

# CSA Newsletter, Week 10 of 20

August 13, 2007

This is a Healthy Alternative 'B' week.

## Farm Report

*by Farmer Tim*

Greetings from Erehwon! As we reach the halfway point, the weather continues to cooperate to provide favorable growing conditions for most crops. The exception has been lettuce and some greens that have suffered in the hot weather. At Mongerson our focus is on developing a planting and cultivation strategy that reduces the need for hand weeding and we have a couple of plots now that look pretty clean. For larger plants like melons, squash, tomatillos, and cucumbers, we lay out the drip line, transplant the seedlings along the line and put down a thick layer of straw around and between the seedlings and on top of the drip tape to keep weeds from growing. Rows are spaced about 7 feet apart to allow the big tiller to make two or three passes to skim off the weeds before the plants get too large.

At the Konen farm we are beginning to see some ripe winter squash and gourds and pumpkins are on the way. In a week or so Mike will transplant a fall crop of broccoli, cabbage, and some other crops. We are hoping to get an assist from Mike to mechanically harvest our potatoes -- the ground is just too hard for us to dig them by hand.

Last week our Wednesday volunteer crew, Robin Migalla, Steve Trisko, and Chuck Wettergreen, troopers all, came out to help weed, harvest, and do some transplanting. Candy Crawford and her younger daughter Ellie weeded in the herb garden while her older daughter attended farm camp, an activity that was cut short by rain, wind, and thunder.

On Friday, Adam, a friend of Rachel who has been helping in the store, came out to volunteer. He works for an organization called World Relief that helps resettle refugees from countries in turmoil around the world. He helped us spread straw around the fall crop of summer squash and harvest some crops.

On Sunday Kurt Bench came out to help and we did some hand weeding in the melon patch. He happened to spot our farm and asked if he could help out a bit. As we weeded some long rows, we discovered he grew up on a farm in Ohio, got an Ag degree from Ohio State, manages nursery production for a local company, and has a keen interest in organic growing. He has a lot of farming knowledge and is going to help us figure out how to grow some cover crops to improve the soil at Mongerson. And, yup, he has a relative who is quite famous in the baseball arena!

We had some visitors at HPM on Sunday, Katie Prochaska and Mike Bollinger who are going to give us a hand in further developing the farm. Katie and Mike have a lot of experience working with Seed Savers' Exchange, managing Eliot Coleman's farm in Maine, and are now working for

the Chicago Botanic Garden and helping develop urban vegetable gardens around Chicago. We got a lot of ideas on building soil, growing intensively, and making use of greenhouses. They'll be back to work with us again.

At HPM our heirloom tomato patch is starting to produce ripe fruit and on Saturday we picked more than one Brandywine (large, pink color), Limony (yellow), Cherokee Purple (purple and red), Abe Lincoln (deep red) and Mortgage Lifter (large red fruit.). Mortgage Lifter supposedly got its name from the man who bred it during the depression. The tomato became so popular that he sold enough plants and seeds to pay off his mortgage! These heirloom tomatoes typically have great taste but because of their thin skins must be handled carefully. We often pick them several days before they are ripe to prevent critters from digging in to feast on the ripe fruit!

## Volunteer Days

We are scheduling two special volunteer days for this fall in conjunction with subscriber potlucks.

On Saturday, September 15, we plan on harvesting the bulk of the winter squash. (We may harvest some small quantities prior to that, but this is when we will harvest the bulk of it.) Volunteers will meet for lunch at Heritage Prairie and then caravan down to the Konen Farm to harvest squash. Around 4:00 the caravan will head back to Heritage Prairie, where we will be setting up for another Subscriber/Farmer potluck. The Volunteers do not need to bring a dish to pass—their sweat and sore muscles will be their contribution—but if they wish to do so, they can leave them at HPM while they harvest. The potluck will begin at 4:30 and end around 7:30. You do not need to volunteer in order to attend the potluck. In fact, those hungry volunteers will need lots of hearty food to feed the hearty appetites they will have worked up harvesting squash. Squash harvesting is a good family activity, but possibly physically difficult for smaller children.

Then, on Saturday, October 06, we will have a similar event for harvesting pumpkins and ornamental gourds. Gourds are small, and we also have a lot of mini pumpkins, so this might be a very good activity in which to involve smaller children.

Also, next week (the week of the 20<sup>th</sup>) we are scheduling another *Feast on the Farm*. We could really use some help on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of that week cleaning up the property for the event and helping set up tables and tents. Call the store (630-715-5475) to schedule that.

## CSA Produce Forecast

*by Farmer Tim*

### **This week's offerings:**

Slicing tomatoes (Early Girl) and hopefully an heirloom or two.  
Small plum tomatoes (good for salads or salsa) or black grapes (great flavor!)  
Herb bunch

A small tasting bag of amaranth (beautiful leaves can go into salads)

Potatoes

Corn (later in the week)

Sweet bell peppers (green and purple)

Lettuce (later in the week)

Winter squash (butternut, spaghetti, acorn)

Tomatillos

Garlic

Cucumbers

## **Future offerings:**

## **College Bound**

It is that time of year again where young people head off to school. This year we have several workers heading off to the halls of higher education. Sweet Ashley, that cheerful young woman who helps Sarah in the store, is heading off on Thursday to Kenyon College. Ashley isn't sure yet what she wants to major in, but says it absolutely will *not* have anything to do with math or science. Since Ashley's mom is not only a subscriber, but a friend of Bob and Bronwyn's, I'm sure we'll be kept posted on Ashley's whereabouts in the future.

