



# 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 OCTOBER 12<sup>TH</sup> ,2009 ISSUE NUMBER V



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## CALENDAR:

October 13<sup>th</sup>: Ona's cooking demo at the Springfield Farmer's Market

October 20<sup>th</sup>: Ona's cooking demo at the Springfield Farmer's Market

Dec 4<sup>th</sup>: End of Season Evaluation and Planning Meeting for Boston Area Distributions at 7:30PM. Location to be announced by email. All CSA members are invited and encouraged to attend.

**Winter Share Dates: Nov. 6, 20, Dec. 4 and 18.**

Now in season:

lettuce - spinach - carrots- chard -  
beets- parsley - dill - kohlrabi  
potatoes- cabbage- - radish -  
broccoli - cilantro- garlic bulbs -  
salad mix- kale - collards -  
onions-winter squash - turnips -  
rutabagas - leeks  
Locally grown Apples

## The Final Reader of the Year

October is here and we are still working pretty hard at the farm. Harvesting root vegetables for storage, cleaning up the fields from the finished summer crops, planting cover crops, and planting the greenhouses with the winter greens crops are the major projects that are keeping us busy in addition to the regular harvesting. We are also beginning to plan out some carpentry projects for repairs on the farm buildings for this winter, and we are planning to begin applying compost to many of the farm fields this fall. With all the rain back in April and May, the 2009 season did not get off to a good start, so we are very grateful that we have been able to get enough crops to grow and that we have not had major crop shortages overall. At the same time we certainly hope for better growing conditions next season.

There are many exciting changes coming for the farm including our transition onto the new land in Montague over the next few seasons. We are excited about all the potential that this new property offers and this winter we look forward to beginning to plan for this transition in more detail. I would like to thank all of the members for their support this season and hope that most of you will renew your commitment to being members of Red Fire Farm sooner that later this winter, as that really helps us in our planning and budgeting for the upcoming season.

Thanks, Ryan

## How to Renew or Sign Up for 2010

All the **current CSA members** get a reserved month to sign up and keep their shares for 2010. Forms will be coming your way via e-mail. Please send in your form and deposit by November 30<sup>th</sup> 2009 to reserve your share.

**If you're new to our CSA**, please call or e-mail to join the waitlist for 2010. We will send you the sign-up form via e-mail in November. Paper copies are also available by request. Please send in your form and deposit by December 4<sup>th</sup> to reserve your share using your spot on the waitlist.

**After December 4<sup>th</sup> everyone can signup** by visiting our website and downloading the sign-up form. Just fill it out and mail in your form with your deposit to Red Fire Farm 7 Carver St., Granby, MA 01033. Shares will be filled on a first come basis.

**Please fill out the End of the Year Survey!**

Give us feedback to make next year even better. A link to the survey is in the weekly email. Please request hard copies by calling the farm. Thank You.

## How to Store Winter Vegetables

Winter is fast approaching and it is time to fill the cellar. Or the "cellar" as is the case for many folks. (The "cellar" is whatever somewhat appropriate environs you can carve out of your small apartment living space :)

We have many vegetables for bulk order that need nothing more than a cool dark place to keep well through the long cold nights of winter. If you are interested in stocking up, we recommend ordering unwashed vegetables since these will keep better (and it saves us time too!).

Here is just a little bit of basic information about how to store vegetables during the winter...

**STORE THINGS DIRTY:** the process of cleaning things causes tiny scratches and damage that may shorten the storage life of the produce, so store things dirty and wash right before use.

**STORE ONLY THE HEALTHY:** When you put away produce into storage, check for disease and damage, and set aside damaged produce for early use. It is indeed true that one bad apple can ruin the barrel.

**CHECK PERIODICALLY:** Go through your stored produce and remove for use or compost anything that's starting to decay.

### **IDEAL CONDITIONS:**

Keep in mind that you don't have to have it exactly perfect to be successful in storing months worth of local produce.

