



RED FIRE READER

A bimonthly newsletter from Red Fire Farm, growers of healthy organic
GRANBY, MASSACHUSETTS 01033 (413) 467-SOIL JUNE 30, 2008 ISSUE NUMBER III



IN THIS ISSUE:

FARM UPDATE
FARMER OF THE WEEK
PYO UPDATE
VEGGIE OF THE WEEK
RECIPES
FARM CAM
REMINDERS

CALENDAR:

July 1st: Ona's cooking demo at Granby

July 9th: Book Discussion about "In Defense of Food" 7PM at the Granby Barn

July 11th: Cooking demo at the MIT CSA distribution

July 19th: Picnic at Little Hill Field; Weed walk at 3:30PM, dinner at 5:30PM.

In season:

Lettuce – summer squash –
zucchini – cucumbers –
greenhouse carrots – chard -
hakurei turnips – radish – broccoli
– cabbage – mini onions – kale –
collards – greenhouse tomatoes -
basil, -dill – cilantro – beets –
scallions –radicchio -

One of the hardest parts of my job every other week during the harvest season is to write something for the Red Fire Reader. When, as we have been the last few days, we are in the midst of harvesting hundreds of bunches of produce each day, struggling to get our successive fields of winter squash, brassicas, and lettuces planted and trying to direct seed the late fall carrots and beets between the poorly timed rain drops, turning my attention to writing something relevant and adequately eloquent for the reader can be a bit of a struggle. The mindset is different from the list forming mode that I need to use the rest of the time in order not to forget any important details for the 40 some different crops and multiple planting we have of each.

At the moment almost everything is growing well, including both the crops and the weeds. In the last 10 days or so we have had an overabundance of rain. This can be inconvenient at times, preventing cultivation, seeding and transplanting to happen on time as easily. Nevertheless, rain is generally good overall. On our well drained soils I prefer wet weather over drought any year!

One thing that makes our task easier when we are harvesting or otherwise need to get into a field just after a rain storm is that we have arranged most of our fields into growing blocks of 14 beds with a harvest lane in-between each block. These harvest isles are planted to grasses and wildflowers and grow into a thick sod that we mow every now and then. They allow us to drive a farm truck into the field near the crops that we need to harvest or tend with much less chance of getting stuck than if it was just bare soil. Additionally these strips of vegetation throughout our fields provide habitat, nectar and pollen for beneficial insects which helps reduce pests in the nearby vegetables. Not only that, the thick roots of the sod helps prevent erosion during the winter. They also help us dramatically in planning our crop rotation in that we know where one section of the field begins and ends so can rotate our crops each year and avoid accidentally overlapping crop families in successive years.



A harvest aisle on Chicopee Street Field

FARMER OF THE WEEK: Sarah Ingraham,

Personnel Manager

Where are you from? Stafford Springs, CT

What is your dream farm? Beautiful soil, lots of it, in an involved community. Farmed by a crew that knows their stuff, and works well together with a passion for growing food. A place that makes complete sense.

What is your favorite vegetable? Watermelon, when I'm thirsty. Right now I love zucchini with salt and pepper. We've all been talking about how garlic is the awesomest plant ever. Dill, every time.

What is your goal for the year? Getting the farm to run smoothly, especially for all the people who work here.

What is your favorite job around the farm? Stocking the stands, or delivering produce to stores. Also, planning the season.

What is farming for you? A way to do what I believe in.

What are your current projects? CSA weekly e-mails, keeping everything interesting on the website, learning how to bring new people in the crew up to speed.



PYO Update:

The strawberries are winding down at the farm, but there are still peas to pick. Beans will be ready in a few weeks. Right now, our herb patch looks great and ready for picking. There is parsley, basil, dill, and a patch of perennial herbs that include chives, rosemary, thyme, oregano and a collection of lesser known perennial herbs.

Stevia—a natural sweetener, 250 times sweeter than sucrose.

Lemon balm—very lemony and excellent as tea or added to cakes

Salad Burnet— nutty flavor to add to salads, soups and salad dressings.

Winter Savory—spicy, peppery taste, good for bean dishes

Please only take what you will use for a week of cooking. There will be basil for pesto-making later in the season. Also, please bring a knife or scissors to cut your herbs and when picking basil, please take only the top 2-3 inches of the plant. leaving the small leaves so there'll be more basil to pick soon.

Radicchio-

Either this week or next we will be harvesting and distributing our first Radicchio crop of the year. Radicchio is a unique vegetable that is related to lettuce, but the flavor is much more complex. Somewhat bitter, some find the flavor to be an acquired taste. For those who have acquired it though, radicchio is a much loved vegetable! Not only is it tasty, but the color is uniquely brilliant with reds and white folded into a little head. Add radicchio to your tossed green salad, or you can get more sophisticated and make a wilted radicchio salad with goat cheese and walnuts and other such gourmet type additions.

