

# EREHWON FARM

Week 1-October 26, 2009

## Farmer Tim Reports

### Hello from a soggy Erehwon!

Last week we spent most of our time in our brightly colored rain suits and mud boots that were necessary to keep us comfortable in the elements. We covered several beds with plastic mini hoopouses in hope that we can continue to harvest cool-weather crops through December. We're trying to harvest the remainder of our potatoes to keep them from rotting and we're experimenting to determine whether a sieve or a net is better for snagging the little tubers. Also, we have nearly finished an 18" excavation of the floor of our small hoopouse to create a root cellar for storing our spuds. We're in progress of creating a hot bed to see if we can grow some additional crops through the late winter. We're nearly half finished digging a one hundred foot trench that will be filled with hot compost and covered with finished compost for growing plants. Nearby, our compost pile is smokin'!

We're in the process of sealing and insulating our small hoopouse and we'll be adding reflectors to increase the light and heat inside. If anyone is in need of some light therapy this winter, come on out on a sunny day and bask inside our dazzling little house! Our compost heater for this house is moving along and the thirty-foot pile along the north side of the house is half built and heating up nicely.

This week we were watching Farmer Tim who was racing back and forth to nearby merchants and struggling under armloads of pvc conduit, long rolls of plastic sheeting, used waterproof seed bags, weatherproof duct tape, and

bales of compressed pine wood shavings, normally used for horse bedding. "Did you get a horse?" the owner of the feed store asked. "No." "You know, you never use what you buy here in a normal way. You planted the bag of Horse Racing Oats, you used the bags of soybean meal, and alfalfa meal to fertilize your field instead of feeding chickens and rabbits, and now you're buying pine shavings but don't even have a horse! Okay, what are they for?" "Insulation," replied the impatient farmer as he scooted out the door, leaving the feed store lady with a puzzled expression on her face. Later we observed him scribbling in his notebook and muttering, "R-values...conductivity...straw bale houses...radiation reflection...heat retention mass...hot water recharge rate..." We're not saying he's crazy as a bedbug but some think he is definitely headed that way.

### In your boxes this week:

Fall garlic share plus a few cloves to plant in your garden RIGHT NOW! (You could, of course, eat them. ;-))

Spaghetti squash. Store for a month or so, cool and dry.

Rose Finn fingerling potatoes. Eat these now.

Health salad mix. Contents are different every week.

Bag of stew vegs. This will likely contain carrots, potatoes, red meat and nero tondo radishes, turnips, beets, and Jerusalem artichokes. Cut 'em up and throw 'em in your pot, no need to peel, just put everything in,

including the carrot tops. If you need to store, put 'em in a sealed bag in fridge.

Bag of stew greens. Beet greens, kale leaves, and turnip greens Chop 'em up and into the pot, stems and all. Wash, spin dry, cut up, and store in sealed bag in fridge.

Note that the list above is our plan but may change later in the week due to weather or other factors.

Remember, these veggies are mostly water. Eat some and you should feel full.

"Eat real food, not too much, and mostly plants." -- Michael Pollan, [In Defense of Food](#)

### Community Winter Market

What was formerly known as the Geneva Winter Market, has become the Community Winter Market sponsored by the Geneva Green Market, NFP. You'll still be able to purchase fresh, local food throughout the winter. Once the Geneva Green Market has ended for the season, the Community Winter Market is scheduled to be open from 9 am through 1 pm on Saturdays, starting November 7. It will be located at 11 N 5th St, Geneva IL 60134.

### Apples

Subscribers can purchase a bushel, about 40 pounds, (one apple variety per bushel for delivery subscribers) for \$20, and you can order multiple bushels. Please email us your order and pay after delivery or pickup.

## Grandma Beth's Cookbook

### Grandma Beth's Stew

Start with some stew meat cut into bite-sized pieces. Saute in olive oil in an electric frypan or dutch oven. (If you are going to use a crockpot, saute in a frypan and transfer to the crockpot for the last step.) Add sliced or coarsely chopped onions right away.

When the meat is brown on the outside, add your vegetables. Good stew vegetables include turnips, carrots, beets, potatoes, radishes, and any cooking greens. In the summertime (I don't usually make stew in the summer, but this year I did) I also add summer squash and tomatoes. Cut the veggies into bite-sized pieces before adding to the mix. Salt and pepper to taste and saute a little longer. Feel free to add other herbs and spices as you like. Then cover (here is where you transfer to a crockpot) and simmer until everything is tender—usually about 40 minutes. I usually do not add any water, but if it seems dry you can.

About 5 minutes before the stew is ready, add chopped garlic and stir well before replacing cover.

### Preparing Winter Squash

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.

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 ½ to 2 hours at 325°F. Test for doneness by squeezing the shell. When it gives a bit with pressure, it is done. Alternatively, wrap halved and seeded squash in aluminum foil and bake for 30-60 minutes in 325 degree oven or until soft enough to scoop out of the shell.

### Spaghetti Squash and Mushroom Casserole

3 pounds spaghetti squash, halved lengthwise and seeded  
 1 tablespoon olive oil  
 1 medium onion, chopped  
 1 (8 ounce) can sliced mushrooms  
 1 teaspoon dried basil  
 ¾ cup sour cream  
 ¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese  
 3 slices bread, cubed

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (205 degrees C).

Cook squash on a baking sheet in the preheated oven for 40 minutes, or until tender. Do not turn off the oven. Shred with a fork once cooled slightly, then transfer to a lightly oiled casserole dish, discarding shell.

Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a skillet over medium heat. Cook and stir the onions, mushrooms, and basil until onions are translucent and tender. Stir onion mixture and sour cream into the squash until well mixed. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and cover with bread cubes.

Bake in the preheated oven for 15 minutes, or until warmed through and top is lightly browned and toasted.