



ONE POTATO TWO

NEWS FROM THE FIELDS OF DRIFTLESS ORGANICS

Volume 5 • Issue 1 • June 9-11, 2011

WOW! Here we go again! With much anticipation and a whole heck of a lot of excitement, we once again start another CSA season. All of us here at Driftless Organics are proud to finally, after 3 months of hard work, be able to provide you all with your first CSA box of the season.

And what a 3 months it has been! Memories of a winter that seemed to not want to end are still somewhat fresh in our minds. After all, it snowed about 3 inches a mere 7 weeks ago and a dangerously close-to-frost night was only about a week and a half ago. This is pretty hard to believe on a day like today, when the thermometer is touching 95 and sweating is just pouring off of our foreheads as we work in the fields.

With the late snows and near frosts and now this crazy hot weather, we've had a pretty interesting spring to say the least. With some very cold and wet days well into the end of April, and a May that just sort of sputtered along, it sort of seems like we went directly from winter to summer and spring kind of passed us by.

Despite it all, we are really on top of things this year - and I can't tell you how wonderful it feels to be off to such a great start. We love spring with all of the planting and seeding and positive attitudes and excitement about starting the cycle all over again.

We have about 60% of this year's crops already planted: everything from 4 rounds of broccoli to all of the potatoes (well, *almost* all of the potatoes). With 2 rounds of carrots planted and 3 of the 4 plantings of sweet corn in the ground, things are looking great. Now comes the fun part - harvesting all of that goodness.

We are hoping for a tremendously bountiful season, and hope you are ready to fulfill your duty as a CSA member. You see - being a CSA member isn't just about getting a box of veggies every or every other week. It is about opening your minds (and mouths) to new foods, new recipes and new ways to prepare foods that you may not think you like. I am not going to lie - a CSA box can be challenging for those (like me) who haven't spent a ton of time in the kitchen. All I can say is: the work is worth it and I do believe that we'll all be healthier come fall after a season of eating 'from the box;.

Being a CSA member is more than just about the eating - it is as much about learning as well! How to eat seasonally, how and where those veggies of yours come from, and who actually grows them are all things that we hope to help you learn about throughout this season.

And finally, I have to once again thank you all for signing up this season.

It is your dollars and your faith in us as farmers that has enabled us, and I mean all of us: Josh, Noah and I but also our amazing crew consisting of Adrian, Rachel, Eric, Lauren, Kaleb, Matt, Lilly,

THIS WEEK'S BOX

- Asparagus or Baby Broccoli
- Collard Greens
- Green Garlic
- Parsnips
- Pea Vine
- Radishes
- Spinach
- Tsoi - Sim
- Thyme
- Yellow Potatoes

Patrick, Mike K., Erik, Luke, Liz, Dustin and Susan to do what we love and that is grow great vegetables for folks like you.

And that's the news for the week. Remember, if you have any questions, comments, complaints or whatever, feel free to give me a jingle. I would love to help you out in anyway I can to make this 2011 CSA season an enjoyable and educational one for you. Here's to another year, may it be the best yet!

--Mike



Adrian, Eric and Kaleb planting winter squash with "old faithful": our one row steel-wheeled transplanter.

"Hello! This here is Mike's wife, Dani. I write this back page of the newsletter that includes veggie descriptions, preparation & storage tips, some nutritional info, & recipes. For those of you who don't know me from previous years, I'm a self-described "produce nerd", long-time gardener, & just generally food obsessed. I just retired from 10 years as the produce manager at our local food co-op in Viroqua to start a catering company called Rooted Spoon Culinary. We specialize in local/seasonal menus & love to use Driftless Organics produce, oil, & occasionally a crew member or two to help cook & serve. I also get to cook lunch for the crew one day a week. I hope you enjoy the season, the newsletter, & all your great produce!"

Asparagus or Baby Broccoli - It is the last of our asparagus and the first of our broccoli! This early broccoli is small, but tasty nonetheless and rest assured, there is much much more to come! The asparagus is great steamed, with salt, pepper, olive oil, lemon juice and nothing else.

Collard Greens - are super healthy for you! 1 cup of cooked collards contains almost 900% of your RDA of vitamin K, 120% of your vitamin A, almost 60% of your vitamin C, & over 20% of your calcium. It's easy to add collards into soups, stir-fries, pasta sauces, bean dishes, eggs, or sauteed with garlic. Best to strip the leaves off the stem, as it's rather tough. Store in plastic in the fridge for about 5 days.

