



Community Cultivator



Newsletter of the Foggy River Farm CSA, Week 12

Cloven-hooved corn-trotters

We have some sad tidings to report this week. Sunday morning, I (Emmett) took a walk through the winter squash, potato and corn fields to check on the soil moisture. Having passed through the sprawling squash tendrils, I stepped over each of the mounded potato rows, sticking a shovel into the ground here and there. Almost at the edge of the potatoes, I lifted my head up to look to where the corn plants should have been growing.

The corn was gone.

I did a double take. I turned to the left and the right to make sure I didn't just have my bearings mixed up. But no, I wasn't going crazy—the corn was gone. Where the day before there had been 4,000 square feet of head-high and chest-high corn stalks (1st and 2nd plantings), there was now only stubble.

You may have heard of the model that describes the process by which people cope with tragedy, called The Five Stages of Grief. Well, once I got past the Denial stage, I skipped right past the Anger and Bargaining stages and waltzed blithely into the Depression stage. “What’s the point?” I thought. There goes four weeks of corn for the CSA. Sweet, delicious corn. Corn that we spent many days planting, weeding, mounding. I might as well quit right now. Woe is me.

But then somehow, inexplicably, I found myself entering the Acceptance stage. “Well, I guess we won't have any corn this year,” I mumbled, still standing exactly where I was when I had first looked up. I got up the courage to take a closer look. Tracks and scat confirmed what I had suspected: wild pigs. While we've never had a corn destruction like this before, there are pigs that regularly root around in wet soil on the farm. And these large, mature corn stalks had been gnawed off near the base, not delicately chewed on in the way a deer would approach them from the tips of the leaves.

When I made it back to the house and shared the news with Lynda, she made up for my lack of vitriol, jumping quickly from Denial to Anger. “I'm going to get a gun and I'm going to shoot those pigs! Or trap them. Or something.” (That morning, we went out to brunch to try and cheer ourselves up, and usually-vegetarian Lynda ordered an omelet. With bacon.)

So...this is our long way of breaking the news that we can't expect much corn this year. It's an example of the shared risk accepted by us the farmers and you the eaters, knowing that on a given year plague or pest or pig might wipe out a certain crop. And—sad though we may be—it makes us appreciate that crop even more the next time we eat it. By the way, we do have a third “late planting” of corn, which was left unscathed by pigs so far because it is less than a foot tall. Even if we can keep it safe (and we will certainly try!), it won't be coming in until late September or early October.

In case you're curious, we haven't shot or trapped or even seen any pigs between Sunday and now. We have seen signs of them though – hoof prints in damp soil the day after watering. So they're still out there, roaming the fields.

Also, Lynda says that if indeed we are able to hunt aforementioned pest pigs, you will all be welcome to a share of bacon/pork/pork belly (if that's something you enjoy). 100% natural, "corn-fed" pork!



Your Foggy Farmers,
Emmett & Lynda
Craig & Emma

What's In Your Box:

- **Beans (Rattlesnake, Dow Purple, Rocdor, Blue Lake)** Beans for all this week. This mix of colors comes from three different locations on the farm: two beds of bush beans and one row of pole beans. You might like to sauté them with an ample amount of garlic and some olive oil.
- **Beets (various)** Beets are excellent roasted with potatoes and carrots. You might also like to try boiling them, chopping them up and mixing with lettuce greens, balsamic vinaigrette and goat cheese. **(Recipe included.)**
- **Carrots (Danvers)** Grate them into salads, chop them into soups, make carrot sticks for the kids. **(Recipe included.)**
- **Potatoes (Red Norland and/or Yukon Gold)** Both varieties are good for roasting or potato salad. **(Recipe included.)**
- **Lettuce (New Red Fire or Bergam's Green)** A small head of summer lettuce. **(Recipe included.)**
- **Cherry Tomatoes (Sungold)** The cherry tomatoes are multiplying, and we are all the lucky beneficiaries. Great as snacks, or lightly browned and then tossed into a pasta dish.
- **Heirloom Tomatoes (Black Plum and Cherokee Purple)** The first few larger tomatoes are beginning to roll off the vines. Once all the varieties come into play, over the next couple week, we'll give an overview of each type. A quick review of a few tomato tips: 1) if the tomato is hard and yellow on the top, this is sunburn and you'll want to just cut that part off and the rest will be fine; 2) if the tomato is still firm and seems not perfectly ripe, you can let it sit for a day or two on the counter to let it ripen further; 3) tomatoes keep best just on the counter at room temperature.
- **Garlic** A head of garlic from this past winter's crop. **(Recipe included.)**
- **Onion** An onion with greens attached. Don't be afraid to use the greens like you would green onions or chives. We included the Scallion pancake recipe again...it's delicious and if you haven't tried it yet you should! **(Recipe included.)**
- **U-PICK ITEMS: Basil & Sunflowers** Snag some basil for pesto (or to accompany your tomatoes) and some sunflowers for the table. Just ask us and we'll point you in the right direction and give you the tools for harvesting.

