



# CHRONICLES OF A DRIFTER

## CSA NEWSLETTER      OCTOBER 2, 2012

### IN YOUR BOX THIS WEEK . . .

**Beets: Red Ace**

**Brussels Sprouts: Diablo or Nautic**

To use, snap sprouts off the stalk, trim the end and remove any limp leaves. They are actually delicious simply blanched for about 5 minutes but there are a couple of delicious recipes on the back page as well.

**Cauliflower or Romanesco**

**Cabbage: Storage**

This is a great storage cabbage that will last a long time in your fridge if uncut so there is no rush to use it up. Great for winter soups, stews, with pork roasts, in stir fries - a great all around and vitamin-packed veggie.

**Carrots: Nectar**

**Garlic: Bogatyr or Music**

**Leeks: Tadorna or Bandit**

Leeks are the longer, slender, milder-flavored cousin to onions. Use all of the leek except for the tough upper green leaf.

**Onions: Cortland/Copra and Redwing**

**Parsnips: Lancer**

Parsnips are the long, slender carrot-like vegetable. Their sweetness comes out when they are roasted or slowly sauteed. Also try in the crock pot with carrots, potatoes, celeriac and a roast.

**Peppers: Green Bell**

The last of the gleaned bells.

**Potatoes: Red or Yellow**

**Pie Pumpkin: New England Pie**

The pumpkin in your box this week has a thick, sweet flesh and is for eating rather than décor though it can be decorative until you bake it up. Display indoors until that time so that it is not hurt by a frost or freeze.

**Spinach: Corvair**

Just a taste - with the onset of cooler weather and shorter days, the spinach has been growing slowly, however, it is nice and sweet right now!

**Thyme**

**Winter Squash: Carnival (multicolored acorn), Delicata (slender striped), and Butternut**

The delicatas are a very sweet squash that are delicious all on their own. Carnivals are great on their own as well but are also delicious in stuffed squash recipes (nothing wrong with a dollop of butter and a touch of brown sugar either!). Butternuts are perfect for soups, for roasting with garlic, and in other squash dishes that call for a large amount of squash.

### WEEK 17: NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

October is National Co-op Month, a time to recognize and celebrate the many co-ops that exist in our communities. A cooperative or "co-op" exists to serve its members, and what makes co-ops unique is that the members are also the owners. So, in addition to getting the products and services you need, you also have a say in the business decisions your cooperative makes. There are several examples of co-ops in our communities including energy, housing, banking, and agriculture. The Good Earth Food Co-op in St. Cloud and the Litchfield Natural Food Co-op are two great examples of the cooperative movement in the food world. Both of these co-ops have great member benefits like discounts on bulk orders, member discounts monthly or each time you shop, and you have a say in what products are offered in the store. Stop in to either Co-op and talk to an employee about the benefits of membership.

It was a *great* pleasure to see many of you this past weekend at the Share Member Potluck and we truly appreciate your effort to make it out to the farm. Our family members left the farm that day saying, "You have the *nicest* share members!" and we really do agree. There is a renewed sense of energy at the farm after your presence here. If you were not able to make it to the potluck, there are still several jack o'lantern pumpkins left on our hay wagon and if you are in the area you are welcome to swing by and pick up a couple for your home.

The newsletter says Week 17 and for many of you (half share members), that means this is your last box of the season. Full shares, your last week will be next week. We want to extend a big thank you to all of you for joining us this season and making an investment in this CSA. We are honored to provide produce to you and your families and hope that you can join us again next year! Included in this box you will find a 2012 End of Season Share Member Survey as well as a CSA Registration Form for the 2013 season. We will hold your spot for you until January 31, 2013 after which time we will open spots up to interested families; if you register with a deposit by that date, you can pay this season's share price. Also, we are offering a \$10 credit to returning share members who refer a family that signs up for a CSA share next season. Please let us know if you have any questions about registration.

The End of Season Survey is one of the best ways for you to give feedback on your CSA experience. We take these surveys to heart and made several changes in what we grew this year based on last year's responses. It is our goal to make your CSA experience as positive as possible so we thank you in advance for your input. In answer to several members who inquired, we will be sending out statements during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in October to those who have a balance from additional purchases such as eggs or preserving shares.

