



# CHRONICLES OF A DRIFTER

## CSA NEWSLETTER

### SEPTEMBER 3, 2013

#### IN YOUR BOX THIS WEEK . . .

**Beets:** Red Ace or Touchstone Gold

**Cauliflower**

**Carrots:** Necoras

**Celery:** Tango

Delicious in stir fries and soups.

**Eggplant:** Globe

Eggplant must be cooked before being eaten. We love to slice and sauté eggplant with garlic, salt and pepper then serve on a sandwich with pesto and tomato. It is also nice in marinara sauce - dice and sauté in oil, garlic and salt then add to your marinara. Great in lasagna!

**Fennel:** Orion

Fennel is the vegetable with a white bulb and green fronds that has a light flavor of anise. The entire vegetable is edible. You can thinly slice the bulb and/or fronds and add to salads, sandwiches or egg salad. We enjoy fennel with marinara sauces and it adds a very delicious touch to meatballs.

**Melon:** Cantaloupe or Watermelon

Cantaloupe should mostly be ripe! Put in the fridge and eat soon! Watermelon is best in the fridge now too.

**Onions:** Talon or Patterson

**Pepper:** Colored Bell and Heirloom (Stocky Red Roaster, Tolly's Sweet Italin, Jimmy Nardello, Topepo Pimento)

**Hot Pepper:** Jalapeno (medium hot)

This is the smallest green pepper in your box. Use gloves when cutting up. Great for fresh salsa!

**Potatoes:** French Fingerling

These potatoes are creamy and succulent and delicious simply boiled.

**Summer Squash/Zucchini**

The last of the season!

**Thyme**

Delicious with the potatoes.

**Tomatoes:** Cherry Tomatoes (Sungold, Esterina, Sweetie and Black Cherry) and Slicers/Heirlooms (New Girl, Big Beef, Pink Beauty, Persimmon, Black Prince, Jaune Flamee, German Johnson, Striped German, Iron Lady)

The Striped German and Persimmon tomatoes are heirlooms that have a yellow to orange tone when ripe. This would be a great week for tomato soup - we actually had stocking hats on harvesting tomatoes on Monday!

#### WEEK 12: CORE GROUP

**NOTE:** Cantaloupe are ripe! Put them in the refrigerator and eat within the next day or two!

It appears that the last serious blast of heat has passed us by fairly unscathed. The temps were great for ripening but we are appreciating the cool down time now too. Our task for the week now is to bring in the rest of our onion crop to cure in the greenhouse and continue irrigation since we have still not received any significant rain for some time. We were narrowly missed by some severe weather on Saturday night. We are glad to have missed damaging winds and hail on Saturday but would not have minded a bit of moisture. The next couple of weeks will also be busy with putting in a new irrigation well on the farm. We will be moving into some new ground on the eastern portion of the farm next year and our current house well does not have the capacity to irrigate this additional acreage. The new well will mean rethinking of irrigation lines but we are looking forward to a higher volume well, which should service our fields much more efficiently than our current setup.

As with the coming irrigation well, each year brings changes and additions to the farm. This year, one of our additions was to establish a core group with our CSA. When the CSA movement first began, many CSA's were actually initiated through a core group. Often, a group of people interested in local and sustainable foods would come together, decide to establish a CSA, and then one person or couple in the core group was chosen or volunteered to be the lead farmer for the CSA. The core group's job then was to do the vast majority of planning, marketing, distribution, and member communication for the CSA, allowing the farmer to focus on production. This has changed significantly over the years. Now, most CSA's are established by a farmer interested in this model of production, who then does all of the business work behind the CSA as well as the production. The core group we have established is comprised of a group of CSA members who we meet with twice a year to do some visioning with us for the farm as well as offer us insight into member satisfaction and growth, an eye on the budget, and to have other sets of creative eyes to continually improve our operation. Our first core group meeting was held this spring at the farm and we really enjoyed the opportunity to gather, have discussion and generate excitement for the season to come. The members of the core group come from both the Litchfield and St. Cloud areas and include Cheryl Spellacy, Claudia Broman, Karen Hoeschen and Hank Krey, Marcia and Dennis Brown, Pat and Deb Lalley, Steve and Shelley Erickson, and Tim and Diane Ross. We want to extend a big thank you to this group of members for their time and insight and look forward to the growth of the group!

#### Additional Shares

We have a few additional shares available on a first come first served basis. We can put your name on the list if you are interested and additional shares can be delivered along with your regular share.

- **Tomato Share:** 20 pounds of tomatoes for canning/freezing. These are the seconds of tomatoes. \$24
  - **Greens Share:** Bushel box of kale and chard for freezing. \$24
- ~Best wishes from your farmers,  
Joan, Nick, Abe and the littlest Drifter-to-be

#### Upcoming Events on the Farm or around the area

- **Annual Hoedown at York Farm:** Saturday, September 14, 5:00pm. Potluck, bonfire, dancing and music at our friends Andy and Irene's farm in Hutchinson. We are co-sponsoring this event with several other local farms and businesses. Bring a dish to pass and enjoy the evening!
- **Share Member Potluck:** Sunday afternoon, September 22. Good food, good company, lawn games, scavenger hunt, informal farm tour, pumpkins, socializing with the chickens. Hope you can make it! Please RSVP so we know if you hope to come.

**Please remember to return your CSA boxes to your pick-up site. You may also choose to bring bags to transfer your produce into at your pick-up site so you do not have to remember to bring the boxes back. You can also return the cherry tomato pint containers for reuse. Thank you!**

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

Rainfall: 0.1"

High Temp: 91°F

Low Temp: 52°F

Sightings: The baby swallows have literally flown the coop for the first time this week! They come back to sleep in the evenings and are looking lovely.

