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 JUNE 7, 2010 ISSUE NUMBER I

TOMATO PLANTS OVER 8' TALL!

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CALENDAR:

June 7th : First week of CSA distributions
June 8th: Ona's cooking demo at Springfield X Farmers Market / CSA distribution
June 19th: Strawberry Soiree. Dinner at 6 PM. Come earlier to pick strawberries!
June 24th: Ona's cooking demo at the Metro Pedal Power CSA distribution
June 29th: Ona's cooking demo at the Springfield X Farmers Market/CSA distribution

IN SEASON

~lettuce ~ strawberries ~ radishes ~ hakurei turnips ~ beets ~ spinach ~ kale ~ mesclun greens ~ cilantro ~
green garlic ~ herbs

FROM THE GREENHOUSE

cucumbers ~ peppers ~ cherry tomatoes ~ carrots ~ basil ~

Welcome to the 2010 CSA harvest season! We have been working for months now to make this season happen, first to plan the crops and order seed in the winter, then to seed the crops in the early spring, and now with the planting and transplanting still in full swing, we add harvest of our list of duties. This season Dave Grace has moved into the Harvest Manager position (allowing Patrick more time to manage the chickens), and Dave is raring to go.

The spring weather has been a roller coaster of generally warmer than normal temperatures with a few frosts mixed in to keep up on our toes. There has been very little rain and these bordering-on-drought conditions have meant we have had to do some irrigating for the first time in a few years. Last week we also had a massive wind storm that blew large trees down and knocked out the power during one of our harvest days. No crops were damaged by the falling trees, but we spent a day removing branches from harvest aisles and access roads and repairing wind-damaged row covers that have been protecting the crops from frost and pests.

Our dedicated crew has pulled through every challenge so far and despite and endless to-do list we're all looking forward to another great year! So get ready to eat your greens and hakurei white turnips, the 2010 CSA season has begun!

-Ryan

Ryan
Harvest Manager Dave washes greens on a harvest day

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Strawberry Soiree, June 19th, all day!

Join us for the 3rd Annual Strawberry Soiree. There will be strawberries to pick for all CSA and Farmstand members all day with Strawberry Shortcake for sale, live music from the Red Fire Farm String Band and free strawberry samples at the farmstand **2-5PM**. Dinner will be served next to the strawberry patch at **6PM**. Tickets are available; please reserve yours today since space is limited. The menu and ticket prices are on our website, www.redfirefarm.com/news/strawberrysoiree. See you there!

CSA DISTRIBUTION SITE INFORMATION

Cambridge – Distributions will be ready each Wednesday starting June 9th from **4:30-7:30PM** and Friday starting June 11th from **2:30-6:00PM** in the parking lot next to the Cambridge Harvest Coop (581 Mass Ave.) Your Wednesday distribution coordinator this season is Kristi Ceccarossi who can be reached at 413-210-1803 and info@bostonlocalvores.org. Natalie will be helping out too. On Fridays, your distribution coordinator is Drew Love who can be reached at 330-801-0389 and medrew101@gmail.com Also feel free to contact us at the farm in Granby at any time.

Cambridge at MIT- Distributions will be ready each Friday starting June 11th from **3:00-6:30PM** at the Stata Center (32 Vassar Street). Your distribution coordinator is Sweet Tea Dorminy who can be reached at 404-704-7202 and sweettea@MIT.EDU

Brighton- Distributions will be ready each Friday starting June 11th from **3:30-7:00PM** at the back of the Whole Foods parking lot (15 Washington St.). Your distribution coordinator is Laura Owens who can be reached at 617-792-4163 and at laura.j.owens@gmail.com.

Jamaica Plain- Distributions will be ready each Wednesday starting June 9th from **3:00-6:30 PM** in the small fenced area near the front of the Jamaica Plain Harvest Coop store (57 South St.). Your distribution coordinator is Zack Bly who can be reached at 919-618-5455 and zack.web@gmail.com.

Newton- Shares will be available for pickup on Thursdays starting June 10th from **4:00-7:30PM** at Temple Shalom (175 Temple St., West Newton) Your distribution coordinators are Michael and Leigh Flannery who can be reached at 315-292-8379 and mflannery@jd10.law.harvard.edu

Boston- Shares will be available for pickup on Thursdays starting June 10th from **12:00-6:30PM** at the South Station Farmer's Market (Dewey Square) Farm crew members Greg and Susan will be at the farmer's market to assist you. You can reach Greg at 617-842-6931.

Somerville at Metro Pedal Power- Shares will be ready for pickup on Thursdays starting June 10th from **3:00-6:30PM**. MPP is located at 11 Olive Square. Your distribution coordinator is Mariela Cerda who can be reached at 781-3632-675 and mariela.cerda@gmail.com.

