

BROOKFIELD FARM SHOPTALK

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Distribution Week #7

WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK

Mediterranean Summer!



Tomatoes: Our early crop from the (unheated) fieldhouse is trickling in and looks great. The fruit are a little smaller than our main season crop, but so far they look disease free. Quantities will be limited to start and then should pick up quickly.

Red Long Onions: One of our "fresh onions" that are great right out of the field (no curing or storage necessary). These are long and narrow and delicious. Enjoy them on your summer burgers, in salads, and any other way you like an onion (just keep in them in the fridge to store). They are mild and delicious and we expect to have a few different varieties through August.

Fresh Garlic: We harvested about half of the crop so far, and it looks good! We sort out our seed for next year as we harvest, and cure the crop in the loft, but we also have enough to distribute a limited quantity 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).

Eggplant: We grow black Italian, pink Italian, and purple Asian varieties which are ripe now and we hope will keep going strong through September. Use them all the same way, but the slender ones are a special treat to grill.

WHAT'S ON THE WAY

SWEET CORN
RED CABBAGE
HOT PEPPERS

BULK PRODUCE

KALE (GREEN, RED),
COLLARDS: \$2 / LB
CUCUMBERS: \$1 / LB

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE FARM

Between Here and There

Things have changed around here. It's hard to remember now just a few weeks ago we were sweating and fretting and wondering just how we were going to get any crops to grow. Look at us now! We spent the week moving steadily from the springtime of planting and early summer of small harvests into finishing touches and bringing in the first storage crops of the season.

Ben led harvest crews through big and bigger regular harvests with the cucumbers taking the center stage and the tomatoes starting to making noise from the wings. And the weeder crew just about made it through the last two very weedy crops (parsnips and celeriac). In between those two ongoing productions we planted our last big field of brassicas, continued trellising our tomatoes, put the final cultivation through the sweet potatoes, undersowed cover crops in the sweet corn and winter squash, and renovated our strawberries for next year. All the while we got gentle rains which germinated the fall carrots and left the farm looking poised for some nice harvests to come.

On Wednesday, with the threat of rain below 20%, Marlee fired up the flatbeds, brought the crew to the West Field and pulled the now-ready garlic. The ground was soft so we didn't even need the tractor to loosen the bulbs - we piled, sorted & bunched next years seed, and brought it all to dry in the barn loft. With 3/4 of the crop done, we expect to finish the rest with you all on Saturday - our first fall crop in the barn - wahoo!!

Polenta Baked Breakfast

- 4 eggs
- 3/4 cup polenta
- 3 cups of water
- 1 cup diced tomatoes
- 1 diced carrot
- 1/2 diced onion
- 2 diced garlic cloves
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 cup grated parmesan
- Olive oil
- salt and pepper

Preheat the oven to 375. In a saucepan, saute onion, garlic, and carrot, seasoned with salt and pepper. Once soft, add the sugar and cook for a minute before adding the tomatoes. Let cook while you get the polenta ready. In an oven-proof skillet, boil the water. Slow pour in the polenta while stirring so it doesn't clump. Cook for 3-4 minutes, and once thick add half the cheese and season with salt and pepper. Pour the sauce on top, and make 4 holes to crack in the 4 eggs. Top with the rest of the cheese. Bake for 7 minutes.

Recipe from Spork Me (sporkme.tumblr.com).

And now? Well, it's a good time to go on vacation - with most of the planning & planting behind us and the rest of the big fall harvests on the horizon. The crew will all take turns every week until the of August. So that's what our family is going to do this week - go sit on a beach, read a book, and rest up for a while. The crew back back knows what to do and is ready for this - and excited for what's to come.

We hope you enjoy the harvest,

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

HOW WE FARM

Harvesting

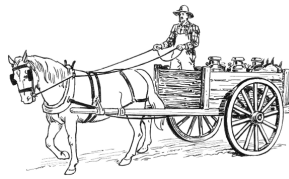
After all of the crop planning, seeding, planting, and tending of crops is done hopefully there's something out there to harvest! It's time to get the harvest operation in gear – we load up the knives, 5 gal buckets, and the big black & red barrels and head for the field.

We make use of pickup trucks and wagons for all of our harvesting since our fields are sometimes up to 3 miles away from the harvest shed. One person (a 2nd year apprentice at first, and then all of the apprentices as the season moves along) is designated the harvest manager for the week. It is their responsibility to make sure we have a plan for the week (what we need to harvest when to make sure all of our 500 shares are filled to the brim with fresh veggies!) The harvest manager moves the crew (our apprentices and a few stray teenagers are the harvest crew) to the field and back, ferrying people, buckets, and vegetables from field to harvest shed and back again.

Once in the cool of the shed, vegetables are washed and cooled in our well water and then packed in re-usable plastic lugs and into the walk-in cooler where they sit as close to 36F as we can get them. In this way we ensure maximum freshness for all of our perishable crops. Some crops (onions, winter squash, potatoes, etc) are not washed, but brought to the greenhouse or root cellar for curing & storage.

We generally harvest on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Starting at 6am to make sure the greens & lettuce still have no "field heat" we begin cutting as the sun comes up. Brassicas (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kale) comes next as they like it cool, but can be more tolerant of heat than lettuce. Roots (carrots, beets, turnips, etc) come next along with slightly heartier green veggies like scallions, fennel, celery, and leeks to round out the "wet crops" that want to be picked before 10 or 11am.

After those, we start on the fruiting crops, which want to be picked when they are dry so as to avoid moving plant diseases around the field. In the early summer that's zucchini, summer squash and cucumbers. As summer rolls along we add in peppers and eggplants. In the afternoons we pick tomatoes or whatever other fruits we haven't gotten to in the morning. In the spring we might harvest from 6am until about 10 or 11 and by early summer it takes us until noon. By the time August rolls around, we need almost the entire day to finish the harvest as we sort the tomatoes in the cool of the farm shop and finish by 5pm. By the end of the day, at the height of the season over 2000 lbs of vegetables are packed and cooled and ready for distribution the following day. Then we wake up the next morning (Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday) we pick sweet corn at 6am so that it has peak flavor and is ready for our CSA distribution later on that same day.



FOOD PRESERVATION

A Pickle For a Nickel

It's pickle time. The cukes will be coming in hot and heavy for the next two weeks, so order up some in bulk and make this recipe (from shareholder Bonnie McLaughlin)

Quick Dills

1 gallon glass jars or smaller ones	
2 Qt Water	1/2 c Kosher Salt
1-3 Cloves Garlic	1/4 c White Vinegar
Stalk of Dill	15-20 Pickles



Put water & vinegar in pan and bring to boil. Mix in salt. Allow to cool completely. Wash cukes. Put dill & garlic in bottom of jars. Add cukes. Pour in brine. Cover. Let stand for 3-4 days in fridge. Ready to eat. Lasts 10 days to 2 weeks in the fridge.



PIC OF THE WEEK
Marlee leads the crew to get the garlic out of the field!

