

Guldan Family Farm



NOTES FROM THE FARM

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This week's share... Our best guess

This week marks the final week of CSA shares for the 2011 season. Nearly everything harvestable in our fields has been cut, pulled, picked or dug in some fashion. This week's selections pretty much say "autumn" in every way: comfort foods like squash and potatoes that fit right in with rustling leaves, fall colors and chilly nights. There will be some varying in our shares this week. The end of the season is bringing us some smaller quantities of several items. We know for sure that we have enough white potatoes, carrots, leeks, tomatoes and squash for everyone. The butternut squash looks to be the variety for everyone and probably another type, either delicata, carnival or acorn. We have a bag of storage onions for everyone. The balance of the contents will more than likely differ for everyone. We have a small crop of sweet potatoes, fall cabbage, shallots and perhaps some other last minute additions to divide out between shares.

ON THE FARM

Again, it's another 88 degree day in October as I'm struggling to put thoughts into sentences for this year's last newsletter. It only seems typical that this year would end on such a wacky note. It was a year of extremes – from endless rainfall and cold temperatures in early summer to extreme heat and drought conditions since the beginning of August. It was a year to make any farmer's hair turn grey or fall out! I guess it's safe to admit to you now that there were times this summer that we were ready to quit and say, "FORGET IT!! It's not working this year." But we hung in there and made the best of it. The main goals of CSA's are to provide its members with a large selection of seasonal produce throughout the season, share recipes and keep you in touch with the daily happenings in a farming family's life and give you a connection to where your family's food comes from. We hope we met your expectations. As Denny and I reflect on the past 18 weeks, we send a thousand thanks for your support and confidence in us. The selections weren't as diverse as we sometimes hoped for, but a quick glance at the year's newsletters reminds us of all that was included this year. Wow, there were bumper crops of melons, sweet corn, beans, peppers and eventually tomatoes. On the other hand, peas and the cabbage family crops like broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and brussels sprouts couldn't deal with the extreme weather. Regionally it was a similar story for all gardeners, small and large. For the most part, all our members had at least a taste of nearly everything we grow. It's so good to be diversified because we know that there's never a year where everything turns out! What next? We'll spend the next few weeks cleaning picking equipment, washing out tons of pails, finishing field-work and then it's not long until we're ordering seeds and making plans for next year's growing season. Oh yea, of course, we'll spend some time just being lazy. Will we be offering CSA memberships again next year? For sure!! Watch for next year's information to be distributed in January or February. Again, we thank you so much. It's been a pleasure putting food on your table this summer.

The Guldan Family, Denny, Janice, Tim, Emily & Samantha

IDEAS FOR THE COOK

First of all, I apologize that there aren't enough sweet potatoes for everyone. We planted 500 "slips" which resulted in about 120 pounds of sweet potatoes. In doing the math on this, it's fortunate that we aren't full time sweet potato growers. I think we'd be in trouble. Anyway, for the most part, only the full shares are receiving them so that they have a decent amount to make a meal with. Just store them in a cool dry spot. They will store well for at least a month. The carrots and leeks should be kept in your crisper in bags and will also store quite well. Don't keep carrots in the same crisper drawer as apples. The gas that apples release will cause carrots to lose sweetness. I can't believe we're still picking tomatoes. The crows were pecking on them last week looking for sweet moisture, but we beat them to the rest of them when we realized they were checking them out. Keep the squash in a cool, dry spot for best storing capabilities. The small long ivory colored squash is a delicata and the brightly colored ribbed squash is called Carnival. Both are similar to an acorn squash in taste and texture. The shallot is the small onion looking bulb. It's combines the taste of a strong onion and garlic. I like to brown them in a bit of olive oil or butter and add them to stir fried vegetables or rice dishes such as a risotto or herbed rice side dish. As most fall vegetables, the onions should store well for you into early winter if you keep them in a cool dry spot.

COCK-A-LEEKIE STEW

1 (2 to 3 pound) whole chicken, cut into pieces
1/2 cup sliced carrots
1 cup barley
2 1/2 cups water
1 teaspoon chicken bouillon powder
salt and pepper to taste
1 leek, sliced

In a large pot combine the chicken, carrots, barley, water, bouillon and salt and pepper to taste. Bring all to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and let simmer for 30 minutes or until chicken is cooked through and no longer pink inside. Skim broth as needed.

Remove chicken from pot and add leeks. Bring back to a boil; reduce heat, cover and let simmer another 15 minutes or so, until thickened.

Meanwhile, skin and debone the cooked chicken. Return chicken meat to thickened stew and cook for about 5 minutes to heat through. Serve hot.

RECIPES OF THE WEEK

BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP WITH SHRIMP *This recipe is from Every Day Food, a concise digest sized food magazine which I highly recommend. I enjoyed this recipe with the shrimp; whereas Denny thought he'd rather skip the shrimp in this soup. Either way, give it a whirl; it's easy and just omit the shrimp if you see fit.*

2 tablespoons butter
1 pound frozen large shrimp, (peeled and deveined), thawed
1 medium yellow onion, diced small
1 teaspoon dried sage
1 1/2 pounds butternut squash cut into 3/4 inch cubes
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
Coarse salt
1/4 cup sour cream

In a large Dutch oven or heavy pot, melt 1 tablespoon butter over medium heat. Add shrimp and cook until opaque throughout, 6 minutes. Transfer to a plate, cover with foil. Increase heat to medium high. Add 1 tablespoon butter, onion, and sage; cook until onion is softened, 8 minutes. Add squash, cayenne and broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until squash is tender, 20 minutes. Season with salt. Transfer half the mixture to a blender. Add sour cream and puree until smooth. (Use caution when blending hot liquids.) Return to pot along with shrimp, stir to combine. Makes 4 large servings.

BAKED SWEET POTATOES *Not that long ago, it was difficult to find recipes using sweet potatoes that weren't heavy in the sugar and gooey marshmallow department. A trend to much healthier eating has resulted in lots of recipes being available utilizing this fall crop.*

2 tablespoons olive oil
sweet potatoes
2 pinches dried oregano
2 pinches salt
2 pinches ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Coat the bottom of a glass or non-stick baking dish with olive oil, just enough to coat.

Wash and peel the sweet potatoes. Cut them into medium size pieces. Place the cut sweet potatoes in the baking dish and turn them so that they are coated with the olive oil. Sprinkle moderately with oregano, and salt and pepper (to taste).

Bake in a preheated 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) oven for