Somerville at the Growing Center- Distributions will be ready each Wednesday starting June 9th from **4:00-7:00PM** at the Somerville Growing Center (22 Vinal Ave). Pick up will be under the tent outside. Your distribution coordinator is Tania Mejer who can be reached at 617.290.1935 and tm@sidetrekked.com.

Springfield at the X- Shares will be ready for pickup at any time the farmers market is open (**12:30-6:00PM**) on Tuesday afternoons starting June 8th . The farmers market is in Forest Park (follow the signs). Farm crew members Kevin and Elaine will always be on hand to help. Please remember to bring your bags. You can reach Kevin at 401-714-1489.

Granby at the Farm- Shares will be ready for pickup each Tuesday starting June 8th and Friday starting June 11th from **2:00-7:00PM**. Pick up area is in the farm stand area of the barn and items are identified by Blue cards. Contact us at 413-467-7645 or thefarmers@redfirefarm.com with any questions. Steve Sousa will be coordinating the distributions in Granby. He can be reached at 413-467-7561 and parsonsousa@comcast.net

Amherst – Shares will be ready for pickup each Tuesday starting June 8th from **3:30-6:30PM** at Tabellas Restaurant (28 Amity St.) Your distribution coordinator will be Jess Lamson who can be reached at 413-461-6483 and jessicafairy@yahoo.com.

Northampton – Shares will be ready for pickup each Tuesday starting June 8th from **4:15-7:15PM** at the Hungary Ghost (62 State Street) Your distribution coordinator will be Lori Parent who can be reached at 508-360-2385 and tomboy.40@hotmail.com.

Montague- Members are Old Depot Gardens Farm Stand Members (504 Turners Falls Rd, Montague). Each member has a Farm Card which can be used like a debit card for their farmstand account at the stand. You can stop any day and use your credit toward any items sold at the stand. Produce deliveries will be on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays once the season gets going.

Common Wealth- Distribution will be each Wednesday (June 16th- Oct. 6th) from **3:00-6:30PM**. Pick up will be in the alley behind Green Fields Market. You may contact Suzanne Carlson (who is the Common Wealth bookkeeper and member coordinator) at 413-774-2112 or the farm at anytime for questions.

ALL MEMBERS:

PLEASE REMEMBER TO CHECK IN WITH COORDINATOR EACH WEEK ON THE MEMBERS LIST.

CHECK THE INFORMATION LISTED NEXT TO YOUR NAME AND MAKE SURE IT IS CORRECT.

MARK ON YOUR CALENDARS WHEN THE NEXT PAYMENT IS DUE. YOU MAY BE ABLE TO PAY THE SITE COORDINATOR. HOWEVER, WE RECOMMEND MAILING PAYMENTS.

LIMITED PLASTIC BAGS ARE OFFERED AT PICK UP. WE RECOMMEND RECYCLING OR BRINGING YOUR OWN REUSABLE BAGS.

OUR FARM STAND IS OPEN! COME BY AND VISIT!

ALL SHARES WILL BE DONATED TO A FOOD RELIEF ORGANIZATION IF NOT PICKED UP DURING THE DISTRIBUTION HOURS.

SOLAR ELECTRIC IS COMING TO RED FIRE'S GRANBY FARM YARD!

Finally a project that has been several years in the organization stage is coming to fruition. Several years ago we noticed that there was a chance to get grant funding from the state to have solar electric panels installed on the farm. We use a surprising amount of electricity to power various things on the farm including especially the electricity used to power our produce coolers. Greenhouse fans, seed germination chambers, farm stand lights, welding machines and so forth also seem to suck down the electrical juice. Our electric bill currently hovers around $900 to $1000 per month, and the solar electric array that we are having installed will cut that amount by about half!

I submitted multiple grant applications over the last couple years, and three agencies have awarded grant funds toward the project. These agencies include the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC), The MA Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR)and the Natural Resources Conservations Service (NRCS). Altogether we have been awarded grants totaling $154,000. This plus some federal tax incentives will pay for about 90% of the PV system installation cost.

After several false starts we have hired PV Squared from Greenfield to install the solar panels and associated electrical wiring. We also had a major struggle in order to figure out where on the farm yard to install the panels. We needed a place that has full sun, but also a place that is not in the middle of one of our vegetable growing fields. Unfortunately the roofs of our existing barns and house were not designed with solar electric in mind when they were built almost 100 years ago (they all slope the wrong way). Finally we decided the best plan was to tear down our old chicken shed which was in relatively poor repair and install instead a new structure with a south facing roof. The new structure is also going to allow us more tractor parking and other storage space underneath, so this is will be a side benefit of the project. This structure is now being constructed by Kurtz builders, and we expect that by the end of July the solar panels will be up and working!

