



# Notes From the Pea Patch

Foxtail Community Farm

Week 22

October 28, 2010

## Farmer's Notebook

*All things on earth point home in old October:  
sailors to sea, travelers to walls and fences,  
hunters to field and hollow and the long voice of the  
hounds, the lover to the love he has forsaken.*  
~ Thomas Wolfe (1935).

With this week's delivery, our fifth CSA season comes to a close. This is a benchmark year in our farm business plan, and overall we are gratified with the continued success of the CSA. The commitment of members remains essential to that success, and we truly appreciate your support. Although it is always sad to see another growing season end, it is also a welcome opportunity to reflect on the successes and challenges of the past six months, to turn our attention to farm and household tasks set aside since last March, and to get rejuvenated for next season.

Quite a few members have commented that this was the best season yet. It certainly was a productive one, with consistently full share boxes since week one. We haven't crunched all the numbers yet, but we think the quantity and market value of the produce distributed this year exceeded any of our previous seasons. It was a very good or even great year for quite a few crops: spring greens, strawberries, peas, beans, carrots, tomatoes, peppers, lettuce, beets and potatoes. We were able to donate over 400 pounds of fresh produce to our local food pantry, and to preserve a nice variety of canned goods for ourselves and interested members.

Of course, the year had its failures too – seemingly more than many members have noticed! Our melon crop was devoured by deer, sweet corn seedlings were stolen by crows, fall brassicas (other than Brussels sprouts) never got going, storage onions drowned in weeds, and eggplants and fall raspberries had one of those inexplicable vacation years.

Attentive members might note that with the exception of melons (which we've always struggled with on this farm), this report is almost a mirror opposite of last season's successes and failures. It is perhaps a truism for a diverse, small-scale and labor-intensive farm like ours that not all crops will do well in any given year.

~ Continued on reverse ~

## This Week's Harvest

**Popcorn** – thankfully the crows that ravaged our sweet corn this year left the popcorn seedlings alone, giving us a very nice crop. Let these dry on the cob until mid December. Remove kernels by rubbing two cobs together. For old-fashioned stove top popcorn, put a single layer of kernels in the bottom of a pot with just enough oil to coat, cover and shake over medium-high heat until popping stops.

**Sage** – an aromatic, soft-flavored leafy herb. Sage works with nearly any vegetable or meat, but is especially prized for stuffing. You can make a simple butter and sage sauce by melting 8 tbs of unsalted butter just until it starts to color, then adding 2 tbs of minced fresh sage leaves to cook for another minute, stirring in about ¼ - ½ tsp of salt at the end. This is especially good on a pumpkin or butternut squash-filled ravioli (it's the one I wrote about a few weeks ago). Any extra leaves can be hung in your kitchen to dry or can be frozen.

Also...

**Beets ~ Brussels Sprouts ~  
Butternut Squash ~ Carrots ~ Celeriac ~  
Kale ~ Leeks ~ Lettuce ~ Turnips**

*Members with smaller size shares may not  
receive all items or quantities described*



**Thank you to all our members  
for another successful CSA  
season!**

*Special thanks to ...*

**Phyllis Silver, Bob Frawley,  
Mary Applegate & Charles Fisher,  
Eric Hardiman & Kathy Witherspoon,  
and Paul & Caroline Barrett**



## Recipe of the Week: New England Sage Stuffing

*A traditional basic sage stuffing recipe. I am famous (some would say infamous) for adding a lot of extras to my stuffing - sauteed diced apples or mushrooms, crumbled cooked sausage, toasted pecans, dried cranberries – and encourage you to experiment.*

- 1 (1-lb) loaf of French, Italian or other white bread, cut into cubes (about 10 cups loosely packed)
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 large onions or whites of 3 leeks, chopped
- 2 celery ribs, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 4 tablespoons chopped fresh sage
- 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3/4 to 1 cup chicken, turkey or vegetable broth
- 1 egg, beaten

Spread the bread cubes out onto a baking sheet and toast in the oven at 400°F oven, stirring several times, until firm to the touch, 8 to 10 minutes.

Melt the butter in a large skillet. Add the onion and celery and cook over medium heat until softened, about 10 minutes. Add the nutmeg and herbs, and toss to combine. Season with the salt and pepper.

In a large bowl, combine the toasted bread cubes and the onion mixture, tossing gently to mix. Add 3/4 cup of broth, along with the egg, and mix lightly but thoroughly again. For a moister stuffing, add the remaining broth. Bake in a covered dish at ~350-400°F for about 20 minutes (or in your turkey!).

## Rachel's Winter Squash Stuffing Casserole

*Save a few cups of your stuffing for this delicious dish.*



Peel and cube a winter squash. Place in a covered dish with a few pats of butter. Drizzle with local maple syrup and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake at 400°F for about 30 minutes, until just tender (*or* – halve and partially bake a squash, then remove peel and chop flesh into bite-sized pieces).

Add 1-2 chopped apples and sliced leeks to the squash, along with a handful of toasted pecans. Bake another 15 minutes, until apples are soft. Stir in 3-4 cups of sage stuffing. Bake another 5-10 minutes to meld flavors. Serve and eat!

~ Continued from front ~

The hot dry conditions that helped our tomatoes and peppers thrive this summer also stunted growth and promoted insect damage of our fall brassica seedlings. In contrast, last year's cool wet weather that decimated our tomatoes was perfect for broccoli, Swiss chard and turnips.

Work wise, this was another challenging season. We had hoped to hit a stride this year (we could just glimpse it at the end of last year), but moving into a new field kept us at full tilt. The increased member work contributions this year were helpful, with quite a few members pitching in to help with planting, weeding, harvesting and of course the never-ending task of digging and erecting fence posts.

We've been winding down for a few weeks now, and even as this year draws to a close we're looking forward to next season. We're contemplating a few changes, including adjustments to share sizes, a possible modest increase in the number of shares, a small flock of chickens, more structured opportunities for willing workers to help out in the fields, and taking the big step of hiring an intern. We wish you all a restful and joyous winter, and hope to see you again in the spring for another CSA season!



## Closing out the 2010 CSA season...

Please help us close out the season:

- \* **Return all your delivery boxes** to your delivery sites so that we can reuse them. Please return boxes to your regular delivery site by **8:00 pm on Thursday November 4th**.
- \* **Complete and return a member survey**. Your feedback as members is very important! You can return your survey by mail or email.
- \* **Submit any outstanding payments by November 15th**. Please make checks payable to Foxtail Community Farm and send to: 506 CR 75, Greenville, NY 12083. Email reminders have been sent to members with outstanding balances.

## ...and looking ahead to 2011

Information about 2011 shares will be announced via email in December. Please let us know if you change your email address! Current CSA members will have priority to renew before we offer any available shares to people on our waiting list.