



WELL FED

Newsletter for Wellspring Farm CSA

www.wellspringcsa.com

July 3, 2006

Welcome to our weekly CSA e-newsletter.

Thank you to our editor, CSA member Pam Quinn, and to member Mark Dodge for lending computer assistance. In our newsletters you will find recipes, a list of upcoming crops, important reminders and reports from the field. If you would like an email address to be added or deleted from our list, please email Pam directly at qumclane@sover.net



Member
Zoe
enjoying
one of
our few
days of
sunshine!



Hanging those
mud boots out
to dry

Farmer's Message

July 2, 2006

Rain again today. A fellow farmer invited us over to drink beer in his barn. What else is there to do on a day like today when the rain just pours and pours down, soaking my plans, hopes, expectations? Sometimes it feels like the farm is drowning, struggling to stay above water. I wake at 2 a.m., hear the rain pouring down and it feels like the barn is on fire and there is nothing I can do.

People have been asking me how I am. There's the short, perfunctory answer. "Fine, fine." Then there's the true answer, the answer that I don't want to burden our members with, but must. The truth is that this season has been an enormous challenge. A winter of careful, full-of-hope crop planning, a mud season of tending greenhouse seedlings, a spring of field work spreading compost, laying straight beds, planting and cultivating, and now the summer offers up a soaked dream. The work is hard and beautiful and merciless. The rain comes, seemingly unending and it feels like a strong arm has descended from the sky and wiped away all of my efforts and intentions, destroyed all the love I have poured into this farm. In one fell swoop. Swoosh. When it rains like this (wettest May ever in Vermont, 20-plus days of rain in June) the soil becomes so saturated that the plants literally can't breathe. Growth slows or stops altogether, roots possibly rot, seeds don't germinate. Heat-loving crops like tomatoes, eggplants and melons sit still. Threatening pests like snails come out in full force to eat through delicate stems of peppers and melons (we had to replant). As for the farmers, we can't get onto the fields with the tractors, can't even walk in the fields at times because of the mud. This means we can't plant, seed or weed crops. Work slows, giving the mind too much time to fret and worry. This is the result despite that fact that we have taken precautions against such weather by chiseling our fields to enhance drainage and by planting on raised beds and beds laid with agricultural black plastic to augment heat as well as drainage. On the bright side, our potatoes and onions seem to be handling the storms fairly well, and we have a beautiful stand of summer carrots. I keep waiting for the sun, though my hope feels damp often. In May I kept saying to myself, "Just hold on until June 1. You can make it." Now June is gone and I have been holding on to the promise of July 1. Cruelly, and somehow comically, it rained on July 1!! What do I hope for now?

(Continued on next page)

I hope for your empathy and understanding and support. Deluge after deluge, I hope I will find it.

A farmer friend wisely said that he thinks the hardest part of farming isn't the mechanics of it or the botanical mysteries. Rather the hardest part of farming is the emotional roller coaster; the mental struggles that challenge most. While I have no control over the weather I sometimes feel frantic because I promised food that I may not be able to deliver in just the way I want to: baby beets on June 30, followed by carrots on July 4, melons ripe, voluptuous and abundant – overwhelming in their perfection - in August. I don't want to let anyone down. Not the members, not my community, not my own dreams.

Unless the sun comes out hard and strong and bright like I pray it will, there may be less food this season than in the past. I want you to know that I am doing everything within my power to produce as much as I can from this land, while still giving the land what it needs and deserves back from me. I wish I could stop the rain; I wish my arms were strong enough, I wish my will could be power enough to do it.

In the meantime, I want you to know that I keep strict account of each week's share value and that I hope to make up the season's thin weeks with crops that will thrive this season. You may receive fewer melons than you or I would like, but perhaps in exchange you will receive lots of potatoes. I also commit to communicate with you through this newsletter. I'll keep you abreast of the challenges and successes so that you can gain greater insight into what it means to farm in central Vermont, and gain a deeper understanding of what it truly means to support local farms. Together we'll wait and see how this season pans out. Keep hope alive!

Stir-Fried Bok Choy with Roasted Peanuts

3 T raw peanuts	4 t minced ginger
2 t roasted peanut oil	2 T soy sauce
¼ t red pepper flakes	salt
1 ½ ponds bok choy	1 t roasted peanut oil
2 T peanut oil	4 garlic cloves minced
1 t cornstarch mixed with 3 T cold water	

Fry the peanuts in 2 t roasted peanut oil until they're golden. Chop with the pepper flakes and a few pinches of salt and set aside.

Slice off the bok choy stems and cut them into 1-inch pieces. Leave the leaves whole. Set the wok over high heat. Add 2T peanut oil. Add garlic and ginger and stir-fry for 1 minute. Add the bok choy and a few pinches of salt and stir fry until wilted. Add the soy sauce and cornstarch and stir-fry for 1-2 minutes. Add the crushed peanuts, toss, and serve.

Reminder:

Pick-up dates will remain unchanged for the week of July 3. Please call the farm at 426-3361 if you need to make alternate arrangements to get your share.

Coming soon:

zucchini, summer squash, baby beets, basil

Chard: Suggestions for use

- Leaves can be used like spinach. Larger leaves can be stuffed after being boiled for 4 minutes (remove the stems).
- Use the stems in stocks or stir-fries. Prepare the stems by trimming the tops and bottoms, and peeling off the film of skin and tough fibers that cover the surface.
- Sauté with olive oil, crushed garlic, and a pinch of red pepper flakes. Season with salt, pepper, and fresh lemon.