-Ryan

THE HOW-TO GUIDE ON PICK-YOUR-OWN (PYO)

One of the nicest perks of being a member of Red Fire Farm is the opportunity to visit the farm and pick crops that otherwise do not show up in your weekly shares. These items, throughout the season, will include herbs, peas, beans, flowers, hot peppers, tomatillos, cherry tomatoes, husk cherries, strawberries, and raspberries. There will be weekly picking limits (seasonal limits for Boston members) posted in the farm stand. Strawberries and peas will be ready for picking starting the week of June 7th and the herb patch has a whole slew of herbs for your culinary pleasure. Watch for more current updates in PYO availability in the weekly emails. Here's how it works:

If you pick up your weekly produce share in Granby or Springfield, we will post a weekly limit for the maximum amount of each item that you can pick each week. This information will be posted inside the barn near the farm stand area along with maps of the fields and instructions about where you should pick. We also provide picking containers in the barn. You can do your picking when you are at the farm picking up your other produce, or you can come back any time during daylight hours, 7 days a week. Check the board in the barn when you arrive for your weekly limits. You're welcome to bring friends, but we appreciate if a member is present for PYO.

If you pick up your weekly produce share at one of our Boston area distributions, then we assume you will probably only come to the farm about once during June and then again during July or August for beans and tomatoes. The farm is only about a 1.5 hour drive from Cambridge, so a visit is easy to fit into a weekend or any day off that you have. Car pool with other members from your distribution if possible (see below for more carpooling info). During June, Boston area members can pick at least **8 quarts of strawberries and 8 pints of peas all at once during one visit.** Upon arrival at the farm go into the farm stand area and check the member pick your own information board. This will have detailed information about which crops are ripe, amounts per share, maps of the fields about where you can find them, and containers to pick into. Depending on when you arrive, there may or may not be anyone from the farm around, but you can come anytime during daylight hours. Remember that for both strawberries and peas the picking is expected to be great during the weekend of June 19 and 20 (the Strawberry Soiree is also that Saturday). Picking is also expected to be excellent on the weekends of June 12/13 and 26/27. You're welcome to bring friends, but we appreciate if a member is present for PYO.

If you are a Farm Stand member you can use your credit toward the pick your own crops. Prices will be posted on the pick your own info board inside the farm stand area of the barn, along with field maps and picking containers. You can pick anytime crops are ripe and you're welcome to bring friends, but you must also be present for PYO.

NOTE: When you are out in the field, look for the wooden signs directing you to the picking areas. Please pick only in the designated areas, do not jump to sections that are roped off or otherwise marked as closed! When harvesting, always be careful not to step on the crop plants, and feel free to pull some weeds while you are out there!

RIDE SHARING TO THE FARM

GoLoco is an online ride-share website. By joining, you can network with the other Boston-area CSA members to work out carpooling to the farm for farm events or just a visit to the pick-your-own patch. To join, follow this link:
http://goloco.org/users/new?uuid=5f997177-dada-4335-a904-6a4cfbc15981
After signing up, join the group "Red Fire Farm CSA". With almost 700 members in the Boston area, there are bound to be folks in your neighborhood heading west every weekend! If you have a car, please post your rides and maybe meet a new fellow CSA member.

COOKING THE HARVEST

Our culinary chef, Ona, will be stopping by each CSA distribution site once throughout the season. There, she will be demonstrating recipes using the vegetables found in your weekly share. If you aren't sure how to cook that unknown vegetable, or would like to learn new recipes, stick around on those days to watch what she cooks up and to sample her tasty creations! The Red Fire Reader will post her visits at the beginning of the month. Also, please send your favorite recipe to her at recipes@redfirefarm.com if you'd like to have it posted on the website or maybe in the next Red Fire

Spinach Pie

This will be one of the entrees at the Strawberry Soiree!

3 tablespoons olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
1 bunch green onions, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 pounds spinach, rinsed and chopped (other greens can also be added in like turnip greens)
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
1/2 cup ricotta cheese
1 cup crumbled feta cheese
8-10 sheets phyllo dough
1/4 cup olive oil
½ tsp salt and pepper

Saute the onion and garlic in the oil adding in the spinach at the last minute so that it is just wilted. In a bowl mix cheese, egg, parsley, salt and pepper and then add in the spinach mix. In 9x9 inch pan, lay one sheet of phyllo, brush with oil, put another layer on top and continue for 4-5 layers. Spread spinach mix on top, folding the extra phyllo from the bottom over the filling. Repeat the phyllo/oil layering for the top, tucking the extra phyllo into the pan. Sprinkle with water and back 30-40 min (until golden brown) at 350ºF.

The Red Fire Reader is compiled and edited by Ona Lindauer. Newsletter topic ideas, recipes, writings, poems, and CSA community announcements are welcome and should be submitted to thefarmers@redfirefarm.com.

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