

CSA Newsletter, Week 13 of 20

September 03, 2007

This is a Healthy Alternative 'A' week.

Farm Report

by Farmer Tim

Weather here is awesome – makes ya wanna spend all day outside. The lovely sun and dry weather have dried things up nicely, and we have resulted in much less damage to crops than we thought last week. We have still lost a lot of tomato plants and some other things, but the winter squashes and pumpkins are in great shape.

At Mongerson we are nursing along our late-planted melon patch hoping for a good harvest if frosts are late. We improved our weed strategy in the melons and have done only a small amount of hand weeding. All future plantings of large plants and vine crops will use this method. We are also getting ready to plant cover crops to improve soil fertility. We have a giant pile of horse manure and wood shavings that needs to be turned. Later we will spread some on the fields to give the earthworms something to digest over the winter. We found a couple of rows of late cucumbers that are just starting to bear and they need to be weeded. Now! Last week we pulled out the nets and stakes from our pea area and tilled that piece of ground. Jenny Gresko helped with that project – disengaging the netting was quite a chore!

At HPM we did some field cleanup and pulled out the early tomatoes and hauled the cages and stakes back to their winter home at Mongerson. Kurt Bench and Marte Freke put in some great efforts to help get this work done. We finished fall planting in the unprotected beds and this week will plant our two raised beds that have row cover protection. We should have a little kale and collards soon (finally!), carrots and beets are about a week or two from harvest, the late planting summer squash is coming along (we harvested some babies for Beth to sell at her Saturday market last week), and there is a chance to get some late-planted okra. We've been patching up our irrigation system and are adding a few lines—a sure sign we'll get more rain soon as Mother Nature laughs at our rather pitiful efforts to control Her. Thanks to Robin Migalla and Steve Trisko who helped with our Wednesday harvest and lettuce planting.

At the Konen Farm we have been harvesting a few winter squash, gourds and pumpkins and are hoping for some volunteers to join us on September 15 to help us bring in the rest. Mike has one more stand of corn which should be harvestable in a couple of weeks. We have been harvesting a few potatoes with help from Mike who pulled a plow down the potato rows to get them to the surface so we could scoop them up. The harvest has been a little disappointing due to damage done by potato beetles and excessive moisture.

Volunteer Days/Customer-Subscriber Potlucks

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. Volunteers who are attending the potluck can leave their dish at HPM before going down to the Konen Farm. 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. We have decided to provide some items and a nominal fee (less than \$10 per family) will be charged to cover these costs. We would like an approximate count so that we can be sure to have enough yummy items on hand. E-mail Beth at alpropst7@yahoo.com or call the store at 630-715-5475 to make your reservation.

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.

CSA Produce Forecast

by Farmer Tim

This week's offerings:

This week we will harvest some different kinds of winter squash, lettuce, swiss chard, herbs, heirloom tomatoes, potatoes, kohlrabi, baby summer squash, red mustard, and a few more items.

Heritage Prairie Happenings

by Beth Propst

Dishing it Out

The next event will be on September from 6:00-7:00 pm. The subject will be The ABC's of School Menu Planning.

Pages from Grandma Beth's Cookbook

by Beth Propst

Recipes on 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

I keep getting more questions about winter squash, so I will give you even more information and ideas.

Peeling winter squash can be a challenge to the novice. The thin-skinned varieties (acorn, butternut, delicata and sweet dumpling) can be peeled with a paring knife or vegetable peeler.

Most recipes using these varieties call for cutting the squash in half. Position the squash on a cutting board, stem end facing you. Place the blade of a heavy chef's knife horizontally along the length of the squash. With a hammer or mallet, repeatedly hit the back of the blade near the handle to drive it into the squash until it breaks in half.

Place the larger varieties (Hubbard and Turk's Turban) on newspaper and use a sharp cleaver to split the hard-rind open. Or use the chef's knife method described above. Once you have a slit cut, bang on a hard surface and pull apart. Pieces are easier to peel. With a spoon, scoop out the seeds and strings and discard, or set aside if you plan to roast the seeds. For instructions on roasting seeds, visit our website Pumpkins and More and substitute squash seeds in the recipe.

To cook winter squash, place unpeeled pieces cut sides down on a shallow baking dish and bake in a 350°F oven for 30 minutes or longer. Check for doneness by piercing with a fork or skewer. When tender, remove from the oven and allow the pieces to cool. Spoon out the soft flesh and mash with a fork or process in a blender or food processor. Peeled pieces can be cut into cubes and boiled until tender. Use with any recipe calling for cooked mashed or pureed squash. Or microwave the squash pieces on high for 15 minutes or longer.

Small acorn squash and spaghetti squash can be pierced in several places with a long-tined fork or metal skewer and baked whole. Piercing prevents the shell from bursting during cooking.

Place the squash on a baking dish and bake for 1 1/2 to 2 hours at 325°F. Test for doneness by squeezing the shell. When it gives a bit with pressure, it is done.

Stuffed Acorn Squash

3 acorn squash
4 medium apples, peeled, cored, and finely chopped
1 small orange, peeled, seeded, and finely chopped
1 cup cooked diced ham
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup butter

Cut squash in halves crosswise; remove seeds and fibers. Combine apples, orange, diced ham, brown sugar, and butter. Spoon mixture into the squash halves, dividing evenly. Place halves in shallow baking pans. Bake for about 55 to 65 minutes in a preheated 350° oven, or until tender.

Variations

Try leaving out the ham and adding raisins instead.

Wrap in foil and cook on the grill.

Add nuts—I think walnuts would be good.

Peel and cut up the squash and combine ingredients in a casserole dish instead. (Good for children (or husbands) who might be fooled by the sweetness into thinking this is NOT a veggie dish.)

Until next week...

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.