

Blackberry Meadows Farm

WEEK II-

On the Menu: (This is a loose projection of what you may find in your CSA share this week. Don't hold us to it!) Herbs, Garlic, Peppers, Cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, tomatillos, tomatoes!

Harvesting Tomatillos: It's hard to tell, but that's Dana back there with a hat on - swamped by the tenacious tomatillo!

GROWING NUTRITIOUS FOOD FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

It's about time that the weather starts warming up! Before this last rain we were able to prep two fields (about 1/2 an acre) and plant some fall kohlrabi. Prepping the fields involves mowing down the weeds or old crops; letting them dry; then disking the debris in order to chop up the organic matter; then fertilizing and rototilling to make a smooth seed bed. After the fields are prepped, we either direct seed the crops into the ground (yesterday we seeded arugula and tatsoi) or transplant with the water wheel (Friday we planted about 2000 kohlrabi). We still have golden frills and ruby lace mustard greens, lettuce mix, boc choy, and spinach to transplant. In two weeks, we'll be direct seeding more arugula, tatsoi, spinach, lettuce mix, mesclun mix, and radishes into these fields.

Well, this morning it just p-o-u-r-e-d! Our fields are well saturated and the new seeds and

seedlings, as well as the established plants are happy to get a drink. We're back to transplanting things by hand - as it takes about 5 dry windy days for our fields to dry out before we can get into them with a tractor. But . . . if we had a team of draft horses, we could work in wet fields much sooner . . .hmmm!

This has been the kind of growing season that was all "Spring Weather" - we could have been growing lettuce, radishes, arugula, peas - all sorts of cool weather crops that don't hold up to heat. Instead, we go with what the typical growing season calls for - sometimes you can't second guess Mother Nature. We learn as we go and do the best we can. We figure after 30 more years of farming, we'll finally be pros, like some of the 'old' organic farmers around here!

People, Animal and Vegetable

Our apprentices this year have been great! (Not that they aren't every year). We're coming into the peak of the growing season - where, despite the day light getting shorter, our work days seem to get longer. Tuesday and Friday nights, we often find ourselves in the barn sorting tomatoes and packing up tomatillos until 10 pm.

Every other night of the week the **'The Homesteader'** should spearhead a preservation project; whether that be cutting up tomatoes to be dehydrated, simmering elderberries for syrup, or pureeing garlic for powder. There's always leftovers and seconds that need to be dealt with, lest they linger and attract the ubiquitous fruit fly.

The homesteader also is in charge of making lunch for everyone throughout the week. With this, they learn to cook and eat seasonally. They also gain an appreciation for the stress of cooking for large groups of people, having the meal ready to eat on time, and clean up too. They keep the homestead tidy and ensure that there's a full pot of coffee on hand (Dana's roast, of course).



This little piggy went to market: We loaded up and

took our three little pigs to the processor today. We got them as month old piglets back in April. Only 4 months later and they are 'market weight'. We had an interesting time getting them into the trailer. Encouraging a 200 lb. pig to go somewhere it doesn't want to go, is not for the faint of heart. But, neither is raising those little guys and then sending them away only to come back home as bacon and ham.

The Stockman goes out each morning, noon and night, and tends to the animals. They milk the cows, feed the sheep, turkeys, guinea hens and chickens, collect eggs, and, when they were still here, feed the pigs their slop. We're so used to keeping our dinner scraps for the pigs - now that they are gone - we're really missing their presence! The Stockman needs to be aware of general animal health - noticing when a cow may have a bad hoof, or if a sheep is unusually lazy. Being in tune with the animals, spending time watching and learning from them and most of all, being comfortable around them are all important qualities of a good stockman.



The Cropper is in charge of the field crew. The crew constitutes Greg, Jen, Jameson,

Dana, Brittany, and an assortment of volunteers. Pretty much, everyone is on the vegetable crew when they aren't doing their other chores. The Cropper needs to make sure that the crops are tended, as well as, getting everything in order for the day and keeping every one busy. There's a lot to accomplish and being well organized and good at motivating people are two great qualities needed in a crew leader. We encourage the Cropper to set the pace and notice when a team member is lagging behind. This time of year - when we're working long hard hours on the farm - it's helpful to have someone on the team that is upbeat and ready to keep on keepin' on. Around 7 pm, we'll 'quit' and do the farm chores, getting in a little after dark . . . just after the hens have gone to bed.



Weekly, we rotate these roles amongst all of us, to prevent anyone from getting burned out on one particular job. So far, Greg and I are ecstatic with how things are going. The apprentices have really embraced the responsibilities and seem like, as each week goes by, they are learning something new about farming and themselves.

Things you ought to know about

The next Potluck is August 31st. All are welcome to come and enjoy the farm from 4 - 7 pm! Bring games, blankets, drinks, and have fun! **We'll be cranking out fresh pizza from the wood oven. Bring a side dish to share, and your own chairs and place settings. Please RSVP if you think you'll make it.**

The Frankferd Farm order is coming up. In case you don't know - Frankferd Farms is a distributor of a large variety of natural and organic products. If you buy things from the East End Food Coop - you may be able to find the same things at Frankferd Farms in bulk, and cheaper. They have an online catalog - but it's best to call in your order. Just let them know that we will be picking them up. Please have your orders placed with them by August 30. We'll have your order for you on September 3rd.

Dana roasted some **amazing coffee** - we buy fair trade, organic green coffee beans from [Sweet Maria's](#). She'll

roast a fresh batch each week - try it out!

The barn is open on Wednesdays from 11 am - 7 pm. If you think you might be running late - just give us a call (724 226 3939). **The Phipps Market/CSA runs on Wednesdays from 2:30 pm - 6:30 pm, and we'll be at the Boyd Center on Saturdays from 9 am - 11am.**

Be sure to bring your own bags.

Please remember to **check in** when you show up to pick up your share. If you're new to our CSA, we'll gladly give you the run-down on the operation and answer any questions you may have.

If you'd like something delivered to the Phipps or Boyd drop off locations - just give a holler - we'll gladly send it on down to you.

Thanks for supporting local organic agriculture!!

Dana's Fresh Tomatillo Salsa (Salsa Verde)

- Quick & Easy

Add coarsely chopped tomatillos, a jalapeno, garlic, and cilantro into the food processor.

puree all together

add finely diced onion, lime juice and salt.

Stir together and that's it!