



# Bear Prints

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September 1, 2014

It's September 1st, so I should forewarn you that the **big fall party** will be the **last Sat in Sept.** this year—**Sept. 27,** 4 p.m. to whenever.

Those of you who have been here before know it is not to be missed, so mark your calendars!

No stress pot luck (bring whatever you want), great food, big bonfire, pumpkins to carve, live music... We'll still have pick-up's into Oct., but we moved the party up so the weather may be nicer.

## Farm News

Happy Labor Day everyone! I hope we are all grateful to have jobs, especially those of us who enjoy, for the most part, what we do. My Mom, Babci, lives for productive labor & she's happy the Market Basket situation has been resolved. Not only for all the farmers & businesses & workers, but also because she hasn't had any bread to open for the critters. Hopefully that situation will be back to normal this coming weekend, when we can pick up some un-sold bread again. In the meantime she's been sorting change for the market, raking & whatever else she can find to keep herself busy. The world would be a better place if more folks had her attitude.

Mike is still irrigating, since we have missed most of the showers. We had some rain last night—every little bit helps. He needs to do some more haying, so we'd just as soon have it dry for 3 or 4 days now while the hay dries. First up is the Day Conservation Area that we rent in Westford. We didn't grow any crops down there this season & we're glad we didn't since it was so dry. There's no way to water down there. Then we'll focus on Nashoba & the big field down the street for it's second cut.

Every year Mike makes new fields here at the farm. This fall he's working behind the house & on the slope up from the pond. That field is too sloped for veggies & should make a nice pasture for the sheep eventually. He also has to start windrowing his compost. New leaves will be coming in soon by the trunkful & he needs to make room.

## What's New In Your Share This Week

New this week are **leeks**. They are related to onions but are much milder. Chop up the white & light green parts, since the darker green tends to be tougher. You can certainly use that part to flavor soup, though. We cut most of the tops off for you, otherwise you'd never fit them in the fridge! (We compost the tops.)

They sometimes get dirt between the layers as they grow, so make sure you chop, then soak them in a bowl of water or in the sink. Swish around, then let the dirt settle to the bottom & fish out the clean leeks.

Also new this week are **sugar snack carrots**. You've had carrots before, but this variety grows large and is very high in beta carotene. They are my favorite.

We also have a new variety of **potato** this week—Augusta. They are one of the parents of Yukon Gold, & are yellow-skinned with yellow flesh. They're a good all purpose variety. Store your potatoes in a cool, dry place in a paper bag, not in the fridge & not directly near your onions (also not in the

fridge). The paper bag will let them breathe without turning green from the light. If you do have some that have turned green, just cut that part off, since it isn't good for you. Try making some potato leek soup—good hot or cold. Just google for recipes.

Did you notice the hops growing into the farm stand? I've never seen such a beautiful crop of them—the bugs like them & they usually don't look so great. Any beer makers out there? Help yourself behind the farm stand. They grow wild, a remnant from prohibition days.

As we wrote last week, the tomatoes are sadly going down to blight. We'll try to find as many half-decent ones as we can, maybe you can salvage parts of them. If they don't look that great we'll probably put them on the extra table.

Pick those cherry tomatoes while you can. It probably won't be long before they are gone as well. By the way, the lettuce is growing slowly, but it's coming!

## 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.)*

**CSA Since 1998**

COME ANYTIME —  
THIS IS **YOUR FARM!**

## Why do we care about the Dirty Dozen?

Chances are, you're already aware of the "Dirty Dozen," but just in case: The Environmental Working Group ([www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org)) publishes a list every year of the 12 common produce items that have the most pesticide residues on them—which they determine by taking multiple samples of 48 typical fruits and veggies. I'm glad this list gets a lot of press each year, because it helps to keep organics in the spotlight. And I like the message that if you can't get *all* of your foods organic, you should focus on the ones that do the most harm to your body. (ALWAYS organic apples!) But I've been having a little trouble with some of the implications of this list. Mostly, I'm just not sure that the direct impact of pesticides on my own health is the main reason why I choose organic whenever possible. So a conventional vegetable like cauliflower is on the "Clean 15" (least amount of pesticide residues) - do I go ahead and eat it with impunity? What about the health of the workers who are manufacturing and applying these toxics? What about the Dead Zone in the Gulf of Mexico, caused by chemical fertilizers? And the health of the soil, which is generally ignored with conventional farming methods? More than that, I'm not even sure where organic fits in my current algorithm of food decisions. I might choose whole over processed. (As Mark Bittman says, "just start by adding vegetables to your diet, then go from there.") Or livestock raised under humane—not to mention sanitary—conditions. Or local and small-scale over...well, over everything else. All the same, the list of research implicating pesticides grows every longer. Pesticides have been linked with everything from increased allergies to infertility and Parkinson's disease, not to mention cancer. Yeah, I really don't want that in my body. Google the list—you may read, as I did, that cherry tomato samples were found to have 13 different types of pesticides on them! - Anna Barker ([annabarker@verizon.net](mailto:annabarker@verizon.net))

## Recipes: Leeks

*It would be so convenient if leeks were on the EWG Dirty Dozen list. But they're not—I wonder if they're even common enough to be tested? No matter, we keep coming back for Farmer Mike's leeks because they taste so good! While, like most members of the onion family, leeks store pretty well, try to use them quickly and enjoy their fresh sweetness. - AB*

### Leeks in Mustard Vinaigrette

*From Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone, by Deborah Madison*

6-8 leeks, including an inch of the pale green\*

Aromatics: 1 bay leaf, 5 parsley branches, 4 thyme sprigs

1 large carrot, thinly sliced

1 celery rib, thinly sliced

Mustard Vinaigrette (below)

Halve the leeks lengthwise to 1" above the root end. Soak them in a large bowl of water for 15 minutes, then rinse gently under running water. Put them, in a single layer, in a large skillet with the aromatics, vegetables and water to cover. Simmer until they're tender when pierced with a knife, 20-25 minutes, depending on their size. Gently transfer the leeks to a platter or individual plates with some of the broth spoon the vinaigrette generously over the top, and serve with fresh bread. Be sure to use the remaining broth for soup stock or risotto. (Serves 4-6.)

*\*Or 3-4 leeks, if that is this week's share...*

### Mustard Vinaigrette

*Also recommended for steamed potatoes, grilled fennel, broccoli or cauliflower*

2 TBS red wine vinegar, sherry vinegar, or fresh lemon juice

2 shallots, finely diced

1 garlic clove, minced

Salt and freshly milled pepper

1 TBS Dijon mustard

2 TBS crème fraîche or sour cream

1/3 C extra virgin olive oil

2 TBS snipped chives

1 TBS chopped parsley

3 TBS capers, rinsed

Combine the vinegar, shallots, garlic and 1/4 tsp salt in a small bowl. Let stand for 15 min, then vigorously whisk in the mustard, crème fraîche, and oil until thick and smooth. Grind in a little pepper, then stir in the herbs and capers. Taste and adjust the seasonings if needed.

*I try to share healthier recipes, but I have a hankering to use my leeks in something high-fat and bready. Is it the calendar turning to September, or the rain on the roof? I am thinking about a leek & fennel stuffing (with sausage, if for winter squash), a tart with leeks, red pepper, and goat cheese, leeks & shrimp in a creamy pasta sauce...How about you? - AB*