



ONE POTATO TWO

NEWS FROM THE FIELDS OF DRIFTLESS ORGANICS

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Week 18! What a beautiful week it has been! With the sun shining and the warm breeze blowing, we feel like we can accomplish just about anything. And with 5 acres of potatoes, an acre of carrots, half an acre of parsnips and a slew of other crops still left to harvest, this is just the kind of weather we need...

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO...

As you probably all know, Driftless Organics has evolved quite a bit over the years. What started out as a quarter acre of potatoes grown by a very young Josh and Noah has now morphed into over 200 acres of vegetables, sunflowers, small grains, pasture (for beef cattle) and all sorts of different perennial crops. Even though our farm has seen its share of changes, one thing has remained constant and that is our desire to produce high quality organic goods on a scale substantial enough to make an impact on the regional food system.

Now, what exactly does it mean to produce goods *on a substantial scale*? Well, I guess we've always believed that we want to be bigger than a simple market garden. We have always wanted to have enough equipment, infrastructure and know-how to be a significant player in the regional food scene. This isn't an ego thing or big business thing for us, just a desire to grow a lot of good food and earn a decent living doing it.

The going towards this goal has certainly had its set of challenges. In 2007, the first year that "we went big" we got the bejeezus knocked out of us by a killer flood. But, with the help of a very understanding CSA membership and a very forgiving banker, we kept on keeping on.

4 years later, we are 650 CSA members strong and at a scale that suits us. We've got the equipment we need and even

though we learn countless hard lessons week to week, we are seeing some of our hard work pay off.

Where we are now is exactly where we want to be (*isn't THAT a good feeling?*). We grow food primarily for all of you and honestly this is our number one passion. No other group of folks appreciates the veggies that we grow more than you all do - and for that we are forever grateful.

We also grow a significant amount of produce for our wholesale accounts as well. You can find our kale and sweet peppers at certain Whole Foods stores and co-ops as well. And hopefully, this fall and winter, our signature potato bags will make their appearance in the Twin Cities co-ops again.

On top of it all, we harvest and wash up a bunch of fine looking produce and haul it down to the Dane County Farmers Market every Saturday. This is one of the largest farmers markets in the country and we so proud to be a part of it.

So, at the end of the day, why do we do we choose to grow as much as we do? The scale does certainly lend itself to a certain amount of chaos and stress. With 10 -12 employees and so much acreage to manage, we have our fair share of insane, busy days. When late season burnout looms, we have to remind ourselves why exactly we've decided to take this path.

Josh, Noah and I all have our distinct reasons - but they all revolve around that central notion of searching for that wonderful feeling of knowing that we are doing something good for the world. What we do may be pretty small and insignificant, but at least its *something* good, right?

And I do believe that we, through it all, always try to stay true to our philosophies of caring for the land and leaving things better off than how

THIS WEEK'S BOX

- Apples
- Black Spanish Radishes
- Garlic
- Green Top Carrots
- Green Leaf Lettuce
- Heart of Gold Squash
- Mint
- Red Kuri Squash
- Salad Turnips
- Spinach
- Sweet Peppers
- Sweet Potatoes
- Tomatoes
- Yellow & Red Onions

they were when we got there. To stay true to some of these ideals, we firmly believe that we have to be a farm of a larger scale. You see, things like cover cropping, soil mineralization, using biofuels and taking vegetable fields out of production (to give them rest and keep them healthy) all cost money. These are actions that we know we won't see an immediate return from, but all things we feel are necessary to keep true to our ideals of being organic *and* sustainable.

We still have a very long row to hoe to get to where we ultimately want to be with the farm. We make our share of mistakes, compromises and even failures. But farming, like life, is all about learning from our mistakes, sticking true to our ideals and hopefully, just maybe, ending the day with a satisfactory smile on our faces.

STORAGE BOXES

Don't forget to order your November and December storage boxes! Each box is about twice the size of your current CSA box and are chock full of veggies like carrots, winter squash, onions, potatoes, beets, and yes, sweet potatoes! Follow the CSA links on our website to order. Hurry, they are selling out quick!

HELP! We need your empty wax boxes back! We are running low and don't think we'll have enough for the rest of the season. Please remember to return your used CSA boxes to your pick up site. THANKS!!!

THIS WEEK'S BOX

Apples - Did you know the the Driftless region is the apple capital of Wisconsin? We wanted to share the love so we decided to purchase some apples from our neighbors, Turkey Ridge Orchard. The variety is Liberty and they are organic and tasty - a sweet and crisp dessert apple. Enjoy!