**True Root Vegetables** - these include Carrots, Parsnips, Beets, Turnips, Rutabaga, Storage Radishes and Celery. Kohlrabi also stores well under the same conditions. Store all of these vegetables in the refrigerator. They need high humidity in order to stay crisp, so put into a plastic bag first with a few drops of water. I find that it is best to leave a tiny bit of air circulation though, so don't use a twist tie on the plastic bag, just leave the top open. These crops easily can keep until May under these conditions.

Ideal conditions for storing them in a **root cellar** are 32-40 degrees with 90-95% humidity. You can create humid storage containers by packing the roots in damp sand, sawdust, leaves or other packing material.

**Sweet Potatoes** - Keep at room temperature (above 55 F is important - cooler temperatures will result in chilling injury to this tropical root.) Keep in paper bags or baskets out of direct sunlight.

**Butternut Squash and other Winter Squash** - Keep cool and dry.

Traditionally squashes were kept under beds in the upstairs of farm houses where there was always above freezing temp, but not super hot either. Butternuts might keep until around February at the best.

**Onions and Garlic** - Keep at room temperature in the kitchen. They like it dry, and on the cooler side (32-50 F ideally, though kitchens work well). Don't put in plastic bags. Onions eventually start to sprout, but you can then give them some light from a window and use the leaves that grow from the center as scallions in late winter sprout salads! Garlic will also keep well at room temp. in a dry area.

**Potatoes** - For longest term storage, keep under refrigeration. However, if you refrigerate, take out and leave at room temperature for a week before eating. This allows the starches to convert back to normal inside the potato. For shorter term storage, just keep roots in the 40- 60 F range and they can keep for weeks until they begin to sprout.

**Cabbage** - 38-40 degrees, 80-90% humidity. They do well in humid refrigeration. Even if outer leaves get gross and moldy you can peel them away to find a good head underneath.

### **BULK ITEMS AVAILABLE:**

**APPLES** - specify variety: Cortland, Gala, Shamrock, Macintosh (more varieties later), \$35 per bushel box (about 40 LBs). Honeycrisp and Macoun varieties \$42 per bushel box. Not organic, grown using Integrated Pest Management (IPM) methods.

**BEETS** - \$36 for 25 LB bag.

**BUTTERNUT SQUASH** - \$20 per half bushel.

**CARROTS** - \$32 for 25 LB bag.

**CELERY** - \$42 for 25 LB bag.

**CORN** - Conventional \$25 per 5 dozen bag. Organic done for this season.

**DILL** - \$1.25 per bunch.

**EGGPLANTS** - \$20 per half bushel.

**GARLIC** - \$1.50 per bulb.

**NECTARINES** - (not organic, but IPM) \$40 per 25 lb box

**ONIONS, YELLOW AND RED for STORAGE** - \$30 per half bushel. Specify yellow or red.

**PARSNIP** - \$42 for 25 LB bag.

**PEACHES** - (not organic, but IPM) \$40 per 25 lb box

**PEPPERS, SWEET** - \$25 per half bushel.

**POTATOES** - Specify color. Red (includes Cheifan and Pontiac varieties), White (includes Elba and Reba varieties) or Yellow (Carola variety), \$35 per half bushel.

Adirondack Blue, a unique potato blue inside and out, \$40 per half bushel.

**RUTABAGA** - \$30 for 25 LB bag.

**SWEET ONIONS** - sweet onions (not for long-term storage) \$30 per half bushel.

**SWEET POTATOES** - \$35 per half bushel.

**TOMATILLOS** - \$30 per half bushel.

**TURNIPS** - \$26 for 25 LB bag. Specify Gold or Hakurei variety.

**WINE and JUICING GRAPES** - seeded grapes that make great juice and wine, 11-12 lbs makes about 1 gallon of juice - \$38 box (20 lbs) Choose variety: Frontanac, purple, is ready now. Chardonnay, yellow/green, starting in a week or so. IPM, not organic.

**WINE KITS** - Wine Kits \$20. Includes 3.5 gallon bucket, twist tap, plunger, bubbler, and yeast. For making wine!

## **PYO**

Most of the PYO items are done for the season, but some of them are still abundant and definitely worth visiting the farm to check out.

