



Bear Prints

Volume 17, Number 15

September 22, 2014

Our 17th BIG CSA PARTY IS THIS COMING SAT, from 4 p.m. on!

Feel free to come late, leave early, & bring a friend.

Don't miss out, it's a great time. Keep your fingers crossed for no rain. We need the water, but it can wait until after the party!

We'll have live music again this year, so feel free to bring your guitars & fiddles, flutes, tambourines....

They'll be pumpkins to carve, smores to eat, & lots of nice folk.

Farm News

It certainly is getting colder at night. Last Thursday I took the day off to help Mike get the winter squash in from the fields. We heard there was the potential for a frost Thursday night/Friday morning & we didn't want to take a chance on all that squash. In addition, now that it is ripe the deer found it & between them & the woodchucks, we were taking a mighty big chance leaving it out there any longer. What a great time picking it all up. I cut & piled, then Mike would bring the tractor up & we'd load up the bucket & he'd count it into bins. He had to count to see how much to give everyone. As you can see from the bins in front of the farm stand, we have plenty.

Unfortunately the deer found the last batch of zucchini & summer squash down the pond field, too. Luckily we missed the frost, though, so hopefully we'll have a few more weeks of growing slowly for the last stuff Mike & Michalle transplanted. It's always a gamble at the end of the season.

A few tips for the party this Sat—bring lots of layers. It gets pretty cool once the sun goes down. Hopefully the weather will be beautiful. A flashlight is always helpful, & a couple folding chairs are a plus for sitting around the bonfire, but we'll have benches, too. Mike plans on roasting a big fresh pork shoulder in Patrick's new pig roaster, as well as a beef brisket. Patrick will make his famous deep-fried mushrooms, he has no choice they are always such a hit. Bring anything you want, there's always a great variety. Feel free to bring some wine or beer as well.

What's New In Your Share This Week

New this week are **sweet dumpling winter squash**. They are the same color as the delicata, but round instead of oblong. As I said last week, I think they could be used for decoration. Both of these little guys don't store nearly as well as the acorn & butternut you'll be getting in the next few weeks. Variety is the spice of life, though, so we grow a few different kinds. This just happens to be a great year for winter squash for us. Luckily it does keep for a while (I had some butternut last all winter) and it is very versatile.

Try it sweet or savory. These little guys are tough to peel, so they lend themselves best to stuffing. Their size is perfect for that, since they don't take as long to cook. The recipes Anna provided on the back page this week sound great. The slow cooker is great for getting dinner on the table fast, but when it gets chilly & the heat isn't on yet the oven helps warm the house. Try some squash as is with a little

brown sugar or maple syrup to bring out the sweetness. Or go the savory route with a little cumin or chili powder. Of course, as Anna suggests, the stuffing possibilities are endless, from bread stuffing, couscous or rice with veggies to the same mixed with hamburger or sausage.

We'll also have radishes this week again. They like the cool weather, so we don't usually have them in the heat of the summer.

We'll also have more carrots (bet you didn't realize how many different kinds of orange carrots there are), potatoes and onions, so roasted root veggie recipes and stews should be popular this week. Leeks, too. We were surprised that when one of the cows got out he ate a bunch of them. Usually the critters don't go for the alliums (the onion family). Guess they are mild enough that the cows like them, too.

Bear Hill Farm CSA

Anne & Mike Gagnon

14 Davis Road
Tyngsboro, MA 01879
Phone: 978-649-7308 answering machine
Mike's cell: 978-846-3427
Email: bearhillfarmcsa@gmail.com
Website: bearhillfarm.com

*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.)
Always feel free to come late - just bring a
flashlight!*

CSA Since 1998

COME ANYTIME —
THIS IS YOUR FARM!

We are right here where we are, we are.

Have you had a chance to pick the cherry tomatoes this summer? What a bumper crop! Last week I was so happy to be able to take a few minutes to wander up and down the row. My goal was to pick enough to oven dry a batch ("cherry tomato chews," great on pizza). That was on my mind, as well as what I was going to make for dinner and how I was going to get my homework done after dinner. So I was unprepared for the sense of peace I'd feel standing there. Slowly I felt my mind slowing, and my shoulders coming down from up around my ears. I tuned into the sounds around me, from bees buzzing nearby to the distant bark of a dog.

What is so calming about the farm? I often find that I arrive at pickup all stressed out, and I think that I will breeze past the share table, then get back in my car and on with the evening. And too many times that's what I do! But when I take a few minutes to walk up to the top of the hill and see what's growing, or to cross the street and go down to see the animals ... those few extra minutes always pay off by lifting my spirits and readying me for the last push ('heartbreak hill') of a marathon day. I know that I'm still part of the real world when I'm at the farm—this isn't Disney we're talking about—but I crave those moments when I can feel fully in touch with the world around me, yet detached enough to watch it go by.

So this Saturday is the big farm party. Already! You may think that you're too busy to attend. You may feel you have too much on your mind and you won't be able to relax and enjoy yourself. You're wrong! Come and see how the farm can work its magic and restore you. Because what is true in the daytime, standing in a row of tomatoes, goes doubly as the sun sets and the jack-o-lanterns come out. Bundle up, pack up a dish, bring a flashlight. And be prepared to sit with friends old and new, look up at the stars, and know that you belong. Plenty of time to work during the week! —Anna Barker (annabarker@verizon.net)

Recipes: Slow Cooker Winter Squash

There are numerous recipes for stuffed winter squash. Here is one that uses the slow cooker. Once you get the idea, adapt it with other kinds of stuffing. (Sausage is popular, as are apples.) Very satisfying this time of year, and the slow cooker is your friend in the middle of a busy week. —AB

Winter Squash Stuffed with Couscous, Apricots and Pistachios From "Fresh from the Vegetarian Slow Cooker"

2 C apple juice
1 C couscous
1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp ground allspice
1 C chopped dried apricots
2 TBS olive oil
1 large yellow onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, minced
1/2 C chopped pistachio nuts
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
2 lbs squash, halved and seeded*
1 C hot water

Bring the apple juice to a boil in a medium pan. Add the couscous, cinnamon and allspice. Reduce the heat to low. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove from the heat, stir in the apricots, cover and set aside.

Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic, cover and cook until softened, about 5 minutes.

Fluff the couscous with a fork, then add the onion mixture and pistachios, season with salt and pepper, and mix well. Place the squash halves, cut side up, in a 5 1/2-quart slow cooker. Pack the stuffing into the squash halves. Carefully pour the hot water into the cooker without disturbing the squash. Cover and cook on low until the squash is tender, about 6 hours. Serve hot.

*If you're using our cute little dumpling squash, slice the top off rather than cutting the squash in half. Scoop out the seeds and stuff.

Wild Rice Stuffing

Adapted from vegetarianslowcooker.com

Mix together 1/2 cup wild rice, 1/4 cup pine nuts (or chopped walnuts), 2 cloves minced garlic, 1 TBS tomato paste, 1/2 tsp salt, 1/8 tsp pepper, 1/2 tsp dried basil, 1/4 tsp dried thyme. Prepare squash as above, substituting the wild rice stuffing for couscous and onion mixture.

Top cooked squash with crumbled feta and goat cheese. Bring to a party. :-)