Black Spanish Radish - a very beautiful winter-type radish (growing over a long season & harvested in the Fall, potentially for storage into the winter versus the quick growing "spring" bunching radishes we're more used to) that can be quite bity. I would suggest putting it plastic & stashing it in the back of your fridge, to be unearthed with pleasant surprise sometime in December or later, as it's spicy radish flavor mellows with age. Cooking also mellows it's flavor - try it in stir fries or miso soup.

Celeriac - a wonderful Fall veggie that can be eaten raw or cooked, both the bulbous root & the green stems/leaves (note - the stems & leaves are much more strongly celery-flavored than grocery store California celery - doesn't take much). To use the bulb - cut off the mangled bottom for a nice flat foundation & then cut off the skin with a very sharp knife. The delicious white insides oxidize quickly once cut, so immediately cook or, if using raw, plop in

cold water with some lemon juice in it, to keep from browning (like you would a cut apple). Adds body (when pureed) & wonderfully nutty & rich celery flavor to soups, stews, au gratins, & mashes. Pairs super well with potatoes.

Salad Turnips - these mild, sweet turnips are delicious sliced thin on salads, cut into wedges on a veggie tray, or steamed, simmered, or roasted.

Green Top Carrots - the nicest crop of mid-season carrots we've ever had - big & fat, nice & orange, & great flavor.

Green Leaf Lettuce - make sure to wash it well, as grit likes to hide in its nether-regions. The best lettuce for sandwiches. Keeps best in plastic with a paper towel in the fridge.

Heart of Gold Squash - Look for the roundish squash that is about the size of a softball and white, yellow & green. Heart of gold is a sweet little squash! Smaller size, more tender skin, sweeter flesh, & dryer texture than your average winter squash.

Mint - great for a night time tea or in the recipe below. Store in a plastic bag in the fridge for up to 5-7 days.

Red Kuri Squash - this is a beautiful deep orange squash with deep orange dry flesh. Cut in half, scoop out seeds, & roast cut side down at 350 degrees for 30-40 minutes. I like to oil the cut side first so it doesn't stick to the pan & you end up with a pretty caramelized top. Store at room temperature on your counter or in the pantry.

Spinach - Beautiful spinach for a salad! We've washed it, but suggest washing it again to get it super clean (dig out that salad spinner!). Best if used up within a few days.

Sweet Peppers - Perhaps the last of the sweet peppers, you will be getting two pimientos (squat pumpkin shaped peppers) and one red bullhorn (long and pointed).

Sweet Potatoes - can't get enough of these! Bake them whole, or cut up & tossed in oil, or added to soups, chili, curries, mashes, & casseroles. Remember, sweet potatoes are like pets and do NOT like to be refrigerated. Keep them on your counter or in the pantry.

Tomatoes - just a couple romas and slicers to round out the season. And what a season it has been! Try a slice of tomato on a bagel for breakfast!

Red Pepper & Mint Sauce

1 medium red sweet pepper (or Italian frying pepper or 2 pimienta peppers), cut in a few pieces
 1 large or 2 small cloves garlic, smashed
 1/2 hot red pepper (cayenne or jalapeno), or a pinch of cayenne powder
 2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
 1 tsp. fresh lemon zest
 salt & pepper to taste
 3 Tbsp. roasted or raw toasted almonds, coarsely chopped
 1/3 cup loosely packed mint leaves

Combine all ingredients but mint in a blender or food processor. Pulse until almost smooth. Add mint leaves & pulse a few more times, until mint is chopped. Serve with grilled or roasted chicken, lamb, fish, or vegetables.

Sweet Potato Apple Sausage Bake

Try this incredibly easy & comforting dish from Noah's mother-in-law.

3 parts sweet potatoes, peeled & cut into 1" cubes
 2 part apples, cubed a bit smaller
 1 part Italian sausage, rolled into small balls
 1 part onions, cut into thick pieces (optional)
 salt & pepper to taste

Mix all ingredients into a single layer in a cast iron pan or baking dish. Bake at 350 for about 45 minutes or 400 degrees for about 30 minutes. No need for oil, the grease from the sausage & juice from the apples suffice for moisture.

Honey Glazed Carrots

1 lb. carrots (or mixture of carrots & parsnips, rutabagas, turnips)
 2 Tbsp. butter (or olive oil)
 1 1/2 Tbsp. honey
 1/2 c. water
 salt & pepper to taste
 Fresh herb such as thyme, rosemary, or mint (optional)

Scrub carrots. Slice carrots into 1/2 inch diagonals & combine them with butter, honey, & 1/2 cup water in a large skillet or sauce pan over medium-high heat. Bring to simmer, lower to medium heat, & cook until carrots are tender (but not mushy) & most of liquid has reduced (10-15 minutes). (If you are combining carrots with other veggies, add quicker cooking veggies like peppers or peas half way through cooking.) Season with salt, pepper, & fresh herb of choice (if using), & serve. Makes 4-5 servings.