**Raspberries** will be available until they are picked out or until the frost gets them.

**Kale and Collards** will be available for picking at a bunch a week.

### **PAYMENT REMINDER:**

**For those who have paid off their share for this year, thank you. If you have an outstanding balance, please send the remainder as soon as possible.**

## Help us prevent late blight from recurring next season:

As most of you know this season was tarnished by the prevalence of the late blight disease on the tomato and potato crops. This disease was widespread on farms all over the northeastern USA, and it was a devastating disease that wiped out entire fields of tomatoes and potatoes both on our farm and in our region. The good news is that the late blight fungus is not believed to be able to over winter easily during our cold winters. The fungus will not be able to over winter in the soil or on the dead plant leaves as long as all this plant tissue is well frozen during the winter. The most likely way that the disease might be able to over winter is by living inside potato tubers that are stored in people's kitchens, root cellars or even compost piles. So help out all farmers and gardeners by making sure that you don't throw any bad potatoes out during the winter and spring. If you do have some bad potatoes to get rid of make sure that they are either buried very deeply (2' or deeper), or put them in plastic bags and toss them in the regular garbage instead of the compost. The goal is to make sure that the bad tubers don't start growing into new late blight infected plants in the spring from where the wind could then blow the disease onto the new seasons crop fields. If you do find any volunteer potato or tomato plants that start growing in your compost pile or garden next spring, then please make sure to destroy those plants right away so that they don't have a chance to perpetuate the disease. Also if you are a gardener absolutely do not attempt to save potato tubers to replant as seed stock for next years crop. It is highly likely that most tubers in this region are infected with late blight. Instead buy certified disease free planting stock to start your new crop. Lastly please don't attempt to over winter any tomato plants in a greenhouse or window, as that would be another way that the late blight disease might be able to make it through the winter on living plant tissue. If everyone takes these steps there is a good chance that our region will not be plagued by late blight again next season. —Ryan



From Left: A Late Blight lesion on a tomato stem, blight spots on the tomato leaf, the hard dark spot of Late Blight on the fruit and Late Blight affecting the whole plant at the unripe stage.

### Braised Kale and Turnips

- 1 bunch kale
- 1 lb turnips, thinly sliced
- 1 Tbs butter
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2 cups vegetable stock
- 1 tsp thyme
- salt and pepper to taste

Melt the butter in the pan and add the sliced turnips. Cover and cook until the turnips are mostly cooked. Add the garlic, thyme and kale and toss to coat in any remaining butter and then add the stock. Simmer until most of the broth is boiled off and the kale is cooked. Salt and pepper to taste.

### Kohlrabi Mashed Potatoes

Boil up equal amounts potatoes and kohlrabi. When soft, pour off liquid and reserve for later. Add ½ stick of butter and enough of the liquid back into the pot to mash into desired consistency. Add salt and pepper to taste. The kohlrabi adds a nice sweetness to the mashed potatoes and try the water you boiled them in—it's super sweet too!

### Kohlrabi Soup

- 3 large shallots
- 6 medium kohlrabi bulbs (about 3 pounds), peeled and diced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 2 cups vegetable stock or miso broth
- 1 cup heavy cream
- salt and pepper to taste
- parsley

Heat oil in a medium saucepan. Add shallots and sauté for a few minutes. Add kohlrabi and stir to coat. Add ½ cup water and cook, covered, on medium heat. Stir occasionally and, if necessary, add more water to cook kohlrabi until tender, about 20 minutes. Continue to cook, uncovered, until water has evaporated. Sprinkle in flour; stir until incorporated. Puree if a smooth soup is desired. Add broth and cream and return to simmer. Season with salt and pepper and garnish with parsley.



**Farm Cam:** Hatch Field is almost dead. We've pulled the tomato stakes out and picked all the good remaining peppers and eggplants from the field. Those blocks will now have their plastic pulled and then get seeded in a winter cover crop. Not all is dead, though. Under row cover are thousands of little beets which we hope will size up before the end of the growing season. Grow little beets, grow!!



Ian and Martin get ready to press cider apples.

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 [thefarmers@redfirefarm.com](mailto:thefarmers@redfirefarm.com)

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