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Week #12! The weeks are just flying past at an alarming and almost sickening rate. What on earth is going on? Is the earth spinning faster than normal? Why does time feel like a freight train barreling past me at such uncontrollable speeds?

A successful method in slowing down this time train for me, is to stop what I'm doing and start thinking about and reflecting on days gone past. This week's newsletter is dedicated to just that...

REMEMBER WHEN...

Remember when Josh & Noah were teenagers, growing potatoes for the farmers market? This was even before they had drivers licenses so their mom had to give them a ride down to Madison every Saturday. Entrepreneurs from the start!

And then there was that day 12 or so years ago, when Noah was about 16 and he brought home his first fully mechanized potato harvester. That rusty hunk of metal, chains, belts and hoses was about the size of small house and Noah paid more to haul it down here than for the thing itself!

I can't forget my first day at Driftless. It was 2005 and I came in on a cold rainy November Saturday to help dig potatoes in the mud. We didn't last long out there that day, but I had fun just the same and knew that working with Josh and Noah in Star Valley was exactly where I wanted to be.

I remember when we tried growing cucumbers on a large scale for the Twin Cities co-ops. It was 2006 and we planted acres of cukes, assembled a motley crew of inexperienced folks and tried our best to be cucumber farmers. There we were, harvesting cucumbers all day, three days a week, from June until September. Ugh! My back still hurts thinking about it.

Remember that first year of our CSA program? It was 2007 and we had 50 families sign up, some of whom are still members now!

And then one can't forget the floods. The first in 2007 hit us the hardest because we

were taken by such surprise. At some time in the middle of a rainy night in August, a 4' wall of water came ripping through our packing shed and the majority of our fields, sweeping away vegetables, a ton of equipment and our hopes for a successful, profitable season. We dug out, cleaned up and didn't miss a single CSA box. But what we didn't do was find land on higher ground and we paid for that mistake the next spring. On June 8th, 2008 another flood came sweeping through, tearing out all sorts of newly planted crops and filling our packing shed once again with 4' of water. We were a little more prepared for this one and were able to move the majority of our equipment to higher ground before the water got too high. This flood came 3 days before the first CSA box of the season and once again, with the help of some neighboring farms, we packed every CSA box ordered!

2009 was the year of the late blight. It came to us via home gardeners buying vegetable starts at big box stores (or so they say). The dreaded late blight decimated our tomato crops so quickly it was frightening.

I remember fondly the broccoli of 2010. We planted 8 staggered plantings throughout the course of the season and every single one of them yielded big, beautiful and delicious heads of broccoli. I think we may have harvested more than 10,000 pounds of broccoli that year!

2010 also saw a bumper potato crop. So much so that we ran out of room to store our harvested spuds. We rented a large refrigerated trailer from a neighbor and spent the better part of a day loading it full of about 30,000 pounds of taters. The one problem was that we failed to properly support the trailer and it tipped over. What a disaster that was!! We had to hire the county's

this week's box!

- Chioggia Beets •
- Dragon Tongue Beans •
- Garlic •
- Gold Beets •
- Green Top Purple Carrots •
- Green Zucchini or •
- Yellow Summer Squash •
- Jalapeno Peppers •
- Mixed Tomatoes •
- Yellow Onions •
- Sweet Pepper Mix: Red •
- Italian Frying Peppers, •
- Red Pimientos, Red or Yellow Bells •

largest tow truck to come and get it upright.

I remember last year's freakishly late snow storm. On April 22nd, two days after we transplanted broccoli on a beautifully sunny 70 degree day, it snowed 2 or 3 inches. What a mess. The broccoli did survive though and looked beautiful. Overall, 2011 was a great year!

Remember that drought of 2012? Not soon to be forgotten for sure...

You know what I remember the most out of every year? No matter what, we've always had awesome CSA members by our sides. Through the good and bad our members have supported us with their thoughts, words and dollars. It is because of all of you that we have these memories and we that we will hopefully have the opportunity to create many many more!

--Mike



Josh and Noah, young studs growing great spuds

Arugula - this is one nice batch of baby arugula. I just served a salad with it at a wedding last weekend with roasted beets, goat cheese, toasted walnuts, balsamic & olive oil. Or have I mentioned how much I love it raw on pizza?? Doesn't keep long, so eat it up within a few days.

