



# RED FIRE READER

A bimonthly newsletter from Red Fire Farm, growers of healthy organic food for communities in Massachusetts

GRANBY, MASSACHUSETTS 01033 413) 467-SOIL SEPT. 17TH, 2007 ISSUE NUMBER 9



## CALENDAR:

- September 19<sup>th</sup>:** Cooking Demo at Somerville  
**September 25<sup>th</sup>:** Cooking Demo at Springfield Farmers Market  
**September 28<sup>th</sup>:** Farm Potluck  
**October 1<sup>st</sup>:** Cooking Demo at Springfield Farmer's Market  
**October 27<sup>th</sup>:** Tentative Boston Potluck

**PYO:** This may be the last weeks for pick-you-own. There are still few cherry tomatoes, beans, herbs, hot peppers, ground cherries, flowers and a few raspberries to pick. Come soon!

### Now in season:

lettuce – summer squash – zucchini –  
spinach – carrots – chard – beets –  
parsley – dill – basil – potatoes –  
cabbage – radish – broccoli –  
cilantro – garlic bulbs – walla walla  
onions – salad mix – garlic – kale –  
collards – tomatoes – peppers – melons  
– onions – corn – cut flowers – eggplant  
– beans – winter squashes  
Locally grown Apples and Pears

Thank you to those who made  
timely payments on towards  
your CSA share! Much  
appreciated!

## FALL HARVEST IS HERE!

Those winter vegetables we thought we were all sick of in February are happily welcomed on the harvest list (and on our table)! Last week began the distribution of the assortment of potatoes and winter squashes arriving in your share. Hopefully recipes abound in books and online for spaghetti squash, the first of a series of squashes. This newsletter will provide lots of information on cooking and storing them to enjoy now or in the colder months.

Red Fire's other delicious veggies are not over yet. As I write, others are transplanting lettuce and salad greens into the field. Lots of greens that were abundant in the spring will have a second chance to make it into your shares in the fall. Leafy vegetables like spinach, greens, and kale do very well in cooler weather and can even survive a light frost. Other fall favorites include storage radishes, turnips, cabbage, carrots, onions and beets, all of which are growing much better now that it has rained!

This year's winter squash crop looks like the best we have had in years, certainly better than last year. The fruits are good sized, solid and the ones we have baked up so far have been outstandingly delicious! Enjoy!  
-Kristin and Ryan

## Fall CSA Potlucks!

There will be two potlucks in the fall to celebrate the closing months of the harvest season.

The first will be in **our barn in Granby** on Friday **September 28<sup>th</sup>**. Anyone in the Western MA area (or Boston area if you want to come out this way) is welcome to join us at the farm at **5pm until the food is gone!**

**Bring:** A dish highlighting the fall harvest. The more creative the better. We would love to see a mixture of green salads, savory breads and main dishes, sweet desserts, and creative juices!

**Activities:** Pumpkin and gourd decorating (painting and possibly carving!)

### Check out the farm and how it's changed over your visits

The **second potluck** will be in **Boston**. The date is later and thus may be changed. Details will be in the following newsletter and also via email. The date is tentatively scheduled for **Oct 27<sup>th</sup>** at Luke Voiland's house in **Cambridge, MA**. Details forthcoming.

# Types of Squash grown at Red Fire Farm



**ACORN:** Acorn-shaped with smooth skin that dark green, orange or a splashy mixture of the two. The flavor can be bland, which may be one reason it is often sweetened. An easy way to prepare acorn squash is to cut in half and bake face-up at 350° with a butter and maple syrup in the center to keep it moist.



**BUTTERCUP:** Usually dark green in color, squat and round in shape these squash have a dense flesh that is extraordinarily sweet. Butternut Squash can be baked, mashed, pureed, steamed, simmered, or stuffed and can replace Sweet Potatoes in most recipes.

**BUTTERNUT:** This buff-skinned squash has a long, straight, solid neck and a round bottom that contains the seeds. Butternut squash has exceptionally good flavor and is easy to peel, which make it ideal for many dishes. Its flavors are similar to sweet potatoes.

**SWEET DUMPLING:** Cream colored with orange spots or pale green with dark green spots in vertical stripes. Its milk flavor lends itself well to butter and herbs. Try sautéing with sage and black pepper.



