warm your skillet over *medium heat* until it's so hot that a drop of water sizzles and quickly evaporates. Then, add the oiled peppers. Let them rest for a minute at a time before stirring, so they get a chance to char. Stir every minute until the peppers are tender and blistered in spots. Popping sounds are good! This will take ~10 min. Transfer to a serving plate. Spritz with a lemon wedge, if desired. Sprinkle with salt, to taste (don't skimp). Eat them all (except the stems!)

HOW WE FARM

The Weeder Crew

Every year, the weeds grow. We plow the earth. Plant the seeds. And then the earth plants a few billion more. Deep down she's a very modest being - doesn't like to be naked at all. Wherever there's a clear spot.....Pop, goes a weedie! It's tempting to think that we could just coexist on the earth, that all living things can just "get along" together. We could grow plants. The earth could grow weeds. We could get our crops out. The earth could make a few more weed seeds. And we could all live in the sweet ever-after. Heck, we could even stop working so hard and maybe take a few months off in the summer to sit under the tree and ponder our existence. Just doesn't seem to work out that way. If left to their own, the weeds just grow and grow and choke out all of our crops; All of our human aspirations at survival are choked with them. We'd be left eating rough pig weed stems or hunting for wild boar.

Of course, this is what has brought us the industrial agricultural chemicals of our time; They are immensely useful. Imagine planting a field of onions. Then seeing some weeds emerge. Then spraying the crop once and seeing all of the weeds die while the onions magically live on. Now that seems like good magic. It's just that the earth doesn't usually let such force just go "unanswered." There usually is a balancing force that has another, unintended effect. For instance, you may kill the weeds, but also leave carcinogens that cause rampant cell growth in other beings - causing unintended harm.

On our farm, we try and find a balanced approach. Plow the earth. Plant a seed. Cultivate the rows (with small tractors). And that's where the weeder crew comes in. After we are done with the primary cultivation of our plants, we "crawl" the fields. Plucking (not so gently) all the remaining weeds that have emerged to compete with our plants. This can be very difficult (like when the 4' tall August pig weed choked our Brus-

sels' Sprouts), but mostly the weeds are in a very concentrated area (about 2" around the crops). Still, when you've got to keep 30 acres of vegetables clean, it can take a little while. 30 acres of crops, one row at a time, comes out to about 343,000 feet of row. **You try crawling 64 miles!** That's why we need an entire crew.

Every year, we hire some folks who want to work hard, be outside, and help us produce food that's good for you to eat! We're very fortunate to have lots of eager high school & college-aged people around who fit the bill. We only have them work from 8am to 12pm so that they can do other things with their time, and not get burnt out from too much of a good thing. You should know that these folks work their tails off for your food. We all simply couldn't be eating all of this without them.

We open our jobs to anyone who wants to apply. We pay competitive wages to other agricultural jobs. And we have a good old time on the farm. This year has been not too different. Oliver, Sydney, Becca, Raphael, Ally, Orion, Caleb, Spencer, Ethan, Sarah, Gabriel, and Lukas returned for another season and they were joined by newcomers Rachel, Angela, Terra, and Jana.

They have kept our farm clean and abundant all summer long. Starting at the end of May, they've come and crawled the beets and carrots, yanked nutsedge in leeks, and left the peppers and eggplants looking mighty fine! It was a hot summer, with lots of new public health protocols. Didn't matter - they came and rode their bicycles to the fields. Then they pulled, tugged, plucked, and just kept moving around the farm staying ahead of the earth's urge to wipe us out! And so far, doesn't look like there were too many lasting side-effects for them or for us. They have two more weeks and looks like they will finish the rutabagas, next years' strawberries, and the fall lettuce and greens. So if you see them around the farm, give them a shout and say thanks for the cucumbers. The carrots. The kale. The melons. The eggplant. Couldn't have done it without them.

PIC OF THE WEEK

The Weeder Crew gets busy in the beans.

