



Bear Prints

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Another reminder that about half of you have chosen to pay in two installments. **The second \$220 is due by August 1st, which is next week.** Can't remember if that's you? Just drop us an email & I'll look it up. Our first bunch of bags has dwindled, so, if you have a bag of bags in the kitchen, now would be a good time to drop them off. Thanks to those of you who already have!

Farm News

Last week was so hot & humid, it was really tough getting out there every day. The cooler and much less humid weather this weekend was just marvelous! Hopefully it won't be so humid this week and we'll get some much-needed rain. The heat has been good for the veggies, but they really need the rain, too. More of the same in terms of work: picking, weeding and some planting. We've started to irrigate where we can, with sprinklers running all day. We managed to find the time to do some cleaning up around the place last week. You may not have noticed, but there was a lot of equipment lying around the shop and farm stand. We put all the egg cartons away & straightened up underneath the benches in the farm stand, too. Now that Mike did some mowing, the place is looking a lot nicer. Last week you got carrots with the tops on so you could see how they grow. From now on though, you'll get them with the tops off & un-bunched. It takes so long to bunch things and you need to take off the tops to store them any way. I also have a hard time not pulling off the tops when I harvest them, too. If you have a craving for carrot tops (or your bunny or horse does) just let us know, though. I'm sure we can work something out.

What's New In Your Share This Week

Have you ever noticed that vegetables taste slightly different depending on how you cut them up? Maybe it's just me, but when Mike dices zucchini & summer squash, I like them better. They retain their texture more when diced, allowing them to get caramelized when sautéed. My Mom always scores cucumbers lengthwise with a fork after peeling & before slicing. They look prettier, too.

New this week is garlic. No scapes, just regular **garlic**. It was just harvested, so it comes with the stalk & all, just like it grows. It hasn't been dried at all but you can still use it right away. It is a bit harder to peel when it is fresh, but it tastes great! If you don't use the whole head, just store it on the counter. Garlic doesn't like the moisture of the fridge. Garlic is being touted as one of the foods that are very good for you. Mike & I love it & it really is true that as long as you both eat it your breath isn't offensive (at least to each other, & who else are you getting that close to?) Also new this week are **cherry tomatoes!** Everyone has been waiting for these guys it seems. Please be patient since they ripen slowly at first and there won't be enough for everyone. Don't go crazy so more will get a few. In another week or two there'll be a ton. We always plant a few different kinds. This year we have red grape, which is oval/

oblong in shape. We also have golden sweet, a new variety that is like a yellow form of red grape. We also have gold nugget, another yellow, but rounder, with few seeds. Sun cherry is a round small red cherry tomato. Lastly, we would never forget sun gold, one of members' favorites. It ripens orange, so don't wait for them to turn red! All of them tend to ripen from the bottom up, so look down below first. Like all tomatoes, once they start showing color they will keep ripening even after you've picked them. All the cherry tomatoes are pick your own, like the herbs. Please be careful with the plants and show the kids how to be gentle so you can all enjoy a long season. We have our daughter, Michalle, to thank for the cherry tomatoes this year. She tied all of those plants up, a very daunting task indeed! So if you see "Blondie", thank her.

Bear Hill Farm CSA

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*PICK UP MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, OR
FRIDAY
3 PM UNTIL 7 PM*

*(Please make arrangements at least one week
in advance to switch your pick-up day.)*

CSA Since 1998

COME ANYTIME —
THIS IS YOUR FARM!

The Other Reason to Have Farm Animals

Have you been across the street to visit the pigs? Most times you'll find a bucket around the farm stand, filled with carrot tops, kohlrabi leaves, and other things that we're not going to eat. If you'd like to have a visit with the farm animals, you can take it down to feed them (but double-check first to make sure you have the right bucket). They also like old bread, but nothing moldy or rotted — their stomachs aren't *that* strong!

Having animals on the farm helps to "close the loop" when it comes to growing/dying/nurturing, and then ultimately regrowth. I'm not talking about the fact that we non-vegetarians enjoy a pork chop now and then. I mean that there is a cycle, where the animals consume what we would think of as "waste," and then deliver it back to us in the form of nitrogen-rich natural fertilizer (aka manure). Mike & Anne combine the nitrogen products with carbon materials (that pile of wood chips) and let it "cook" to become a rich compost that feeds our growing vegetables better than anything that can ever be concocted at the chemical plant.

Recently I was down feeding the pigs with Anne, and she told me about another interesting little way the pigs contribute to this cycle. If you were here last year, you may remember that the pigs are now in a spot where the goats were. Anne says they fed the goats hay, and because goats are not the most tidy creatures, there is still quite a bit of hay around that part of the barnyard. Well, the pigs love to wallow, and when they roll around in that mud, they mix the hay in and break it down into...voila! "Instant compost!" It never occurred to me that there might be a *useful reason* for pigs to wallow, and I just love that idea.

If coming to the farm makes you feel more happily in touch with the cycle that is evident in all nature, you might want to try composting at home. There really isn't much to it: just save your produce scraps in a pile (or you can buy a fancy container) somewhere outside your back door and throw in some dead leaves every once in a while. Eventually it will all break down and become what is referred to as "gardener's gold." I don't bother much with turning my compost; I just throw the whole mix on my garden beds each spring, where it continues to break down. Or if that's too much trouble, you can at least save your watermelon rinds for the pigs. — Anna Barker (annabarker@charter.net)

Recipes: Roasted Garlic and Eggs

If you're making pesto at the pace I am, you'll have no trouble using up the wonderful fresh garlic in this week's share. There are other uses for it, though! :) If garlic is generally too strong for you, you might want to try roasting it, which really mellows its flavor. Once done, you can spread it on thick slices of bread or use it to replace fresh garlic in other recipes.—AB

Roasted Garlic

Take your large chopping knife and cut the tips off the whole bulb (head) of garlic. You can leave the bulb whole; don't bother peeling it, but you can take off some of the papery outer leaves. Place on a small baking pan lined with foil, and drizzle with a little olive oil. Then roast in a 375° oven for about 30 minutes, until the garlic feels soft when pressed. When it cools, press the roasted garlic out with your fingers or the end of a spoon.

Vegetables you're not wild about can be placed in the "extras" basket, which is usually on the table near the sign-off sheet in the farm stand. If something you love is in the extras basket, go ahead and take it!

Here are two old basic standbys/ I have left out any call for vegetables: just add them as you see fit. Put in some sautéed greens, summer squash, roasted garlic, pesto...

Cheese Strata

12 slices day-old bread, trimmed of all crusts
1/2 pound Cheddar cheese, thinly sliced
4 eggs
2 1/2 C milk
1/2 tsp prepared mustard
1 TBS minced onion
1 tsp salt
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
Layer bread in baking dish, alternating with sliced cheese.
Mix remaining ingredients and pour over bread and cheese.
Let stand several hours or overnight. Bake at 325F for about 45 minutes.

Quiche

1 1/2 Cups grated cheese
3 eggs
1 Cup milk
1 frozen pie crust
Mix all ingredients and pour into crust with salt, pepper, and herbs. Bake at 350F for 45 minutes until browned and puffy.