## HOW TO STORE YOUR PRODUCE

Your produce this week can be stored in the refrigerator (drawers or main refrigerator) in plastic bags. A few exceptions . . .

**Potatoes** Store in a cool, dry, dark place. Keep out of the light as their skins will green if exposed to light, making the spuds mildly toxic.

**Eggplant** should not be refrigerated. Store on the counter and use soon.

**Carrots** Remove green tops for longer storage.

**Tomatoes** Remove from bag once you get home and store on the counter, shoulder side down.

## RECIPES ON OUR WEBSITE

- Pesto Sandwich with Eggplant

## RECIPES FROM PAST NEWSLETTERS

- Cous Cous Salad: Week 11, 2013
- Quinoa, Black Beans and Peppers: Week 11, 2013
- Carrot, Tuna and Avocado Salad: Week 11, 2013
- Baba Ganouj (Eggplant Dip): Week 11, 2013

## PRESERVING TIPS

- **Broccoli/Cauliflower:** Wash and remove leaves. Separate heads into convenient-size sections. You can also freeze small stem pieces. Wash well. Blanch in boiling water for 3-4 minutes. Cool, drain, and pack into freezer bags. Seal, label and freeze.
- **Peppers:** Core and seed. Chop to desired size and place in Ziploc freezer bags, flatten and freeze.
- **Tomatoes:** Wash and core tomatoes. Chop (with or without skins), place in Ziploc freezer bags, flatten and freeze. Do not overfill. Great for soups, stews, sauces or chili. For a VERY fast freezing method, wash and core tomatoes, leave whole and freeze on a cookie sheet. Once frozen, pack into Ziploc bags, label and freeze. When you pull the tomatoes out to use, simply run warm tap water over the tomatoes to remove skins. We learned about this method from our friends at Loon Organics.

## Recipes

### Roasted French Fingerling Potatoes with Thyme

Adapted from [www.phamfatale.com](http://www.phamfatale.com)

- 1 ½ lb. fingerling potatoes
- 2 T. olive oil, plus extra for greasing the baking dish
- 3 T. unsalted butter, cubed (can substitute Earth Balance or additional oil)
- 1 t. sea salt
- 5 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 1 sprig thyme, stemmed, finely chopped (about 2 t.)
- 1-1/2 T. fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 t. white peppercorns, freshly ground (can substitute black pepper)

Preheat oven to 425°F. In a saucepan, heat the olive oil. Add the butter and about 2 teaspoons of minced garlic. Cook the garlic until it is slightly golden. Remove the garlic and set aside.

In the same saucepan, add the fingerling potatoes. Coat each potato with the oil/butter mixture. Lower the heat to very low. Cover and let it cook for about 10-12 minutes. Toss occasionally. Bring the heat back to medium. Season with salt and pepper. Add the garlic and thyme; wait 2 minutes until the garlic is translucent and starts sticking to each potato. Drizzle the lemon juice over the potatoes.

Immediately transfer to a greased baking dish. Cover with heavy duty aluminum foil. Place into the hot oven and roast for about 15 minutes. Uncover and cook for another 2-3 minutes to get the garlic very fragrant and golden. The fingerling potatoes should be fork-tender. Remove from the oven. Garnish with parsley if desired. Toss well.

### Eggplant Caponata

Adapted from [www.seriousseats.com](http://www.seriousseats.com)

- 1 medium eggplant
- 1/4 c. olive oil, divided
- 3 ribs celery, finely chopped
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes, drained (or equivalent fresh)
- 20 large olives, pitted and chopped
- 2 T. red wine vinegar
- 2 T. tomato paste
- 2 t. sugar
- 1 t. minced fresh oregano (can substitute ¼ t. dried)
- 1 t. Kosher salt
- Ground black pepper to taste
- 2 T. minced fresh parsley (can substitute ½- 1 T. dried)
- 2 T. chopped fresh basil

Trim and peel the eggplant and dice into 1/2-inch cubes. Sprinkle lightly with salt. In a heavy, wide skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil over medium heat. Add the celery and onion and cook, stirring often, until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, one minute more. Remove the celery mixture to a bowl.

In the same skillet, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil. Add the eggplant and cook, stirring constantly, until lightly browned in spots, about 7 minutes. Add the celery mixture back to the eggplant in the skillet, along with the tomatoes, olives, vinegar, tomato paste, sugar, oregano, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low and simmer, uncovered, for about 15 minutes, until the mixture has thickened enough to be spreadable. Stir in the parsley and basil along with additional salt, pepper and vinegar to taste. Serve at room temperature with toasted baguette slices.

### Carrot, Beet and Fennel Salad

Adapted from [marthastewart.com](http://marthastewart.com)

- 1 fennel bulb, trimmed
- 5 medium carrots
- 2 large beets, trimmed and peeled
- 2 t. fennel seeds (optional if you want less of the fennel flavor)
- 1/4 c. fresh orange juice
- 2 T. red wine vinegar
- 2 t. fresh lemon juice
- 1 shallot or ½ small onion, halved and very thinly sliced
- Coarse salt
- 1/4 c. plus 2 T. extra-virgin olive oil

Make the salad: Quarter fennel bulb lengthwise, and cut out core. Very thinly slice fennel lengthwise into strips using a mandoline or sharp knife. Transfer to a covered dish to keep from drying out. Grate carrots, then beets, on the large holes of a box grater. Arrange side by side with fennel. Keep covered and refrigerated until ready to use.

Make the vinaigrette: Toast fennel seeds in a small skillet over medium-high heat, shaking skillet occasionally, until fragrant but not browned, about 1 minute. Transfer to a small bowl, and add orange juice, vinegar, lemon juice, shallot, and 1 teaspoon salt. Gradually whisk in oil. Toss fennel, beets, and carrots with vinaigrette in a large bowl. Serve immediately.