**KABOCHA:** Kabocha is the generic Japanese word for squash, but refers most commonly to a squash of the butternut type. It actually originated in the Americas like all other winter squashes. It can be dark green in color or a brilliant fall colored orange. It is the most common squash in tempura. Sauté with shallots, butter, and fresh rosemary.

**DELICATA:** Yellow, orange or cream colored with dark-green stripes, oblong and usually slender, these delicious squash are generally small weighing about a pound. Their skin is edible but it also easy to peel and once peeled the flesh can be easily sautéed.



**SPAGHETTI SQUASH:** Oval and yellow / orange-skinned with pale yellow flesh, this squash is so course that it's flesh can be pulled into long strands resembling spaghetti. They are good treated as spaghetti with sauces or chilled and tossed with vinaigrette for a winter salad. To prepare spaghetti squash, cut the gourd in half lengthwise and remove the seeds, then bake or boil it until tender. Once cooked, use a fork to rake out the "spaghetti-like" stringy flesh, and serve.



Also grown are Sunshine (essentially an orange colored Butternut), Carnaval (a multicolored orange, green and white squash similar to Acorn, and a few other unique types in small amounts.

**How to Store:** Keep whole squash in a cool dry place that has plenty of ventilation (a back porch is ideal). Some squash, such as delicata, have a short shelf life (about a month). However, most squash, if stored properly, can last through the winter months.

**How to use:** Winter squash are easy to bake, roast or steam. They can be made into purees or soups or used in pies, breads or cakes. Slices or chunks can be fried, sautéed or steamed, or baked in gratins or simmered in stews. The skins and seeds are effective in soup stalks.

**Easy Baking:** Preheat oven to 375, cut in half, brush cut side with oil and place on baking sheet cut side down. Bake until very soft to touch (about 40 minutes). Now you will be able to scoop out the tender cooked center.

**Good partners for winter Squash and Pumpkin:** olive oil, butter, sage, rosemary, garlic, red pepper flakes, chile, cumin, coriander, brown sugar, coconut milk, ginger, lime, lemongrass, curry, alliums, apples, and maple syrups

**Source:** Madison, Deborah, *Vegetarian Cooking For Everyone*.

## Seed Saving!

The seeds of winter squash are delicious when toasted. Rinse them well and pat dry. Toss them lightly in oil and a little salt, spread them on a sheet pan and bake at 250° for about one hour. Let cool and store in a sealable bag or jar with a lid. If you are looking to get crazy with different seasonings, sprinkle curry or Cayenne powder before baking.

# WINTER SQUASH STEW

4 dinner portions  
1 cup soaked black eyed peas  
1 cup soaked cannelloni beans  
1 cup cooked risotto or brown rice  
1 winter squash  
2 T olive oil or butter  
2 tomatoes  
1 chili (hot or mild depending on taste)  
3 cloves garlic  
1 t. paprika  
1 T. fresh basil (or 1t. dried)  
1 T fresh oregano (or ½ t. dried)  
1 bay leaf  
1 t. cumin  
1 t. chili powder  
salt and pepper to taste

Place beans in a large saucepan, cover with water and simmer for 20 minutes, Meanwhile, heat oil in large skillet and add squash, onions, tomatoes, chile, garlic, paprika and salt. Cook stirring for 10 minutes. Add cooked veggies to the beans, add a little bit of water to cover. Add basil, oregano, bay leaf, cumin and chile powder. Cover and simmer for about 15 minutes. Add cooked rice and simmer 10 more minutes.

## Did You Know?

Article from Sustainable Table. [www.sustainabletable.org](http://www.sustainabletable.org)

Where would Italian cuisine be without America? Strange as it might sound, just imagine how astonishingly different Italian food would be without tomatoes to make delicious, rich sauces or corn for creamy polenta. Think of the gastronomic delights we would be missing! Take zucchini, a type of squash. They've become so intertwined with Italian cooking and culture, that Americans even call them by their Italian name — although they originated on this side of the globe. In fact, just like tomatoes and corn, squash of all shapes and sizes were yet another tasty gift from the new world. Part of the large *cucurbitaceae* family — which includes everything from pumpkins and winter squash to zucchini, melons, and cucumbers — they are said to have originated in the South American Andes and were grown in several parts of the American continent well before Columbus ever set foot on it.