Green Garlic - is basically baby garlic. Garlic is an amazing plant that provides for 3 different garlicky products spaced throughout the season - green garlic (now), scapes, & bulb (uncured in August, cured the rest of the season). No need to buy imported bulbs of garlic when green garlic is around - simply substitute chopped green garlic (the white & green parts are edible) for garlic cloves in recipes. Green garlic is a bit milder than cured cloves, so go ahead & double or triple amount called for in a recipe calling for cloves. Store in an open plastic bag in fridge & wash it well right before using as there may be some sand or soil hiding where leaf meets stem.

Parsnips - these spring dug parsnips are like a totally different vegetable than fall harvested ones. These are planted later in the season & overwintered like sprang spinach. The freeze/thaw cycle they undergo in the ground over the winter actually chemically changes them, developing more sugars & becoming more tender & less stringy than normal. Try using them in any cooked carrot recipe instead of carrots. They have a sweetness that is super tasty in soups, stir-fries, roasted or sauteed vegetables. Their high mineral content will be most preserved if you don't peel them. Try the Parsnip Puree recipe below as a bed for grilled chicken or fish or roast pork alongside some lightly steamed asparagus or wilted greens.

Pea Vine - turn your dinner or salad into a gourmet meal! Their sweet pea flavor & cute little tendrils are just plain classy. Eat them fresh or barely wilt them by tossing them wet into a hot pan & stirring a few times. Store in plastic, in with your other bunched greens.

Radishes - you will either be getting a bunch of the French Breakfast variety (long and oval with red tops and white bottoms) or Cherry Belle (round and red). The flavors are similar: radish-y. Try diced in a salad, or simply with salt. For storage, it is best to remove the tops (you CAN cook them up, if you really like greens) and store the radishes in a plastic bag in your crisper drawer.

Spinach - is really really nice looking this year. We are super excited about this variety, called "Marabu". We hope you enjoy it as much as we have been. It is best eaten raw, in a salad (with your pea vine, perhaps?). Try with blue cheese, walnuts and your favorite vinaigrette. Store in its plastic bag for up to a week.

Thyme - one of my favorite fresh herbs! To remove the leaves, grab the top with one hand & strip downward with your other hand's pinkie & pointer finger. Use thyme in a variety of savory dishes that have potatoes, chicken or pork. Great in soups, pastas, or stew; or try it in the parsnip recipe to the right. Add to your favourite vinaigrette for a wonderful salad dressing. Store in plastic in your fridge. The flowers are edible too!

Tsoi-Sim - is a yellow-flowering bunched Asian green in the Brassica family (broccoli, mustard, cabbage, kale, etc.) that is high in vitamins A & C as well as potassium, calcium, fiber, & many phytonutrients. You can steam or saute it, or simmer it in Asian-style soups or Thai curries. Best to separate the stalks from the leaves/flowering tops & cook them a bit longer, as they take longer to cook. Just add the leaves/flowering tops at the last moment of cooking to retain their bright green color & body. Store in plastic bag & try to use up within a few days.

Yellow Potatoes - 2 pounds of the last of our storage potatoes. These are great roasted or mashed. Store in their paper bag, in a cool and dark place.

Spicy Stir-Fried Tsoi-Sim

1 bunch Tsoi Sim (or equivalent amount of other coarse greens, like pea vine, kale, collard greens or even radish tops)
 1 Tbsp. oil
 1/4 tsp. whole coriander seed (optional)
 2 Tbsp. green garlic, coarsely chopped
 1 Tbsp. rice vinegar
 1 Tbsp. tamari/soy sauce
 1 tsp. sugar
 1/2 tsp. fish sauce (optional)
 1/4 - 1/2 tsp. hot chili sauce, to taste

Rinse Tsoi Sim, separate stems into & cut into 1" pieces. Reserve the damp leaves & flowering tops. In a medium saute pan, heat oil over medium heat. Add coriander seeds, green garlic, & Tsoi Sim stems. Stir & cook for about a minute or two. Meanwhile, mix vinegar, tamari, sugar, fish sauce, & hot sauce in a small bowl until sugar dissolves. Turn up the heat & add Tsoi Sim leaves/flowering tops to pan with the sauce & continue to stir until leaves are just wilted, about 1 minute. Remove from heat & serve with rice fried tofu or grilled chicken. Serves 2 - 3.

Parsnip Puree

1 1/2 pounds parsnips, scrubbed & cut into 2" pieces
 3 Tbsp. butter
 1/2 cup half & half (or heavy cream or milk or creme fraiche, as you prefer)
 2 Tbsp. green garlic tops, coarsely chopped
 2 Tbsp thyme, chopped
 salt & pepper to taste

Cover parsnips with cold water in a medium saucepan with lid. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, & simmer until tender (about 15 minutes). Drain into a colander, return to pan, add butter & half & half & puree (with masher, immersion blender, or in food processor. Season with green garlic tops, thyme, salt, & pepper. Serves 4 - 5.

