



# 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 JULY 28, 2008 ISSUE NUMBER V



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## CALENDAR:

**July 29<sup>th</sup>:** Ona's cooking demo at Springfield Market at the X  
**August 8<sup>th</sup>:** Ona's cooking demo at Brighton CSA  
**August 8-10<sup>th</sup>:** NOFA conference at UMass Amherst  
**August 12<sup>th</sup>:** Ona's cooking demo at Springfield Market at the X  
**Aug. 23<sup>rd</sup>:** Red Fire Farm Tomato Festival

### In season:

lettuce – summer squash –  
zucchini – cucumbers – carrots-  
chard – beets- parsley – dill –basil-  
peas – radish - new potatoes-  
cabbage- – radish – cilantro–  
garlic bulbs – walla walla onions –  
scallions - garlic – kale - collards.  
–Gnhs Tomatoes and Peppers  
Locally grown Blueberries

With the hot weather we have seen the early greens such as spinach and salad mix bolt, as well as the end of the pea season. But coming on strong are crops from the solanaceous plant family. These include eggplant, peppers, tomatoes and the first new potatoes of the year. It looks like we are probably going to have a big eggplant year this season, and we should also have more tomatoes than ever before, including especially heirloom tomatoes which we planted more of than ever in response to survey feed back from last season. As I write this we are experiencing a big thunderstorm with lots of rain, so at least for now the soil moisture is abundant and the crops thus well watered. This makes a big difference for the yields and crop quality.

Many other crops are ripe now as well including walla walla onions, lots of carrots, tons of zucchini (including a gold as well as green varieties this year) summer squash, cucumbers (make sure to try the white cukes which are a mix of an heirloom Indian variety called Poona Kheera and a hybrid pickler called Mini white), and of course basil among many other vegetables. Many of you will notice that the shares will start to be a bit larger in LB's per week now that the summer abundance is here! We almost have all of the garlic harvested now and drying in the barn lofts for distribution all the rest of the summer and fall. This harvest has kept part of our crew busy several days per week for the last few weeks. Also of note in the harvest department, the first melons are starting to ripen, so watch for these in your fruit shares soon if the deer don't eat them all first.

Once again we are distributing Organic Corn grown by Warner Farm in Sunderland MA. We are growing some corn in our fields this season again, but since our available farm land is limited we don't have space to grow all that we need. Fortunately Mike Wissmen and his crew specialize in corn and have converted a chunk of their farmland to organic vegetable production. Organic corn is hard to grow, as several pests must be contended with including European Corn Borer and Corn Earworm. Both of these moths lay eggs on the corn plants, and the eggs will hatch into worms which will burrow into the ears. As organic growers we have few options for discouraging these pests, so please be understanding if you find a worms in some of your ears. Just cut them out and the rest of the ear is fine to eat!

Organic green and Yellow beans are also being grown for us by Plainview Farm in Hadley, MA. Wally and his crew use a tractor mounted bean picking machine and sorting line to harvest these beans. These are a really exciting addition to the vegetable selection that we would never be able to offer if we had to hand harvest them. Picking beans by hand just takes to long!

For the next issue I hope to get back to writing about the Red Fire Farm farmland situation. Stay tuned and please enjoy the harvest in the meantime. –Ryan

**BULK PRODUCE STILL  
AVAILABLE**

**Pickling Cukes** \$30 per half bushel,  
**Basil** \$6 LB,  
**Garlic** \$1.25 bulb,  
**Carrots** \$38 per 25 LB bag,  
**Dill** \$1.75 bunch.

Most other produce that is in your share can also be bulk purchased. Call the farm for more info. if you are looking for something in particular.

**Straight out of a children's book**

When the wagon full of families and couples, each with a picnic basket full of summer salads, left the farmyard and headed for Little Hill Field last Saturday, no one knew if they'd make it to the picnic tent before the rain. It rained briefly, just long enough to cool things off, but the fire burned on, and soon there were shish-kabobs grilling and small children playing in the grass to the tune of the fiddle. The second Feast in the Fields—'A Picnic on Little Hill' was a success and a big thank you to everyone who came out and made it possible. The next Feast will be held in September and will celebrate the harvest season. There will surely be cider and pumpkin pie for all, so mark your calendars and watch for more information.

**PYO UPDATE:** The beans are at their peak, there is lots of basil out there and very soon we will be opening the cherry tomato patch

**TURKISH EGGPLANT**

1 Eggplant  
½ Onion  
2 cloves garlic  
2 Tbs. parsley  
1 Tbs. Lemon juice  
1 Tbs Olive oil  
Salt and pepper to taste

Halve the eggplant and bake for one hour on a oiled baking sheet. When cool, scoop out of the insides and mash with the rest of the ingredients. Serve on crackers.

**Walnut Wilt**

We have bad news to report about one of our tomato fields. The field section known as Deadwood A which we planted half to red slicing tomatoes such as ultra sweet, and the other half to paste tomatoes such as Federle and San Marzano is dying. The culprits in these premature deaths are Black Walnut trees which are growing on the margins of this field. Black Walnut roots give off an alleopathic substance called Jugolone which is very toxic to certain plants including especially tomatoes. Tomatoes die in response to Jugolone. This is a problem that I was aware of since my college horticulture classes, but what I didn't realize until it was too late, is that Black Walnut trees were growing in the headlands of this field. This is the first season we grew anything except a cover crop in this field, so we didn't pay much attention to the trees growing around it before this year. Anyway, it currently looks like we will be lucky to get any decent tomatoes from this field. This means we might be a little short on these types of tomatoes this year. Fortunately this field was one of 8 tomato fields we have planted this year, and it was the smallest in acreage of all these fields. So, I think we will still have plenty of tomatoes overall, but it is still sad to see these plants which were growing so well until the Jugolone got to them, wilt and die almost overnight.

**BEETS AND CARROTS IN A LIME  
VINAIGRETTE**

2 medium beets, peeled and cubed  
2 medium carrots, sliced diagonally  
1 medium cucumber, cubed  
6 Tbs veggie oil  
3 Tbs lime juice  
2 Tbs chopped cilantro or dill  
1 garlic clove, minced  
salt to taste

Steam beets and carrots separately until tender. Combine dressing ingredients (I find a jar works will because you can put the lid on and shake it all up.) Put the veggies, including the cucumber in a bowl and toss with dressing. Chill.



In the past few weeks we've brought in the majority of the garlic. First it is loosened with a lifter bar. Then the garlic is pulled by hand and loaded into trucks. We then bring it back to the farm and spread it out in the loft of the barn to dry. This garlic harvest should be enough for the rest of the season's CSA distributions and seed for next year.

## VEGETABLE OF THE WEEK: EGGPLANTS

The farm grows many varieties of eggplant. From striking white to striped and round to thin and long, they come in all shapes and sizes. Here is an illustrated guide to some of your eggplant possibilities in the coming weeks. Not pictured but still tasty are the long slender varieties of Orient Express(dark purple) and Machiaw(lavender).





#### FARM CAM

We have started to harvest the tomatoes from the field and we'll be picking the peppers soon.

The Red Fire Reader is compiled and edited by Ona Lindauer, the Red Fire Farm culinary intern. 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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