



BLUE HOUSE FARM

CSA Newsletter

The Waning Game

09.02.2011

This week we sampled a few of the different watermelons and cantaloupes we have in the field. They are getting really close to being fully ripe. They are fully sized-up and starting to ripen. The flesh is changing from pink to red and yellow to orange. They should be ready by next week!

It is timely to have the apples and pears ripening, because the strawberries have slowed down to a crawl in the last week. Usually they will pick back up after going through a few weeks of semi-dormancy. Until then we are filling that void with tree fruit and soon... melons. The Asian pears this week are incredible, crunchy, spritzy, and sweet. We should have another week of Asian pears after this week, and then back to apples. We picked every last Gravenstein apple for last weeks CSA boxes and markets. They sure went fast! They are such a great, unique first apple of the season, I miss them already.

Here is the story with the garlic: This winter/spring was an awful one for our garlic crop and as I mentioned in an earlier newsletter, the bulbs are very small, which means the cloves are even smaller. Back in July, I debated even harvesting it from the field. Being a wishful thinker, I decided to dig it up and dry it in the greenhouse, thinking that after sorting out the larger bulbs, it might be worth it. So the tiny garlic has been drying in the greenhouse for a couple of months and the good news is that it is dry and ready. The bad news is that it did not miraculously get any bigger. Again I debated if I should even put it in the CSA boxes. But after so much work (and debating,) it seemed like the garlic should at least be given the opportunity to make it from the greenhouse to the kitchen. So for those of you who are more patient in the kitchen than me, this garlic is for you! And for those of you who can't stand peeling those tiny cloves, I apologize.

We've chosen a date for the Harvest Festival. It will be October 9th from 1-5PM. Mark your calendar. We'll have pumpkin carving, tractor rides, grilled corn, mini-farmers market, face painting, music, and more. Next week's newsletter will have more detailed info.

We are also debuting some new add-on options this week, for canning tomatoes and drying herbs. See the reverse of this newsletter for all the details.

From the field, Ryan

Anticipated Harvest

Cucumbers

Artichokes

Scarlet Turnips or Watermelon Radishes

Sangre Potatoes

Green Curly Kale

Red Batavian Lettuce

Summer Squash

Green Cabbage

Garlic

Oregano

Dill

Asian Pears

First cultivated over three thousand years ago in China, the Asian Pear is easily the oldest variety of pear grown by mankind. Yet it differs in many key aspects from the more familiar European Pear; in fact, the Asian Pear's more apple-esque qualities have lead some to call them "apple-pears" though they are not hybrids but full members of the Pyrus genus to which all pears belong.

Unlike European pears, which ripen off the vine, are prime when soft and have a creamy texture, the Asian Pear ripens on the tree and remains firm and crunchy when fully ripe (very much like an apple). Because you cannot use firmness to judge ripeness, Asian Pears are mainly appraised by scent. Take a whiff from the flower end (the bottom): if you detect a strong, sweet aroma, the pear is ready for the eating. Unlike European Pears, which need to be kept at room temperature, Asian Pears will stay fresher longer if refrigerated.

Asian Pears are generally eaten as hand-fruit, but to each his own! In ancient Chinese culture, friends and lovers would never eat from the same pear, as the words for 'separation' and 'sharing a pear' are pronounced identically.



Evelyn spreading compost with the John Deere tractor.

CSA News & Notes:

- Due to the failure of our tomato crop, we thought our members might like the opportunity to purchase other tomatoes through the CSA. We have reached out to our friends at Sea Level Farm in Corralitos and they have agreed to provide us tomatoes with minor, mostly cosmetic blemishes that are perfect for canning. You can purchase them like any other add-on at bluehousefarm.csaware.com; they are 20 pounds for \$25. If you want them next week, be sure to order by this Saturday, 9PM. **PLEASE NOTE:** We will also purchase tomatoes to include as part of your regular CSA box. The add-on is for canning tomatoes only.
- We will also soon be offering bulk herbs as add-ons, both as single varieties (say, bulk basil for pesto) and assorted varieties for drying (say, 10 bunches of each type of herb).

Boerenkoolstamppot – Dutch Kale Hash

1 Bunch Kale
2 lbs Potatoes
1 Onion
½ C Milk
2 T Butter
1 Bay Leaf
1 tsp Caraway Seeds
½ lb Sausage or Bacon (optional)
Salt & Pepper

Peel and dice the potatoes, chop the onion and destem and chop/tear the kale. In a large skillet or saucepan, combine the kale, potatoes, onion, bay leaf and a pinch of salt with enough water to just barely cover everything. Bring to a boil, then cover, reduce to a simmer, and cook for 20 to 30 minutes until the potatoes are tender enough to mash but still retain some of their form.

While the veggies are boiling, if you are using sausage or bacon prepare that in whatever manner pleases you best. Traditionally, boerenkoolstamppot is served with smoked sausage that has been steamed and sliced.

When the veggies are cooked, remove the bay leaf and mash them. Add the milk, butter & caraway seeds. Stir in the meat and adjust seasoning.

Baked Cucumbers

2 -4 Cukes, approx 1-2lbs
1 C Heavy Cream
2 T Butter, Melted
1½ T Red Wine Vinegar
1 Shallot or Cippolini Onion
4-6 Basil leaves
¼ tsp Sugar
1 tsp Salt

Slice (& peel if you wish) the cucumbers. Combine the vinegar, salt and sugar in a non-reactive bowl, then toss with the cucumber slices. Let rest for 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees and finely dice the onion. After 30 minutes, drain the cukes and pat them dry with a paper towel. Combine the cukes in a baking dish with the onion and butter and toss. Bake for about 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. While the cukes bake, gently heat the cream to a near-boil on the stove and hold there, stirring frequently, for about 20 minutes or until the cream is reduced by ½. Then, tear the basil leaves into the cream and let steep until cukes are done. Pour basil-cream over cukes when they come out of oven. Season with salt & pepper.

Summer Squash Bread

1½ C Grated Summer Squash
1½ C Flour
2 Eggs
¾ C Sugar
½ C Vegetable Oil
2 tsp Vanilla Extract
2 tsp Cinnamon
1 tsp Baking Powder
½ tsp Baking Soda

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

In a medium bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon. In a separate large bowl, combine the eggs, sugar, oil and vanilla. Pour the dry ingredients into the wet while whisking constantly to combine, and stir until well-integrated. Then stir in the grated summer squash.

Grease and flour a bread pan and then pour the bread dough into it. Bake for 45 – 60 minutes, until a knife inserted into the center of the loaf comes out clean. Cool for about 10 to 15 minutes, then remove from pan. Serve plain, or with a sugar glaze.