



Bear Prints

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It is supposed to be very hot and humid this week from what I hear. You may want to bring a cooler and an ice pack to put your veggies in when you come to pick up. You may also want to send cool thoughts to Mike and Michalle as they work in the fields this week. Be careful out there folks and drink plenty of water.

Farm News

The big news this week is that the concrete floor of the farm stand addition was poured! We've been doing the CSA for 18 seasons now. The first season had no farm stand—folks either picked up at the house or the shop. Then there were years with a farm stand with no walls. It's been a long time coming, but each component takes so much time. Our friend Dennis and his son put in a lot of hours prepping the floor and they did a great job.

The new addition will include year-round storage for the meat freezers, a walk-in cooler, a washroom with drains in the floor and a place to back up the van to load and unload. For years we've washed the veggies to cool them, boxed them up and carried them to the house to store on the porch where we had an air conditioner.

Last year we started using an old walk in cooler behind the greenhouse with an air conditioner in it. This year Mike bought a cool-bot; a device that allows the air conditioner to get much colder than usual. It is wonderful to be able to pick & store veggies for a few days in the cooler, rather than letting them go by in the field since we couldn't hold them. It will be even more wonderful when we are more efficient and don't have to lug boxes across the street anymore.

It's a good thing that we're getting a little wiser now that we're getting older—physical labor seems harder now than 18 years ago. Once completed this should be as revolutionary as our excavator, the irrigation pond and landscape fabric in the aisles.

What's New In Your Share This Week

New this week is **basil**. It is a little later than usual this season since we transplanted it late. We were worried it wouldn't do well since it was so root-bound, but it was so happy to finally make it in the ground it quickly rebounded.

Once we start picking it we usually have it for a while. Store it in a glass of water on the counter, like a vase of flowers. Pull off any leaves at the bottom of the stems so they aren't in the water & your stems may even send out roots. Basil doesn't like the cold, which turns it black, so don't put it in the fridge. We learned the hard way not to wash basil in our cold well water—it all turned black!

Most folks make pesto with a bunch of basil, but you can also add leaves to sandwiches, salads, spaghetti sauce,

etc... There is also sliced fresh mozzarella, basil and tomatoes with olive oil & salt & pepper. There are many recipes for pesto. Make small batches and try different ones, walnuts vs. pine nuts, different olive oils and additions like tamari. Freeze for winter.

Also new this week are the pick your own **pole beans**. They are the row next to the tied up cherry tomatoes. Be careful not to pull the whole plant when you pick them. They get quite long and are good even when they're big. This is the first year we've grown them as PYO.

We may also have some **purple beans** this week. They aren't as prolific as the green bush beans, so we may mix them in with the green. They turn green when cooked, so you may want to eat them raw like me.

A few folks still haven't paid the second half of \$280. I'd like to get his finished up before I start writing about the end of the season party.... If there's a star I think you owe.

Bear Hill Farm CSA

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*PICK UP MONDAY OR WEDNESDAY
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!**

Just a few extra minutes. Just a few.

Have you been out to the pick-your-own rows yet? They're incredible this year. I always look forward to the pick-your-own (PYO) cherry tomatoes, in a number of colors and shapes. But I don't remember having this variety of peppers before, and the tomatillos are having the best season ever. (I usually work hard to get 8 of them for the salsa recipe below, and last week I picked more than a dozen without going more than a few feet into the row. It was very exciting!) And the pole beans are a completely new thing, as far as I know.

I know that CSA members have different needs and interests when they arrive at the farm for pick-up. If you have children in tow, you're probably taking the time to go across the street and check in with the animals (unless you have baseball practice or piano lessons to run off to, that is). Adults are welcome across the street too, of course, but I rarely make the time to venture over there now that the kids are grown. And many times I'm arriving a little late from work and am thinking about dinner and the evening ahead—to the point where I have to force myself to even notice what's around me, before rushing back to my car.

But when the PYO is in ... well, I was actually late to a dinner meeting last week, because I just had to grab some of those Hungarian wax peppers. Oh, and then I noticed the cherry tomatoes are already in full swing, so I couldn't leave without a handful. It is very peaceful there in the rows, and a bit of a treasure hunt. People will wait, I figure, they'll understand.

At any rate, if you haven't been seduced by the siren call of the PYO rows yet, please do give it a try this week. Do what my youngest, Miles, taught me when he was little: pick a cherry tomato and wrap it in a basil leaf, then pop it into your mouth. Sublime. But be prepared to find that you've lingered longer than you expected. Whoever you've kept waiting, you can always treat them to some of your garden gems. It's well worth that extra few minutes. - Anna Barker (annabarker@verizon.net)

Recipes: Tomatillos and Cherry Tomatoes

Toasted Tomatillo and Tomato Salsa

From Boston Sunday Globe

3/4 lb tomatillos (about 8 large), husked, washed & halved
3 cloves garlic, peeled
1/2 chipotle chili with 1/2 tsp adobo sauce, or more to taste
1 TBS fresh lime juice
3/4 C grape or cherry tomatoes
1/2 tsp salt, or to taste
3 TBS fresh cilantro, chopped

In a large nonstick skillet place the tomatillos, cut side down in a single layer, with the garlic and cook over med-high heat, turning the tomatillos just once (do not move them around in the pan), until they soften and are slightly browned on both sides, about 15 min. Transfer the tomatillos and garlic to a blender or food processor, add chipotle and adobo, lime juice and tomatoes, and process to preferred texture, from chunky to smooth. When cool, stir in salt & cilantro. Serve with chips or over chicken.

DOUBLE ISSUE NEXT WEEK.

ONE MORE WEEK TO SEND IN YOUR RECIPES!

Shells with Grilled Chicken and Mozzarella

From Everyday Food magazine

1 1/2 lbs chicken cutlets
8 oz. medium pasta shells
1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
4 oz. fresh mozzarella, cut into 1/4" cubes
1/2 C fresh parsley, chopped
1/4 C grated Parmesan, plus more for serving
2 TBS butter

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil for pasta. Meanwhile, heat grill to medium; lightly oil grates. Season chicken with **salt and pepper**. Grill until cooked through, 2-3 minutes per side. Remove from grill, and cut into thin strips, halving if long. Cook pasta until al dente, according to package instructions. Reserve 1 C pasta water; drain pasta and return to pot. Add chicken, tomatoes, mozzarella, parsley, Parmesan and butter. Toss to combine. Add reserved pasta water a little at a time to create a sauce that coats shells (you may not need all the water). Serve with more Parmesan.

Save yourself some time and grill double the chicken: first for the pasta, then served with the salsa later in the week.