

BROOKFIELD FARM SHOPTALK

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July 4, 2020
Distribution Week #5

WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK

Old Friends & Big Flavors!

Carrots: First of the season, these carrots are somewhat small, but very sweet, crunchy, and delicious. They will size up in the coming weeks and we plan to have them available from now through March (with a little break in early September)!!



WHAT'S ON THE WAY

CUCUMBERS
TOMATOES

BULK PRODUCE

KALE (GREEN, RED),
COLLARDS: \$2 / LB
LETTUCE: \$2 / HD

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE FARM

Where Are We? (part 2)

This time last week we were a dried out, tired mess of a farm. And now? On Saturday, after the Farmshop closed at 1pm, with the irrigation still pumping in the West Field carrots & beets, I got ready for a quick snooze. Then the thunder clapped and the lightening zapped. Next thing I know it was 2 hours later. A sweet 1/4" of rain to break a drought will do that to me. Then Sunday afternoon, another good soaker, with 1/2" more. Repeat the nap. Then repeat that storm each day through Wednesday (and avoid the one big thunderstorm that rumbled through Hadley on Monday). To top it all off, the weather stayed nice and dry every morning, giving the weeders plenty of time to hoe the winter

squash, and giving the apprentices a chance to get all of our field work done; Prepare ground for planting & seeding. Cultivate and cover crop the summer kale and cabbage. Cultivate and fertilize the tomato fields. Plant the first big fall brassica field.

Thursday dawned humid and warm, with a forecast for no rain. Ben hooked up the spray rig to finally get a chance to push back on the Colorado potato beetles and leafhoppers (see Shoptalk week 3). Joseph cultivated the last stray beds of lettuce, onions, and parsley. Serena rigged up the tractor with forks and brought out the pallets of tomato stakes. In the soft warm soil, Anna and Marlee propped up a few thousand stakes amidst the burgeoning vines. With the weeder crew around, they all took turns pounding in the stakes (although by the time they were done at 2pm Anna had done maybe half of them!), and then Karen finished stringing the cherries and paste tomatoes on Friday, before the last 1/4" of rain fell in the afternoon, just in time to get this weeks' lettuce planted.

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 (see below) or cut it into quarters, brush with olive oil and grill it for a tasty treat. The deer are trying (but so far unsuccessfully) to make a dent...We expect to have it on and off through July.



Basil: We've been struggling with this crop outdoors for the past few years (look up "basil downy mildew"), but we have one beautiful fieldhouse full behind the barn which should give us a limited crop of high quality leaves for (hopefully) a while. Fingers crossed. For now - enjoy this pungent summer treat.

Radicchio, Goat Cheese, and Nut Salad

1 head radicchio, torn
1/8 cup olive oil
1 1/2 T cider or red wine vinegar
3/4 tsp sugar or honey
salt and pepper to taste
1/2 cup (2 ounces) goat cheese (plain or flavored both work great - pepper goat cheese is one of my favorites to add to salads)
1/4 cup walnuts, pecans or almonds (toasted and coarsely chopped)

Mix olive oil, vinegar, and sweetener. Place radicchio in a bowl and mix with dressing. Crumble goat cheese and sprinkle on top with the nuts. Toss lightly. May serve immediately or refrigerate for serving later in the day, I reserve the goat cheese and nuts and add them just before serving.

And guess what? Not one pipe moved this week (except to get them out of the way of the cultivators). And the plants are growing like gang-busters now. Once again its hard to tell where we are. But this seems like a good place; One big relief after another. We will keep you posted.

We hope you enjoy the harvest,

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

This one comes from Karen, who shows her preference for radicchio as often as possible. She loves bitter food, and she's also a great cook, so even if you don't think bitter is better, consider giving this one a try!!

HOW WE FARM

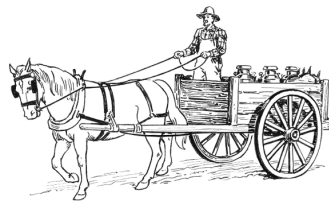
Mechanical Cultivation

Now that we have most of our planting behind us and our harvesting in front of us, this is weeding season. We farmers like to be distinguished and call it cultivating. We mostly use tractor cultivation, with four small tractors (and four small apprentices) driving up and down the fields during the months of June and July and August.

If we are timely we can get most of our weeding done now, and put us in good shape once the big harvests of late-August begin. So before we can be picking and grinning we have to be sweeping and basket cultivating (technical terms for weeding a lot). All weeding works best on warm sunny days, when newly pulled seedlings die quickly in the sun. When it's wet, we frequently have to do a job twice or three times that would be easily done once in a dry year.

The tractors can't get big weeds, or get many of the weeds in the row, so after we cultivate, we have to go through and "clean up" a field by pulling the leftover weeds ("bigs") by hand (that's the "weeder crew" which we'll tell you about another day). It's much faster work after the tractors have been through a couple of times (unless it rains every day).

Another way we keep weeding to a minimum is to try to lower our weed population before we plant. After we prepare the soil beds for planting we let them sit for a week. Then we cultivate the beds with a shallow tool akin to a big rake (a Lely Tine Weeder) which kills the tiny weeds but doesn't bring more weed seeds to the surface. We try to do this three times before sowing seeds. When we plant the weed pressure is significantly lowered and we have what we call a "stale bed." This is one way we deal with crops which are difficult to weed with machines



SPECIAL OFFER

Certified organic low-bush blueberries

Pre-Orders begin July 3rd!

The Benson Place in Heath, MA will be distributing pre-ordered certified organic low-bush blueberries here at the farm during our Farm Shop hours on Wednesday, August 5th between 4:30 and 6 pm.

To pre-order 5, 10 or 20 pound boxes, please visit the reserve berries page of their website, <http://bensonplace.org/ReserveBerries.cfm> on or soon after July 3rd and schedule your order for August 5th. Remember to select Brookfield Farm as your pick up option before sending in your reservation. *All questions regarding berries and pickup should be addressed directly to the Benson Place at info@bensonplace.org or (413) 337-5340.*

like carrots, beets, and parsnips.

We use mechanical techniques to replace chemical techniques (herbicides) to control weeds. Our methods take a bit more management and time, but avoid possible side effects of agricultural chemicals and keep the soil healthy to grow vibrant food.

WHAT'S COOKIN'?

everybody.eats.lunch

Without the ability to do cooking demos in the farmshop this summer, Zoe decided to visit Leila to see what's cookin for the farm lunch these days - check out this video (with recipe links below on the youtube page) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jwo6S72img4&feature=youtu.be>

A photograph showing a person's hands holding a large bunch of harvested garlic. The garlic has long, fibrous roots and green stalks. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

*some things
don't change and
it's time for the ...
(socially distant)*

GARLIC HARVEST

*this year, the adventure starts with a walk
to the west field ... this event is fun for all ages!*

SATURDAY JULY 18

A photograph of a tomato field. In the foreground, there are rows of young tomato plants in a field. In the background, there are several greenhouses and a red truck. A person is visible in the field, working with the plants. The sky is blue with some light clouds.

PIC OF THE WEEK
Marlee & Anna start laying out the stakes
in the tomatoes, while the mist rises and
the sun shines on the soft wet earth.