Welcome to the Driftless Organics CSA Program!



As we begin this 2011 season, we have nothing but high hopes for a season of plentiful, and great tasting fruits and vegetables that continue to satisfy you week after week. Whether you are a first time member or a seasoned CSA veteran, we want you to get the most out of your vegetable boxes. Make no bones about it, learning to eat the contents of your box can be challenging at times. I mean, we all know what to do with strawberries (you stuff 'em in your face!!), but what do you do with a bunch of broccoli-raab? (you'll find out...)

We aim to help you through this endeavour with a newsletter that includes tasty recipes and food tips that focus on the veggies in each week's box. And, as we all know, the internet is a great resource to find just the right recipe for what you crave. Our website alone has over 200 useful recipes and oodles of cooking tips for lots of different veggies and herbs. Most of all, what I find helps the most when you are faced with a box of vegetables that you are unsure of what to do with is to be creative. Don't let past preconceptions about certain vegetables hold you back. Try new things! I used to turn my nose up at brussel sprouts until Dani, my wife and newsletter recipe-writer, prepared a wonderful dressing for them and now I love them.

Throughout this entire CSA experience we hope you will remember that we are a part of a nationwide, no, a worldwide movement towards a more sustainable, healthy and just food system; one that exemplifies the things we care about, like treating the earth a little better and making our ecological footprint just a bit smaller. We, the farmers and you, the eaters, have joined forces to take steps towards positive change.

In addition, we want y'all to learn a bit more about how we grow your food. Through the newsletters, our web site, and our facebook page, we are going to try to show you some of what goes on here on the farm from day to day. We encourage and welcome farm visits and please, if you have any questions feel free to give Mike a call (608-624-3735) or e-mail (csainfo@driftlessorganics.com).

With these ideas in mind, we embark on the 2011 season with gusto. From the bottom of our plows to the tip top of the corn tassel, we wish you the most enjoyable CSA season you have ever experienced.

Some Important Things to Remember this Season :

Your pick up site, be it a garage or parking lot, co-op or cafe, has a designated site coordinator. This hardworking soul (or souls) help us out in ensuring that you all get your boxes. They are just another, albeit extremely important and valuable, piece of the puzzle of the CSA program. Let's all try our best to make their job as easy as can be by not forgetting your box!

One of the hardest things about belonging to a CSA farm is remembering to pick up your box. If you do indeed forget your box, the first thing to do is call your site coordinator and let them know. Arrangements can be made for a later pick up but just keep in mind that this can't become a habit. Your site coordinator is not responsible for your box after the pick up time and if arrangements haven't been made - your box will be redistributed so the food doesn't go to waste.

Your veggies and fruit come in a reusable food-grade wax box and we would love it if you could bring your box back to your pick up site so that we can reuse it. Better yet, bring your own bag along to transfer your goodies so that you can leave your box at your site. There will be a place for you to put your box and here are instructions on the back of this sheet on how to break down your box without ripping it. Please be careful, because a ripped bottom on a box is box wasted. Unfortunately, we can't reuse the pints that your berries and tomatoes will be coming in. However, the plastic pints can be recycled and the green pulpy pints we use can be composted!

Something that we encourage throughout the entire season is feedback. Of course we LOVE to hear the good stuff and we sure appreciate the compliments, but we want to hear the not-so-good stuff as well. Please feel free to e-mail us with any questions or concerns, complaints or desires. Anything! We are open to it all and we are constantly striving to improve our farm and one of the best ways to find out how is by listening to our members! You can e-mail us at csainfo@driftlessorganics.com or call the office at 608.624.3735.

REUSING THOSE WAX BOXES

As you see, we deliver your veggies in wax boxes. We like to reuse the boxes as many times as we can for obvious reasons like recycling and keeping our expenses down. It is up to you to return your box without ripping it and this can be tricky as they are a bit difficult to break down for the novice wax box-breaker-downer. Here's a few helpful tips:



STEP 1: Turn your box upside down. Grip flap with fingers and squeeze together allowing flap to fold along its manufactured fold line. Here's the key: **SQUEEZE** the flap together, don't **PULL**. Squeeze=yes. Pull=no. This is where the majority of the tears occur and when the box tears here, it is useless to us as it no longer is strong enough to hold your veggies.



STEP 2: Flip box and repeat step 1.



STEP 3: After both side flaps have been released, the two larger flaps should easily bend upwards until all four flaps are standing upright.



STEP 4: At this point, box should be loose and able to flatten easily. Like many things in life, **don't force it**. Gently break down box and flatten. Now you can stick it in the empty (larger) wax box provided at your site for empties.

Thank you for helping us reuse these boxes... every little bit helps keep costs down.