Chioggia Beets - slightly more mild flavored than red beets with a lot less bleeding! Great on a raw veggie platter or roasted whole before cutting to preserve their pretty stripes. Store in plastic in the fridge.

Dragon Tongue Beans - these are very pretty beans. Unfortunately the markings disappear when you cook them... They're an heirloom bean, too, that hasn't had all their strings bred out of them - so make sure to snap them & pull the strings off if they have them. Delicious steamed, stir-fried, sautéed, or added to soups or curries. Store in plastic in the fridge & use up within a few days. Or freeze them, either blanched or raw.

Gold Beets - the sweetest beet of them

all. Also best eaten raw or roasted whole to preserve their pretty color...

Green Top Purple Carrots - This may be our first crop of purple carrots that actually *taste* good. They are so pretty. Ditto on the purple carrots for eating raw or cooking whole for color retention. Don't peel! Their purple color, I'm afraid, is only skin deep. Store in plastic in the fridge minus the tops.

Green Zucchini and/or Yellow Summer Squash - Most likely the last of the year. If you can't stand the sight of these, I highly recommend grating them up and freezing to make some zucchini bread this winter.

Mixed Sweet Peppers - it's looking like a great year for peppers! If they start to pile up on you, you can chop them up or slice them & freeze them raw to pull out & add color to winter soups, stir-fries, & sauces. Store on the counter for a few days or in plastic in the fridge for a couple more. Just remember: any pepper other than green in your box is SWEET. The only hot ones this week are the jalapenos.

Mixed Tomatoes - There will be an assortment of red slicers, romas and a few heirloom varieties as well. All tomatoes should be stored upside down on your counter and NOT in your refrigerator. Some may be a touch on the unripe so simply let them sit out for a day or so until they are soft to the touch. For a better explanation of varieties, check out the recipe page on our website.

Sungold Tomatoes - these are the small orange cherry tomatoes. They add a golden orange color & super sweet burst to salsas, salads, & sauces. They may not be quite ripe, so let them sit on your counter or window sill for a day or two to ripen up and get super golden. If you're leaving town - just freeze them whole in a ziplock bag & add to soups or sauces later.

Yellow Onions - some of the nicest looking onions we've grown ever. Great for just about anything requiring an onion.

Yukon Gold Potatoes - a great all around potato for potato salad, roasting, grilling, hashbrowns, etc. As these are not fully "cured", I would store in your fridge.

• **Tomato Gratin with Garlic & Parmesan**

- 4 large or 6-8 small firm but ripe tomatoes, cut in half
- Salt & pepper taste
- 2 Tbsp. fresh or 2 tsp. dried basil, oregano, &/or marjoram
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ c. grated Parmesan
- ½ c. bread crumbs
- 3 Tbsp. olive or sunflower oil
- Preheat oven to 400 degrees & lightly oil a baking dish that will fit all the tomato halves in one layer.
- Gently scoop out some of the tomato seeds & squeeze out a bit of the juice from each tomato.
- Place cut side up in the pan & sprinkle with salt, pepper, & herbs. In a small bowl, mix garlic, Parmesan, & bread crumbs, adding a bit of salt & pepper if you wish. Carefully top each tomato with a bit of this mixture, then drizzle the oil over the top. Bake for 20-30 minutes, until tomatoes are bubbly & tops are starting to brown. Serves 4.

• **Dragon Tongue Beans with Caramelized Onions**

- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 2 yellow onions, cut into ¼" slices
- Salt & pepper
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1 c. white wine
- 2 c. Dragon Tongue beans, snapped & strings removed & cut in half
- 1 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped (optional)
- In a cast iron pan or other thick-bottomed skillet or Dutch oven, melt butter over medium heat. Add onions, stir, & cover. After a few minutes, add salt & pepper to taste & sugar & turn heat down to medium-low. Cover again & cook for another 15-20 minutes.
- Add white wine, turn the heat back up a bit, & cook uncovered for another 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. When onions are starting to caramelize, add the beans, cover, & cook for another 10 minutes, stirring frequently (if the onions start to stick, add a bit more wine). Stir in the balsamic, taste & adjust seasoning if necessary, top with parsley if you wish, & serve. Serves 3-4.