



# Bear Prints

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Speaking of labor day, Mike & Michalle were out at the crack of dawn picking corn for this week's CSA. Our good pal Midge over at Nashoba Ski Area generously offered us some of his corn when he heard ours had failed. He isn't totally organic, but he doesn't spray pesticides on his corn & he is a fantastic farmer. At his ripe old age of 89 he works harder than most of us. Thanks Midge!

**Time to  
Re-Stock  
We Need More  
Bags  
Thanks!**

## Farm News

Tomato drama, unfortunately. Late blight has arrived and is in the process of wiping out all our lovely tomato plants. It seems so much more unfair when they look so beautiful, all strung up, healthy, and full of ripening tomatoes. Struck down in their prime! Late blight can travel miles in the air, so if a back-yard gardener has purchased some plants from one of the big box stores that brings tomato seedlings up from the south we can be doomed. Late blight affects both tomatoes & potatoes and was responsible for the Irish potato famine. It is related to a fungus & kills plants quickly once they get it. We don't know of an organic cure. Conventional farmers use all kinds of poison to prevent it. It needs wet leaves & the right temperature to spread—not too hot or cold. I'm sure the dewy mornings have worked to its advantage. We've tried using drip tape for irrigation to avoid wetting the leaves, but to no avail. We'll just have to enjoy the short time we have them. So get out there & pick those cherry tomatoes before they're gone!

Good luck to everyone going back to school & all the parents getting them ready to go back. Don't forget to keep coming for your produce. We have pick up whether there are holidays like Labor Day or not.

## What's New In Your Share This Week

New this week is **fennel**. Fennel is one of those plants that you can eat almost entirely—leaves, bulb, stalks, even the seeds! Fennel seed is used in Italian sausage. It was revered by the Greeks & Romans, maybe because it is so good for you, full of vitamin C, potassium, fiber & phytonutrients that are supposed to be anti-inflammatory. When I was looking for recipes I found it on The World's Healthiest Foods website: [whfoods.org](http://whfoods.org). They have recipes, too.

Fennel is crunchy & slightly sweet raw, with a licorice/anise flavor. It's related to celery & is the primary ingredient in absinthe.

As with most root or bulb veggies, cut off the leaves before putting in a plastic bag in the fridge. Don't throw the leaves away though, since you can use them, too. The bulb has a hard core, like cabbage.

If you aren't fond of the anise flavor try roasting it. I adapted the following from Cooking Light.

Slice bulb thinly, toss with olive oil, minced garlic, salt & pepper & a little jalapeno, then roast in a 450 oven for 15 min. on an oiled baking sheet. Stir, then sprinkle with a few T parmesan & roast another 5 minutes. Use like that or then add to heated great northern or white kidney beans that you've sautéed with some greens (escarole, chard or kale) for a vegetarian meal, or add some sausage, too.

If you do like the flavor, add the leaves or sliced bulb raw to sandwiches or try it raw with avocado & oranges. Top raw slices with plain yogurt & mint. Saute with onions as a side dish. Braise (fry then add some stock & cover until tender) to use as a side with salmon or scallops.

## Bear Hill Farm CSA

Anne & Mike Gagnon

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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 but you can always come late.)*

**CSA Since 1998**

COME ANYTIME —  
THIS IS YOUR FARM!

## Recipes: Fennel

*My copy of Victoria Wise's Gardeners' Community Cookbook has become totally dog-eared and the spine is falling apart. Now it automatically falls open to a quote from a contributor, Richard Doss: "You grow for yourself and you pass over the fence to your neighbor. How do you quantify the benefits of knitting a family or a neighborhood together?" Nice.—AB*

### Carrots Braised with Fennel

From Gardeners' Community Cookbook, serves 4-6

1 TBS butter  
1 TBS olive oil  
4 medium carrots, trimmed, scraped, julienned (about 1 lb)  
1 medium fennel bulb, trimmed and cut same as carrots  
1/2 C chicken broth  
1/3 C white wine  
1/4 C chopped fennel fronds

Heat the butter and oil together in a large sauté pan until the butter melts. Add the carrots and fennel and stir to coat. Cover the pan and cook over low heat for 10 minutes, or until the vegetables are wilted.

Add the broth and wine; raise the heat to medium and cook, uncovered, for 10 minutes more, or until the liquid has evaporated and the vegetables are fork tender. Transfer to a serving dish, sprinkle with the chopped fronds, and serve right away.

*One of my favorite writers and cookbook authors is Mark Bittman. I love his conversational style—in his book Kitchen*

## Thinking About How the Farm Is In Our Bones

It's Sunday night as I write this, and our oldest son Henry has just finished packing up the car. It's still hard for me to believe, but we leave early tomorrow morning to drop him off for his freshman year of college. I'm really very happy for him and (I don't think I'm in denial) I'm more excited for his future than I am sad to have him going away. Still, I was glad that I had a lot to do in the kitchen today, so that I could keep busy with chopping and sautéing, rather than moping about.

I was thinking about both Henry and the farm as I chopped up our veggies for a nice pasta sauce. I think Henry was 4 when we first started at Bear Hill Farm. His best friend Michael Wray used to come too, and they ran around like they owned the place—especially a little section of rocks that you can't see anymore, back behind where the new cooler is going in.

I wonder how many pounds of farm vegetables Henry's eaten over the past 15 years? I like to think how the farm is literally a part of him, the soil absorbed in his bones through years of potatoes and kohlrabi and green beans (in order of his preference, lol). He can't go anywhere without taking a little bit of that with him.

Mike mentioned not too long ago that CSAs are affected by changing demographics. Young families grow up, and smaller families with older children are less interested in the CSA format. (At least that's how I remember what he said!) But it's also true that we're raising a whole new generation of people who see the value of everything CSAs stand for: fresh real food, certainly, but also the model of the family farm and the beauty of the farm landscape. Once you get a taste of that, it's hard to be satisfied with canned corn or whatever. I predict that Henry—like many of our children—will be back at the farm on his own, in the not-too-distant future.—Anna Barker (annabarker@verizon.net)

*Express, his recipes are written in paragraph form, as if he is sitting in your kitchen and talking you through preparing the dish. Here is recipe #69, copied word for word:*

### Pork Tacos with Apple-Fennel Slaw

*Pork from the shoulder is best here, and if you can't find fennel, \* use celery.*

Heat a grill or grill pan. In a small bowl, combine a tablespoon each of sugar, cumin, chili powder and paprika and a bit of salt; rub it into slices of pork. Slice a tart apple and a bulb of fennel (this is a great time to use a mandolin if you have one). Toss the apples and fennel with olive oil and lemon juice.\*\* Grill the pork, turning once, until browned and cooked; cut into strips and serve it in warm corn tortillas along with the slaw.

*\*We, of course, CAN find fennel. I think it would be much better than celery in this recipe.*

*\*\*I'm going to say 1/4 C olive oil and 2-3 TBS lemon juice, but that's just a guess. - AB*

Have you tried any of the newsletter recipes? I would love to hear from you! - annabarker@verizon.net