



Great-grandfather's barn at Spring Brook Farm, circa 1901

What's in the box and where do I keep it?

Crop	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	
Corn Meal	Yes	Plastic	Mandan Bride
Kohlrabi	Yes	Plastic	
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Red Leaf, butter
Pea Shoots	Yes	Plastic	
Radishes	Yes	Plastic	Cherriette
Spinach	Yes	Plastic	

Salad Days

The salad days continue this time of year at the farm. Other veggies are busy growing while the lettuces take center stage over the next couple of weeks. Last week's heavy rains took their toll on some of the lettuce and spinach, knocking holes in the larger leaves and getting them very dirty. We do our best to clean them up at the farm but you will still find plenty of dirt down at the bases of the lettuce leaves. If you have time it's a good idea to get these all cleaned up and in the fridge the night you pick up your share, so that you don't have the dirt around in your fridge all week. Let me make a brief plea here to encourage you to make your own salad dressing. Dressings from the store are full of lousy oils and all sorts of additives that are unnecessary. A good olive oil and a nice vinegar are an easy place to start.

One new item this week is the kohlrabi. Kohlrabi is a member of the cabbage, or brassica family. This is a wide and deep family of plants that provide us everything from cauliflower to Brussels sprouts and kale. Kohlrabi is a bulb which forms above ground. It is usually eaten raw. We simply peel off the skin and slice it into chunks and eat it like we would a sliced apple. It's a great veggie for kids to try, with a crisp, watery, slightly sweet flavor.

Also in this week's box is the Mandan Bride cornmeal. This is corn we grow and grind ourselves. Actually last

Farm report

Rainfall last week 1.55"
 High temp 86°
 Low temp..... 58°
 Soil condition..... Moist
 Weed pressure..... High
 Coming next week Peas?

year the raccoons got nearly all of ours so we got this batch from Greg Reynolds. I shelled it and ground it last weekend so it's probably the freshest stoneground cornmeal you've ever had, unless you grind your own. This cornmeal is a rare commodity in our household. We use it sparingly because we never have that much of it. Use it anywhere that calls for cornmeal and you will find that it makes the best version of that dish you've ever had. It makes fantastic cornbread, but really where I think it shines is in polenta. We probably use 75% of our stash for polenta. I like to grind it so that there is a mixture of coarse and fine particles so that it adds a nice texture to dishes. If you're not in the habit of making polenta this is a good time to try. Because this cornmeal is fresh and contains the entire kernel of corn it is rich in oil and should be refrigerated or eaten right away.

Farm News

We sure have been in a stormy pattern for the last couple of weeks. This is probably not news to those of you who actually like to spend time outdoors. All of these storms have put us behind with some things at the farm. When the ground is wet it is a bad idea to work the soil so we must wait until it dries out to do fieldwork and weeding. This can sometimes give the weeds a big jump in some crops, especially the slow to germinate crops like carrots. We've got some emergency weeding to do this week on the first planting of carrots.

One thing very different about growing for a CSA is that we are always planting. Unlike a garden where you may have everything planted by now, we plant crops all summer long up until about the first week of September when the last of the late spinach and arugula will go in. This allows us to have a constant harvest of things to go in the box all season long. It also means that when we have a wet period when we can't get into the field, 4 or 5 weeks later there will be some things which should have been in the box but aren't. We had a wet period like this in mid-May that kept me out of the field for about ten days, and we'll see the effects of that over the coming weeks when we may be short on a couple of things.

The first of the sugar snap peas may be ready for next week's delivery. I know everyone looks forward to these.

We are giving a couple of rows of shelling peas a try again this year to see if there is a variety out there that I like. We will keep you updated on their progress.

One problem we're having this year is a massive increase in the amount of flea beetles. They must favor the cooler wetter weather we had in May because their numbers have been massive. Some of you know that I use row covers made of light polyester fabric to keep these off of the arugula and radishes. But as you can tell their populations have been so high this year that even that hasn't been effective, they are the ones responsible for the little holes in the leaves. They also are bothering things which normally are not affected by them, such as the broccoli and turnips. I think the turnips will pull out of it and just be ready a week or two later, but we may actually lose some broccoli to them. Broccoli is tricky because it doesn't like the heat under the row covers, and there aren't many other controls. There is an organic insecticide approved for flea beetles called Rotenone, but I choose not to use it because it is damaging to streams and fish populations. Sometimes even the organic solutions are undesirable.

A couple of you have asked about buying maple syrup and honey this year. We are going to handle these a little different this year and I will talk more about it in next week's newsletter.

Lastly, I want to recommend a cookbook I bought over the winter. It's called *The New Best Recipe* by the editor's of *Cook's Illustrated* magazine. It is a thousand-page compendium full of perfectionist detail, yet not overly complicated or fussy. If you own a copy of *On Food and Cooking*, it's kind of like that level of explanation of technique with a ton of mercilessly perfected recipes. I will be using a few recipes from it in the newsletter from time to time.

Please post your favorite recipes to the forum on the website, it's quick and easy to do. Thanks and have a great week. –David Van Eeckhout

Polenta

2 c. freshly ground coarse corn meal
7 c. water (part of this could be stock or milk too)
1 1/2 t. salt
4 T. butter
1/2 c. cheese (parm, fontina, asiago or any good melter)

A note of caution, polenta is akin to lava in how hot it gets and how it behaves, if yours is sputtering and splattering wrap your hand in a towel when you're stirring it. Bring the liquid to a boil in a large saucepan, polenta

can splatter as it cooks down so use a pan with sides at least twice as high as the level of the liquid. Add the salt, then, whisking briskly, pour in the cornmeal slowly so as to avoid lumps. Lower the heat and cook, stirring regularly, for about 35-45 minutes. The longer you cook it the more firm it will be when done. If you don't know how long to cook it I would just shoot for 40 minutes. Add the butter and the cheese and stir well. Polenta can be served in many ways, use it as you would rice under an entrée, under a nice piece of fish, last week we had it under some beef stroganoff and it was fantastic. You can also cook it a little further and then pour it onto a greased cookie sheet, let it cool, and then slice it into squares to sauté with scrambled eggs or warm with maple syrup on it.

Here's a couple of salad dressing recipes from *The Best Recipe*:

Red Wine Vinaigrette for Mellow Salad Greens

3 T. extra-virgin olive oil
2 t. red wine vinegar
1/8 t. salt
pinch fresh ground black pepper
2 quarts washed and dried lettuces or spinach

Combine all of the dressing ingredients in a jar, seal the lid, and shake vigorously until emulsified, about 20 seconds.

Mustard and Balsamic Vinaigrette for Spicy Salad Greens

3 T. extra-virgin olive oil
2 t. balsamic vinegar
1 1/2 t. Dijon mustard
1/2 t. finely minced shallot
1/8 t. salt
pinch fresh ground black pepper
2 quarts washed and dried arugula or dandelion

Combine the same as the previous recipe