Unlike Ashley, Cowboy Rick (he of hiding in the apple tree at Farm Camp fame) knows exactly what he wants to do. He has already left town, heading off to Kewanee where he is enrolled in a two year equine program, after which he wants to head off to Montana or South Dakota where he will be a real cowboy on a large ranch.

Last, but not least, farm worker Steph Sexton, will be returning to Columbia to resume her studies in fiction writing. Steph says she wants to continue working for us a couple of days a week, so we will probably continue to see Steph—at least until the burden of academic life causes her to scale back on her extra-curricular activities. Just think, when she is a best selling author, we can all say we knew her when she was barefoot and muddy on the farm!

## **Heritage Prairie Happenings**

*by Beth Propst*

## **Feast on the Farm.**

The next Feast on the Farm is scheduled for August 23. The menu will probably be similar to the planned menu for the July feast, since we didn't get a chance to use that one. To sign up, see Sarah in the store or visit Moveable Feast in Geneva. The last one of the season is scheduled for October 12.

## **Dishing it Out**

Last Thursday's cooking class was well attended and a great success. It was the first in a series that is planned for the first Thursday of the month. The next event will be on September from 6:00-7:00 pm. The subject will be The ABC's of School Menu Planning. More details will be available later.

## **Farm Camp**

Last week was the last week of Summer Farm Camp. It was such a success that we are thinking of scheduling weekend farm camps for the fall. Watch this newsletter for more details.

## **Pages from Grandma Beth's Cookbook**

*by Beth Propst*

## **Recipes on [www.hpmfarm.com](http://www.hpmfarm.com)**

Thank you to those of you who have added recipes to the recipe forum.

<http://www.hpmfarm.com/?p=cfbbs&a=forum.view&fid=11>

Anyone who has an account can post a recipe. Go to the website and click on "get an account" to get an account. Once you have completed the form, the web site will send you a password almost immediately. Depending on your security systems, this might go to your junk mail folder so check that folder if it doesn't show up in your regular mail folder within 10 minutes. (Once you log in with this password you can change your password by going to the profile section and changing your password.) Anyone who is logged in can post on the forums.

## **Winter Squash**

Last Week we harvested the very first winter squash. Well...some of them were a little on the unripe side, but Farmer Tim was impatient. In addition to being incredibly nourishing, winter squash are delicious. Most have a mildly sweet flavor and fine texture. This vegetable that was once such an important part of the diet of the Native Americans that they buried it along with the dead to provide them nourishment on their final journey. Winter squash are relatives of both the melon and the cucumber and come in many different varieties. While each type varies in shape, color, size and flavor, they all have hard protective skins that are difficult to pierce that gives them a long storage life of up to six months and a hollow inner seed containing cavity. Pumpkins are the best known winter squash, but certainly not the most delicious.

Varieties of winter squash include:

- Butternut squash: Shaped like a large pear, this squash has cream-colored skin, deep orange-colored flesh and a sweet flavor.
- Acorn squash: With harvest green skin speckled with orange patches and pale yellow-orange flesh, this squash has a unique flavor that is a combination of sweet, nutty and peppery.
- Buttercup squash: dark green and blocky, with a gray "button" on the blossom end, they have deep orange, fiberless flesh with a rich, sweet flavor.
- Delicata squash: often called the sweet potato squash because of its wonderful flavor, delicata is commonly shaped like a cucumber and heavily striped in green and white, although some hybrids (like carnival and sweet dumpling) have a more squatty shape.
- Hubbard squash: A larger-sized squash that can be dark green, grey-blue or orange-red in color, the Hubbard's flavor is less sweet than many other varieties.
- Turban squash: Green in color and either speckled or striped, this winter squash has an orange-yellow flesh whose taste is reminiscent of hazelnuts.
- Spaghetti squash: This squash, shaped like a large egg, has white flesh which can be separated into strands after cooking. Its color, flavor. And texture set it apart from other winter squashes and is usually prepared quite differently.
- Pumpkins: The pumpkin with the most flesh and sweetest taste is the small sized one known as sugar or pie pumpkin, the latter referring to its most notable culinary usage.

### **Tips for Preparing Winter Squash:**

After washing winter squash, cut it in half and remove the seeds and fibrous material in the cavity. Depending upon the recipe preparation, you can either use it peeled or unpeeled. Alternatively, pierce the squash near the stem with a knife to allow any steam to escape.

Bake in a 350°F (175°C) oven for 45 minutes to an hour, until a knife can be easily inserted near the stem. Some people prefer to wrap it in foil or invert it on a rack over water to steam it while baking. You can also steam winter squash or cook it in the microwave.

As you would before carving a pumpkin, cut out a small circle around the stem, remove this piece from the squash, and scoop out the seeds and fibrous material in the cavity.

### **A Few Quick Serving Ideas:**

Top puréed cooked winter squash with cinnamon and maple syrup. (Okay, how bad could that be?)

Steam cubes of winter squash and then dress with olive oil, tamari, ginger and pumpkin seeds.

Top "strings" of spaghetti squash with pasta sauce or sauté in butter and top with shredded cheese.

Add cubes of winter squash to your favorite vegetable soup recipe.

Beth, Tim, Bronwyn, and Bob

P.S. Please email us with questions, comments, suggestions, recipes, and we will include them in future newsletters. We really hope to get a lot of recipes so that in a year or two we can create the Heritage Prairie Market Cookbook.

All newsletters will be posted on the HPM web site in the Forums section by 8:00 Monday morning.

If you need to contact us during the week, please call the Heritage Prairie Market phone (630-715-5475), Beth's cell phone (630-485-9964) or Tim's cell phone (630-485-9963). E-mail works if you do not have an immediate need, but response may take 24-48 hours during busy times. Thanks.