A great piece of trivia for you to throw out during a gathering. This year's winner of the largest cabbage at the Alaska State Fair came out at a whopping 138.25 pounds and was 7 feet 3 inches across from leaf to leaf. We promise *never* to give you a cabbage that large. But what a lot of kraut that would make!

#### Additional Autumn Share:

At the end of October or the beginning of November we will be offering a one-time Autumn Share for approximately \$50 that will be filled with storage vegetables like winter squash, onions, carrots and beets along with dried herbs, gourds and other autumn flair. Most of these vegetables will be able to hold until Thanksgiving (and beyond) if you would like to use them for your holiday table. We will also include several of our favorite autumn recipes and dishes we love for Thanksgiving. There are a limited number of Autumn Shares available and will be offered on a first come-first served basis. Please let us know if you are interested and we will put your family on the list.

-Best wishes from your farmers Joan, Nick, and Abe

Please remember to return your last CSA boxes to your pick-up site - thanks!

### PHENOLOGY AND WEATHER NOTES ON THE FARM FROM THE PAST WEEK

Rainfall: 0"

High Temp: 78°F

Low Temp: 31°F

Sightings: What we thought was a circling flock of seagulls turned out to be a mini twister of circling corn stalk leaves. The harvest moon shined down on the farm this weekend.

## ADDITIONAL PREP/STORAGE INFO

**Winter Squash:** Will store at room temperature for at least a month (this is conservative, squash is hardy stuff). Store for several months in a dry and cool location (50-55 degrees). You can bake winter squash easily by slicing in half, scooping out seeds and placing cut side down, oiled, on a cookie sheet or cake pan.

**Pie Pumpkin:** Prepare your pie pumpkin in the same manner as winter squash. Each pie pumpkin is enough for at least one pie, depending on your recipe. Use leftovers for muffins, scones or breads. For quick preparation later in the year, bake your pie pumpkin, then measure out the puree for your favorite pumpkin recipes. Freeze these amounts in Ziploc bags or containers, write the amount frozen on the container, then they will be at the ready to thaw and use for baked goods later on.

**Brussels Sprouts:** Brussels sprouts contain a substance that produces sulfur when heated. In small amounts, this creates a nice peppery character and flavor. Overcooking, however, can create an unpleasant odor and taste. This is probably why brussels sprouts have gotten such a bad rap in the vegetable world. It is best to cook brussels sprouts briefly; steaming or sautéing works best. Brussels sprouts are especially nice sautéed with butter or salted olive oil. Brussels sprouts are best used within a week or two. After that time, their odor increases. They do, however, freeze very well. Blanch sprouts for 3-5 minutes, rinse well in cold water to stop cooking, drain, let dry, and pack into airtight containers or Ziploc freezer bags.

## RECIPES TO CHECK OUT

- Minestrone Soup from Week 15 Newsletter
- Glazed Carrots from Week 15 Newsletter
- Squash Soup from Week 16 Newsletter
- Marakesh Cabbage from Week 16 Newsletter
- Celeriac au Gratin on our website
- Pumpkin Scones on our website

## Beet Chips

Adapted from Living magazine  
2 medium beets  
1-2 t. extra-virgin olive oil

Preheat oven to 350 degrees, with racks in upper and lower thirds. Peel beets and slice 1/16 inch thick with a mandoline or knife (the mandoline can cut the beets more thinly and evenly, but a knife works just fine). In a large bowl, toss beets with extra-virgin olive oil. On two rimmed baking sheets (or use one sheet and bake in two batches), arrange beets in a single layer. Stack another rimmed baking sheet on top of each. Bake until edges of beets begin to dry out, about 20 minutes. Uncover and rotate sheets. Bake 10 to 20 minutes, removing chips as they become lightened in color. Transfer to a wire rack; chips will crisp up as they cool.