Foggy River Recipes

Roasted Potatoes and Carrots

It's speedy, no fuss, and delicious.

1 pound **potatoes**, cut into bite-size chunks
5 medium **carrots** (or more smaller), cut into ¼ inch diagonal strips
Light olive oil
Salt and pepper

*You can add **beets** if you like; you might want them in a separate pan if you don't want to dye everything red!

Preheat the oven to 375. Cut the potatoes and carrots all into bite-sized pieces. The smaller they are, the quicker they'll cook through. Toss the roots onto a pan, drizzle with a little oil, and then sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Mix the roots with the oil to coat thoroughly, and then arrange the roots so as to maximize exposed surface area. Put the pan in the oven. Shortly, you will hear the oil begin to pop in the oven. Check the pan every ten minutes and loosen any pieces that are sticking with a spatula. Once the carrots are beginning to shrivel, you know their sugars are caramelizing. When the potatoes are soft through and the skins brown a little they're ready to eat!

Beet, Lettuce, and Chevre Salad

A variation of the beet, arugula and chevre salad.

Salad Ingredients

1 bunch beets, boiled and peeled
One small head of lettuce, torn into small pieces (*Note: if you prefer, you can serve the beets on a bed of whole lettuce leaves.)
2-4 oz. chevre cheese, crumbled (or more, to taste)

Dressing Ingredients

6 T olive oil
2 T balsamic vinegar
couple dashes of salt and pepper

Preparing the salad:

Cut the tops off the beets, quarter them, and boil until the pieces are soft all the way through. Drain and then cool them off in a bowl of cold water. When cool enough to handle, remove the skins, which should peel off easily if boiled long enough. Cut the peeled beets into bite-sized chunks.

Mix the beets and lettuce in a bowl. Do not yet add the chevre until *after* you have dressed the salad.

Preparing the dressing:

Vigorously mix the ingredients together. I like to take a wide-mouth pint-size mason jar (or any other jar with a lid...let's say a peanut butter jar) and fill it with all the dressing ingredients. Then tighten the lid on and shake it vigorously. This is by far the best way of achieving a well-mixed homemade salad dressing.

Once the dressing is mixed, toss it in with the beets and lettuce. Next, crumble the chevre generously over the top and serve.

Scallion Pancakes

Here's something to try if your onions have some good greens on them (it doesn't take a ton.) Scallion pancakes are incredible if you're a sucker for a salty, oily snack once in a while! We absolutely love these. This recipe is a good one, taken from www.thekitchn.com. (The writer of the recipe has this to say about the cakes: "Chewy, flaky, and savory scallion pancakes are one of our very favorite Chinese restaurant treats. This pan-fried bread has a lot in common with Indian parathas and other simple flatbreads, and if you follow a few simple steps, they are easy to make at home. Here are instructions on how to make addictively delicious Chinese scallion pancakes in your home kitchen!")

Ingredients

2 1/2 cups white flour

1 cup warm water

Canola or vegetable oil

Salt

1 bunch scallions (or the **greens from 2-3 spring onions** like the ones you got in your share this week!)

Equipment

Rolling pin

Large metal baking sheet

One 10-inch heavy skillet or sauté pan

Thin spatula

Kitchen scissors

Instructions

1. Mix 2 1/2 cups flour with 1 cup water until it forms a smooth dough. Knead by doubling the dough over and pressing it down repeatedly, until the dough is even more smooth and very elastic. Coat this ball of dough lightly in oil and put it back in the bowl. Cover the bowl with a damp cloth and let the dough rest for about 30 minutes.

2. Cut the dough into 4 equal parts. Lightly oil the back of a large metal baking sheet, or lightly flour a cutting board. Roll out one part of the dough on the back of the baking sheet or board. Roll until it is a thin rectangle at least 12 x 9 inches.

3. Finely chop the bunch of scallions and have them ready, along with a small bowl of kosher salt.
4. Lightly brush the top of the dough with oil, then sprinkle it evenly with chopped scallions and kosher salt.
5. Starting from the long end, roll the dough up tightly, creating one long snake of rolled-up dough.
6. Cut the dough snake in two equal parts.
7. Take one of these halves and coil into a round dough bundle.
8. Roll out the coiled dough bundle again into a flat, smooth, round pancake.
9. Heat a 10-inch heavy skillet or sauté pan over medium-high heat, and oil it with a drizzle of canola or vegetable oil. When the oil shimmers, pick up the pancake dough and lay it gently in the pan. It should sizzle, but not burn. Cook for 2 minutes on one side.
10. Flip the pancake over with a spatula and cook for an additional 2 minutes on the other side, or until golden brown.
11. Cut the pancake into wedges with a pair of kitchen scissors or a knife on a cutting board, and serve immediately with soy sauce or another dipping sauce.

Additional Notes:

- If you would like to make a few pancakes but save the rest for later, you can save the dough in the fridge for up to 5 days. Just make sure the dough is oiled and well-covered. You can also roll out individual pancakes and stack them between well-oiled layers of wax paper.