



Bear Prints

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Last week we turned you loose on the cherry tomatoes & okra. Feel free to come anytime to pick your own. This week you can look for **hot peppers** as well. We have **jalepenos** planted next to the okra in front of the farm-stand. Beware, they are pretty hot for jalepenos!

Mike says we'll give CSA members a 15% discount on veggies at the Tyngsboro farmer's market. Just be sure we know you're members, since we don't always remember everyone! We'll have corn from Brookdale Farm in Hollis, NH again in a few weeks, along with their delicious peaches.

Farm News

This past week we weeded, then weeded some more: winter squash, peppers, eggplant, beets, basil, aisles—it was a veritable weeding blitz! Everything has been growing well, especially the weeds, so it was necessary. The place looks great, with the exception of a few beds that need to be re-planted, but it's a constant battle.

This week we hope to have a planting blitz to fill up the field next to the pond with melons, beets, lettuce, zucchini, bok choy etc... Gotta keep it coming. Speaking of eggplant, we had a few to sell at the Tyngsboro farmers market on Sunday morning. They are just starting to come in, with only a few were big enough to pick, so there wasn't enough to give out to members yet. The tomatoes are just starting, too, with the mice eating as many as we picked.

We didn't have to irrigate last week, which saves a lot of time, work, money & the water in the pond. Only a sprinkle last night, so I don't think we can wait much longer. In addition, the plastic that we use to conserve water & cut back on weeding also restricts the amount of rainwater that can get to the plants once they are big, so we need to use the drip tape we placed underneath the plastic when we put it down. Unfortunately Mike needs to buy a new pump. We managed to get some more hay in Sunday afternoon. It was hot, but my brothers were visiting Babci & were pressed into service.

What's New In Your Share This Week

New this week are **carrots** and **kohlrabi**. I think I mentioned that Mike planted 8 beds of carrots at the top of the hill, all at once. They are different varieties with different maturity dates and shapes & sizes (some are stocky, some longer, etc...) We'll probably cut the tops off, since they're a lot easier to clean that way & you'd need to take them off to store anyway.

Also new is **kohlrabi**. For new members, this one might not be familiar to you. I love the bulbous stem peeled then eaten raw. I think it tastes like the stalks of broccoli, crisp & slightly sweet. Mike likes it boiled & mashed with a little butter. Either way, you must peel the tough skin first. You can also strip the leaves off the stems and eat them cooked as well. Anna & I used to say that it looks like a space ship veggie (reminiscent of Sputnik), but I realize that we're giving away our age & many of our members

have no idea of what Sputnik is. It was the first satellite launched by the Russians. Try google for a picture.

NOTE:

We've been short on Mondays. We wanted to make sure everyone understands that the extra table is just the one table—please don't take extras of the other stuff or there won't be enough to go around. If you split a share, that means you take one full share to split, not two full shares as well.

People have been good about crossing their names off this year—thank you! That way we know whether there is enough of everything left at the end of the day for those left to come. Remember, help yourself to the greens on the extra table & if there's something you know you won't get to, leave it there for someone else. Thanks!

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!

A Muggle Goes to the Farm

Last week after I picked up my share and was standing there admiring the cherry tomatoes, I noticed Farmer Anne up the hill weeding. Naturally, I ran up to say hello. There she was in the middle of a row, and I kept calling her but she couldn't hear me. By the time I finally got her attention I was bounding halfway across the field. I don't know, I guess I thought I'd help her with the weeding while we talked? But Anne was waving her hands stop, saying "You're walking in the beds!" What was she talking about, *beds*? I could plainly see that I was walking across a field of *dirt*. There was nothing planted there! But as I looked back at my footsteps sunk deeply behind me, I was reminded of what Farmer Mike has told me many times: farming is all about healthy soil. And, in addition to nitrogen and minerals and all that, healthy soil has structure (tilth), which means...*Don't walk on the beds!*

Well I felt pretty sheepish, but Anne smiled and guided me to a "safe zone" at the edge of the field. She told me about weeding the cabbage: Chinese leafy cabbage is easier to weed (do I have that right?), but the heads of cabbage will stop growing if they're disturbed. In fact, if you want to hold them in the field, you can give them a little twist to stop them growing. Doesn't that sound like magic? It really made me think of the screaming Mandrake plant in Harry Potter! (Do you know the one I mean? It's roots look human, and it screams when repotted.)

Especially in a good year like this, it's easy to imagine that someone waved a magic wand and made our vegetables appear at the stand. But in addition to a lot hard work at all hours (and Anne usually does this after already having put in a full day), it takes a great deal of skill and knowledge to run a successful farm—and perhaps a little bit of a magic touch, too! Those of us who have not been trained as wizards can only admire. And watch where we walk! - Anna Barker (annabarker@verizon.net)

Cute, Anna. It's the cabbage roots that can't be disturbed, that's true about twisting cabbage to hold them in the field, and Mike is the farming wizard extraordinaire!

Recipes: Pick-Your-Own Okra and Cherry Tomatoes

CSA member Pascale Pigeon shared this recipe—Pascale agrees with Anne that the smaller pods (less than 3") really are more tender and less woody. Also, this is apparently just one of eight okra recipes in the "660 Curries" cookbook. Sounds like one to check out! - AB

Pan-fried okra with an onion-tamarind sauce *From Raghavan Iyer's "660 Curries"*

Serves 4—but can be halved easily

- 1/4 C canola oil
- 1 lb fresh okra, rinsed, thoroughly dried, caps pared off without cutting into the pods
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 med red onion, cut in half lengthwise and thinly sliced
- 1 TBS coriander seeds, ground
- 1 1/2 tsp coarse kosher or sea salt
- 1/2 tsp cayenne (ground red pepper)
- 1/4 tsp ground turmeric
- 1/2 tsp tamarind paste or concentrate
- 2 TBS finely chopped fresh cilantro leaves and tender stems for garnishing

1. Heat the oil in a large skillet over med-high heat. Add half the okra pods and pan fry, stirring them around frequently, until they blister and acquire reddish-brown patches on their woody skin, about 5 min. (Note: use a splatter screen to minimize the mess!) Transfer the okra to a plate. Add the remaining okra

Pods to the skillet and repeat. Add them to the first batch.

2. Sprinkle the cumin seeds into the hot oil; they will instantly sizzle and turn reddish brown. Add the onion and stir-fry until it is light brown around the edges, 3 to 5 min.

3. Dust the browned onion with the coriander, salt, cayenne, and turmeric. Allow the spices to cook without burning, stirring occasionally, 1 to 2 minutes.

4. Quickly whisk the tamarind paste into 1/2 cup water in a small bowl, dissolving the paste. Return okra to the skillet and pour the tart tamarind water over it. Stir once or twice.

5. Lower the heat to medium and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until most of the liquid has been absorbed into the okra and the pods appear drenched, about 5 min. The okra should be fork-tender by now.

6. Sprinkle with cilantro and serve.

Cherry Tomatoes

1. Pick them.
2. Eat them. :-)

Just watch your step—and save some for me!