## RECIPES

### Brussels Sprouts with Balsamic Vinegar

1 1/2 pound fresh Brussels Sprouts  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
2 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced  
1 medium onion, peeled and thinly sliced  
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar  
2 tablespoons butter  
Salt & freshly ground pepper to taste

Trim off the stems and remove any limp leaves from the brussels sprouts. Blanch the sprouts in boiling water to cover for 5 minutes. Drain and rinse under cold water to stop the cooking. Heat a large frying pan and add the olive oil, garlic and onion. Saute a few minutes until the onion just becomes tender. Add the blanched, drained brussels sprouts. Saute a few minutes. Add the vinegar and toss so that all the brussels sprouts are coated with the vinegar. Add the butter and salt and pepper to taste and toss again.

### Pan-Browned Brussels Sprouts

Adapted from Gourmet magazine  
1/2 lb. Brussels sprouts  
2 large garlic cloves  
1 1/2 T. butter  
1 T. olive oil  
2 T. pine nuts or other nuts (walnuts, sliced almonds, etc)

Trim Brussels sprouts and halve lengthwise. Cut garlic into very thin slices. In a 10-inch heavy skillet (preferably well-seasoned cast iron) melt 1 T. butter with oil over moderate heat and cook garlic, stirring, until pale golden. Transfer garlic with a slotted spoon to a small bowl. Reduce heat to low and arrange sprouts in skillet, cut sides down, in one layer. Sprinkle sprouts with pine nuts and salt to taste. Cook sprouts, without turning, until crisp-tender and undersides are golden brown, about 15 minutes. With tongs transfer sprouts to a plate, browned sides up. Add garlic and remaining 1/2 T. butter to skillet and cook over moderate heat, stirring, until pine nuts are more evenly pale golden, about 1 minute. Spoon mixture over sprouts and sprinkle with black pepper.

### Potato Parsnip Puree

Adapted from Gourmet magazine  
*This sounds fancy but is really a spin on good 'ole mashed potatoes. The parsnips add a depth and sweetness to the dish.*  
1 lb. parsnips, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces  
1 lb. potatoes, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces  
1 t. salt plus additional 1/4 t. salt  
1/2 c. heavy cream or non-dairy alternative  
2 T. butter or Earth Balance  
1/4 t. black pepper

Cover parsnips and potatoes with cold water by 1 inch in a cooking pot. Then add 1 t. salt and bring to a boil, partially covered. Reduce heat and simmer vegetables, partially covered, until very tender but not falling apart, 30 to 40 minutes. Meanwhile, bring cream, butter, pepper, and remaining 1/4 t. salt to a simmer in a sauce pan over moderate heat. Drain vegetables in a colander. Mash vegetables with cream mixture.

### Red Flannel Hash

Adapted from Living magazine  
*A sweet, colorful spin on hash browns.*  
1 lb. beets  
7 T. olive oil, plus more if needed for frying  
Salt and pepper  
7 slices bacon, coarsely chopped  
1 large leek or 2 small leeks, white and pale-green parts only, halved lengthwise and cut into 1/4-inch half-moons, rinsed well  
2 T. coarsely chopped fresh thyme leaves  
1 1/2 lb. potatoes  
Sour cream, for serving (optional)

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Place beets on a large piece of heavy-duty foil. Drizzle with 3 T. oil, and sprinkle with 2 t. salt; season with pepper. Fold foil and seal to form a packet. Place packet in oven, and roast until beets are tender, about 1 hour. Let stand until cool enough to handle. Peel beets with a paring knife or a vegetable peeler (may even be able to rub skins off with fingers); cut into 1/4-inch dice. Heat 2 T. oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add bacon, and cook, stirring often, 4 minutes. Add leek, and cook, stirring often, until tender, about 8 minutes. Stir in beets and thyme, and cook 1 minute more. Transfer beet mixture to a large bowl, reserving skillet.

Peel potatoes, and grate on the large holes of a box grater. Add potatoes and 1-2 t. salt to the beet mixture, and toss to combine. Heat remaining 2 T. oil in the reserved skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches of 4 and adding more oil if needed, drop 1/4 c. potato mixture into skillet. Gently flatten hash cakes with a spatula. Cook, flipping once, until cakes are just beginning to crisp, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towels as you work, and keep warm in a 200 degree oven if desired.