

# Notes From the Pea Patch

Foxtail Community Farm

Week 2

June 10, 2010

## Farmer's Notebook

I'm often asked if our farm is organic. This is a much tougher question to answer now than it was when I began farming twelve years ago. In 2000, the term "organic" became regulated by the USDA. While this helped codify what it means to be organic, many farmers also think it weakened the term.

In the early 1990s, organic was synonymous with locally and sustainably grown food. However, with the explosion of consumer interest in organic food, the same multinational food corporations that long dominated conventional agriculture began to take over the organic food sector. Today, organic brands like Nature's Farm, Horizon, and Cascadian Farms are owned by Tyson, Dean Foods, and General Mills respectively.

The corporate consolidation of the organic food industry has led to a change in how food is grown organically. Mainstream organic food is produced with underpaid migrant labor, relies on plastic which pollutes the environment in its creation and disposal, is trucked thousands of miles from producer to consumer, and most of the profit is funneled to the corporate owners instead of the farms and communities where the food is produced. Importantly, the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers and the egregious inhumane treatment of animals is now restricted for organic products. But the local, sustainable nature of organic is missing from most of the organic food on our grocery shelves.

At Foxtail Community Farm, we believe that true organic food is more than the USDA definition. We are committed to growing food for our family and yours in a sustainable, ecologically-sound manner that goes beyond the federal standards. We strive to limit fossil fuel use, mulching crops with hay instead of plastic and watering with sprinklers instead of plastic dripline. We use crop management techniques like cover cropping and crop rotation instead of outside inputs of organic fertilizers or pesticides. Our labor is from our farm family, and we strive to educate and engage members in our farm community. So come visit the farm and see for yourself why the food you are eating is more than just organic.

## This Week's Harvest

**Broccoli** - this familiar favorite needs no introduction. We grow broccoli for both spring and fall harvests. Store in airtight bag in fridge crisper for 4-5 days.

**French Breakfast Radish** - a mild and juicy radish variety, easily recognized by its long carrot-like shape and red and white coloring. Traditionally eaten with sweet butter and salt. Remove leaves before storing in plastic bag in fridge for up to 2 weeks.

**Mint** - a peppermint variety. Add mint leaves to brewed black tea and chill for delicious iced tea. Grown-ups see this week's mojito recipe! Store on the counter in a jar of water like a bouquet.

**Mustard Greens** - a peppery mix of baby tatsoi, arugula, swiss chard, kale and mustard. Loosely wrap in damp paper towels inside a plastic bag and store in fridge for 3-4 days. Makes a flavorful salad base - add lettuce to temper the taste.

**Scallions** - also called green onions, a suitable substitute for bulb onions in many spring dishes. For some reason I can't really explain, these are one of my favorite vegetables. Store in plastic bag in refrigerator. White and crisp green portions are edible.

**Spinach** - this mild tender green is one of our most treasured spring crops. Use raw or cooked in a variety of dishes. Store in plastic bag in fridge. Wash well in cold water before using.

**Also...**

**Lettuce ~ Bok Choy ~ Broccoli Raab**

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

## Coming Attractions!

- ◆ Cauliflower
- ◆ Swiss Chard
- ◆ Strawberries (Fruit Shares)



## Recipe of the Week: Foxtail Farm Quiche

*This is a versatile recipe that we prepare often using different combinations of seasonal vegetables and herbs. Works equally well for breakfast, brunch, lunch or dinner!*

- 1 pie shell (make your own if you can – try using all or part whole wheat flour)
- 1½ cups shredded cheese (sharp cheddar or Monterey jack are good choices)
- 2 cups chopped seasonal vegetables (try: Swiss chard, spinach, broccoli, scallions, garlic scapes, onion, mushrooms, grated carrot, finely diced or grated summer squash)
- 3 tbs. grated Parmesan or Romano cheese
- 2 tsp diced fresh herbs or 1 tsp dried
- dash cayenne pepper or paprika
- dash salt
- 4 or 5 eggs
- 1 ¼ cups milk, half-and-half, or combination

Heat oven to 350° F. Prick pie shell with fork tines and bake 8-10 minutes to lightly brown. Remove from oven and reduce heat to 325° F.

Line bottom of hot pie shell with ¾ cup of the shredded cheese. Sprinkle vegetables evenly over the cheese, then cover with remaining ¾ cup cheese.

Combine Parmesan/Romano cheese, herbs, pepper, salt, eggs and milk. Whisk well, then pour evenly over the ingredients in pie shell.

Place dish on a baking sheet to catch spills and bake about 1 hour 15 minutes, or until filling is firm and lightly browned. Let cool slightly before cutting.

## Another Recipe: Hemingway's Mojito

*This recipe – found on the very cool TasteofCuba.com site - is reportedly the authentic version enjoyed by Hemingway himself at its birthplace of La Bodeguita del Medio in Havana.*

Place **4 fresh mint leaves** in a tall narrow glass ~ squeeze the **juice from a cut lime** over it (about 2 oz – we find half a lime to be plenty) ~ add one generous **teaspoon of powdered sugar** ~ *gently* smash the mint into the lime juice and sugar with a muddler (a long wooden device, or use the back of a spoon) ~ add **ice** (preferably crushed) then add **2 oz white rum** and stir ~ top off with **2-4 oz of club soda**. Garnish with a mint sprig, kick back and relax!



## Member Corner: Meet the Dwyer Family!

**Who is in your household?** The Dwyers: Angus, Sarah, Prudence (2.5), Benedict (1 in July), Calvin Coolidge, the Cat (8-ish)

**Members since:** 2009 (second year).

**Tell us a little about your family.** Angus is an attorney in Albany at Boies, Schiller & Flexner. Sarah is a clarinet teacher and composer. Prudence and Ben are focused on their hobbies of eating and not sleeping.

**What are your favorite and least favorite vegetable(s)?** *Favorites:* Swiss chard, beets, okra and jalapeños (which make Sarah homesick for Texas when they show up). *Least favorites:* We never seem to be able to eat all of the bok choy.

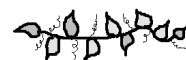
**Why did you join Foxtail Farm CSA?** We moved up from New York City and thought it would be a great way to learn about the area and the people who live here. The planned socializing took a backseat to Sarah's pregnancy last summer, unfortunately. Our farm share is easily the best thing about our move to the Capital Region!

**Any tips for using your share?** We make sure to prepare some stir fried veggies at least once a week in the beginning of the season.

**Any cookbook or other recipe source recommendations?** We're a big fan of Brother Victor-Antoine d'Avila-Latourrette's *Twelve Months of Monastery Soups*. It is organized by month (making seasonal eating pretty easy) and the recipes are both hearty and easy. We do tend to substitute our homemade vegetable stock for the liquid suggestions (the book has a slightly dated reliance on bouillon cubes).

**Do you have a favorite recipe to share?** We make a mean corn soup with roasted corn and avocado relish (*we will definitely run this recipe when corn comes into season!* ~ RD)

**If you were a fruit or vegetable, what would you be?** Angus abstains; Sarah - sweet potato



*Be sure to send us a profile for your family so other members can get to know you!*