So, it doesn't come as much of a surprise that here in the U.S. the fall season is associated with pumpkins and winter squash. Yet, most of us have a rather superficial acquaintance with them, often limited to the ubiquitous Jack-o-Lantern, a few pretty ornamental varieties, lots of pumpkin pie, and the occasional acorn squash soup. But try walking through a farmers market these days, and you'll be hit by an astounding assortment of squash of all colors and forms, from traditional orange pumpkins to smaller delicata and butternut squash to big hubbards. And they're all so full of flavor and incredibly versatile! What other food can be mashed to make comforting soups and delicate purées, stuffed into tantalizing ravioli, used in flavorful risotto and mouth-watering sweets, and hallowed to look like a scary skull lit from within by a candle?

Right, the broken potato digger waiting to be fixed.

# WINTER SQUASH FOR DESSERT

1 Winter squash, preferably delicata, butternut, or buttercup.  
1/2 c Maple syrup or brown sugar  
2 apples  
1/4 c melted butter  
1/2 t. cinnamon

Peel and seed squash. Dice apples and squash into bit-sized pieces. Line a small casserole dish and drizzle with maple syrup and melted butter. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Bake at 375 for 30 minutes.

## Where are the Potatoes?

You might be wondering where all the potatoes are this season. We have distributed spuds several times early on when they first sized up in July, and a few again recently, but some of you may remember several years ago when we gave out potatoes with more regularity all summer long. This year there are several reasons why we have not distributed very many potatoes yet. First of all, we added several major crops to the summer distributions, sweet corn and green beans. This meant there was not room to give potatoes as often. I have opted instead to hold more of the crop in the ground for fall digging and the fall and winter distributions. This strategy has been compounded by troubles with our new to us (but very used) potato digging machine. The machine is quite the contraption with gears, pulley's and chains all over the place. We got it all greased and lubricated and thought it was ready to dig, but upon the first attempted use the chain that digs into the ground and moves the potatoes out burst apart after only a few feet.. New chain has been ordered, but the machine is still not operational. (Cntd last page.)



# Red Fire Winter/Extended Season Shares

We only have about 30 spaces left!  
Let us know if you are interested soon.

Also, we are still in need of indoor space to distribute the winter shares in the Boston area. These sites include Jamaica Plain, Cambridge, and Somerville. If you can help Red Fire out, please call us. In addition, we are considering a Friday afternoon option for winter share pick-ups.

## Time to Freeze Peppers!

Pepper plants yield their most abundant harvests as fall approaches. Although we lost one field of peppers to drought a few weeks ago, the other field that we irrigated has an excellent crop. We will be distributing lots of red, yellow, orange and green sweet peppers in the next few weeks. Freeze some for winter. Just cut the seeds out, put the pepper pieces into zip lock bags, and put into the freezer. The pepper pieces can then be used all winter long in any soups, pasta sauces, sautés, etc.

## (Potatoes continued from page 3)

For this reason our main potato crop is still underground in the fields. I hope that with the irrigation crises passed we will be able to find time in the next few days to install the new parts and dig those spuds. As far as I can tell most of the varieties have a nice crop, so if we can get them out of the crop you will be seeing them soon in all of their earthly glory!

The Red Fire Reader is compiled and edited by Kristen Schafenacker, the Red Fire Farm culinary expert. Newsletter topic ideas, recipes, writings, poems, and CSA community announcements are welcome and should be submitted to [redfirefarm@gmail.com](mailto:redfirefarm@gmail.com).

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Lots of Vegetables are Still Available for **Bulk Orders!** This is likely to be the last week for bulk tomatoes. Please place orders at least two days in advance of your pickup.

Call in orders at 413- 467-7645

**-Paste Tomatoes (for sauces) \$25 per half bushel**

**-Red Canning Tomatoes \$25 per half bushel**

**-Assorted Heirloom Tomatoes (for the best tasting sauces!) \$25 per half bushel of seconds.**

**-Garlic \$1 bulb**

**-Basil \$6 LB**

**-Onions \$28 per half bushel box**

**-Carrots \$25 per 25 LB bag (great for juicing!)**

**-Beets \$25 per 25 LB bag (beet pickles, juicing)**

**-Sweet peppers (for freezing) \$20 per ½ bushel**

**-Cabbage (for kraut and kimchi) \$25 for bushel**

**-Wine Grapes (for wine or juice) from Cold**

**Spring Orchard (choose red or green) \$35 per box of 25 LBs, not organic.**