Although I have grown radicchio here and there for years, Sarah and I really fell in love with it when we won a gift certificate to a gourmet restaurant in Westfield. On the menu we found a treviso salad (treviso is the name of the tall elongated variety of radicchio; the other types are usually just round heads). After ordering this salad we were hooked. This year we are growing both the tall headed treviso type and the more standard round variety called indigo. The plants are looking pretty good (which is not always the case, radicchio can be challenging to grow well) so we are excited about the upcoming harvest!

GARLIC ROASTED RADICCHIO

8 garlic cloves, finely chopped
¼ cup olive oil
¼ cup balsamic vinegar
1 tsp kosher salt
½ tsp black pepper
4 large heads radicchio, halved through the root

Put garlic, olive oil, , vinegar, salt, and pepper in a large bowl and mix well. Add the radicchio and gently toss so that it is well coated. Cover and let marinate for at least 1 hour. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Place the radicchio in a baking pan and pour the marinade on top. Place in the oven and roast until the edges of the radicchio are crisp and almost beginning to look burnt, about 20 to 25 minutes. Serve immediately.

DILLY SLAW

4 cups chopped cabbage
3 cups other shredded veggies (carrots, hakurei turnips, radish, kohlrabi)
5 scallions

Dressing:

¾ cup yogurt or ½ cup mayonnaise
2 Tbs. lime juice
2 Tbs. cider vinegar
1 Tbs. honey
¼ cup dill
1 tsp. salt
3 garlic scapes or
cloves of garlic, minced

Blend dressing and toss with veggies. If time, let chill and stir occasionally so the dressing can soak into the veggies.

Strawberry Soiree, a tasty success.

The first Feast in the Fields was held at the farm on Saturday, June 21st. Tents and tables were set up in a clearing beyond the strawberry patch where 85 CSA members and farm crew gathered for a delicious meal of seasonal farm produce and other local goodies. “It was the perfect way to end a day of strawberry and pea picking at the farm,” said one member from the Boston area. The next Feast in the Field will be held on **Saturday, July 19th** so mark your calendars and get your tickets now as space is limited. Come early for a Weed Walk led by John Root and stay for the picnic with all the summer favorites including shish kabobs, coleslaw and potato salad. Bring your kites and your picnic blankets and we’ll see you in the field.

SESAME GREENS WITH GARLIC SCAPES

If you’ve used up your garlic scapes and can’t find more, garlic cloves would work fine. Also, this recipe is meant to use any greens you have around so spinach, kohlrabi greens, and kale can all be added or substituted for other greens.

1 bunch turnip greens
2 turnips
1 bunch swiss chard
greens from 1 bunch of beets
4 garlic scapes
1/8 cup oil
2 Tbs. Sesame oil
2 Tbs. Sesame seeds
1 Tbs. Tamari (soy sauce)
¼ tsp cayenne (opt.)

Chop greens, removing stems and chopping finely (they need more time to cook so if you want to use them you just have to start them earlier). Thinly slice turnips and cut scapes into 1 inch pieces. In a wok or similar skillet, heat oil until hot and toss in turnips, scapes, and any stem pieces. Cook for 5 minutes. Add beet greens and tamari, cover and cook another 5-10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add cayenne, sesame seeds, swiss chard, and turnip greens and cook until greens are wilted.

KASHA WITH SUMMER VEGGIES

1 cup roasted buckwheat groats
1 egg
2 cups water or veggie stock
1 Tbs. Butter
2 cups diced zucchini or summer squash ½ cup diced carrot
3 cups chopped greens (swiss chard, kale, spinach etc.)
3 garlic scapes chopped or 2 cloves garlic minced
salt and pepper

Beat egg and mix in buckwheat till groats are coated. Cook in a skillet until the egg is cooked and the groats are dry. Move groats to a pot of boiling water or stock, add ½ tsp salt and simmer for 7 to 12 minutes or until liquid is absorbed. In the skillet, sauté the scapes and carrot in the butter for five minutes and then add the zucchini. When the squash starts to get translucent, add the greens and the groats and any additional salt and pepper and cook until the greens are tender (time will differ for different greens).



FARM CAM

This is Little Hill Field two weeks later. Now the tomatoes have been staked and there is hay mulch in all the rows. Soon we will put up the first course of strings to help the tomato plants stay upright and not flop into the aisles. The potatoes growing in this field are also looking great and are flowering. The Colorado Potato Beetles have not yet found them.



The Red Fire Reader is compiled and edited by Ona Lindauer, the Red Fire Farm culinary intern. Newsletter topic ideas, recipes, writings, poems, art, photos, and CSA community announcements are welcome and should be submitted to redfirefarm@gmail.com.

We are still taking names for the baby she-goat at the farm. Email us with **GOAT** in the subject with your winning name!

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VISIT US ONLINE!
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Payment Schedule Reminder

For those who are not current on their payments, a payment is due:

July 1st

Payments not received by or on 7/1 will be assessed a \$5 charge.