

Erehwon Farm

Newsletter Week 13–August 29, 2010

Farm Report

Hello from Erehwon!

Yeah for cooler weather! Last week was definitely a welcome respite for everyone working on the farm. Grandma Beth and Tim both had more energy. Even Bucky the farm dog acted more like his playful self.

The cooler weather means that the cucumbers have slowed down quite a bit. Now I know some of you have been really enjoying those cool cukes, but others of you will be glad that you are no longer receiving so many. And as many as we gave out to all of you, we were giving tubs of them away to various food pantries in the area. However, you are not out of danger yet, as the warmer weather of the past few days may get them started again.

The summer squash seem to still be going strong, but the squashes themselves are looking odder and odder. We suspect this is due to a lot of cross-pollination, something that happens more when it does not rain.

Last week we picked the first really ripe winter squash—some butternuts which were offered as a choice on Friday. Others will be coming soon, so don't be surprised to see butternuts, delicatas, or other winter squash in your shares this week.

The big tomatoes and the cherry tomatoes keep on coming. I know you all have been enjoying the little orange cherries, as they are pretty much everyone's favorites. They



Tropical rain forest or kale plants?

are a favorite of Bucky the Farm Dog as well. Last week when we were sorting through the tomatoes for subscriber pick up, we threw the bruised and badly split ones into a tub for composting. (We eat the ones that aren't split too badly, but some are dirty as well.) A little while later Bucky went to check out that tub of compostable stuff. When next we looked, all of the orange cherries were gone and Bucky was licking his lips contentedly. There's nothing like a sweet snack on the farm.

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Last week we were again able to provide a little of Farmer Tim's popular Health Mix, and hopefully we will be able to continue to provide salad greens from now into the fall. Don't look for spinach any time soon, though. Farmer Tim measured the soil temperature last week and it was 88 degrees. Now the optimum germination temperature for spinach is about 50-55, and anything above 70 is pretty much a no go. So Farmer Tim is up to his usual tricks, experimenting with methods to cool the soil temperature enough to plant spinach sometime soon.

We were hoping to be able to announce our fall CSA this week, but are still working out some of the details. We are going to have one and will announce all the details next week. We don't have a lot of slots, but regular subscribers will take precedence. We are currently planting for fall. Last year we had quite a bit of produce in the fall, both for the fall CSA and the winter market in Geneva that starts in November. We hope to do just as well, if not better, this year.

At the Farm This Week

This week's produce:

Salad mix, cherry tomatoes, chard, kale, potatoes, cucumbers, summer squash, butternut squash, big tomatoes, and a couple more items..

Special this week:

A very large bag of tomatoes for the asking. Delivery subscribers e-mail me by 9:00 am Tuesday

morning. Farm subscribers—just pick them out when you come or pick them yourself.

Pick Your Own:

-Squash blossoms: H4-5 (look for the small wooden stakes with numbers on the east or south ends of beds and see the farm map at the pick up station for areas)

-S1: herbs

Deals:

-Cherry tomatoes: You pick and give half to Farmer Tim.

Foraging:

-Purslane: a tasty and highly nutritious weed growing in many of our rows

Note: Delivery customers are welcome to come to the farm any time for the above activities. Call 630-485-9963 or 630-485-9964 to make sure someone will be there.

Farm Pick-up Times

Wednesday 4:00-6:30

Friday 2:30-5:30

Delivery Times (Tuesday)

1:00-1:30 Van leaves farm

1:45-2:15 Drop off at Wheaton

2:15-2:30 Drop off at Bartlett

2:30-2:45 Drop off at Elgin

From Farm to Food Desert

Black farmers need customers. Black Chicagoans need healthy food. Connecting them isn't as easy as it sounds.

The sun beat down on the vegetable stand on 115th Street, across from St. John Missionary Baptist Church in far south

Events

Every Thursday all summer long

[Geneva Green Market](#)

Every Saturday all summer long

[Community Farmer's Market at](#)

[Inglenook Pantry](#), 9:00-1:00

Saturdays starting June 26

[Batavia Farmer's Market](#)

Roseland. Fresh cantaloupes, yams, and tomatoes baked in the 90-degree heat. Three volunteers, organized by church leader Donnell Williams, waited patiently for customers behind the table, sipping ice water. Sweat beaded on Williams's forehead, but a smile never left his face. "It's a small start, but you've got to start somewhere," said Williams, 31. One of his helpers—actually, his mom—retreated to the car to listen to Rainbow/PUSH in the comfort of the air-conditioning.

This spring Williams signed up his church with the black farmers' market program run by Reverend Al Sampson of Fernwood United Methodist Church, on 101st Street in Roseland. Sampson's grand idea is to bring soul food grown by black people to black people in Chicago. Much of it comes from farm cooperatives in Arkansas and Mississippi, and a smaller amount from the African-American farming community of Hopkins Park in Kankakee County, Illinois.

I stood with Williams for 90 minutes, in which time only two customers showed up. One of them was a close friend who picked up \$5 worth of vegetables. The shortage of shoppers wasn't because of stiff competition: Roseland is frequently cited as one

of the city's most notorious "food deserts." Such places are not strictly without food—chips, candy, and greasy fried food are abundant. But the nearest supermarket to St. John is almost three miles away.

"We have fast-food places that's detrimental to our health," said Beverly Williams, Donnell's mother. "But in this particular neighborhood, I don't think there's any fresh market at all. It's difficult because it's so easy to get the fast food."

[\(More\)](#)

The 2010 ITEST Conference

"Food, Glorious Food" –
Bioengineered and Organically
Produced

September 25, 2010
9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Cardinal Rigali Center
20 Archbishop May Drive
St. Louis, Missouri 63119

We welcome all who are interested in how our food is grown, produced (organically or bio-engineered) and distributed. [\(More\)](#)

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Winter Squash—Part 1

Squash is native to the Americas. Thought to be the first food cultivated by Native American Indians, squash, along with beans and corn, is part of the Indian triad of the three most important food staples called the Three Sisters. Beans and corn completed the trio, and without those foods for sustenance, many ancient peoples would have ceased to exist.

The Three Sisters were vital to many civilizations. The corn and the beans made a complete protein, the squash supplied beta carotene, Omega 3's and Potassium. Whole communities could survive on these alone if game and other foods were scarce. They were also one of the first Companion Plantings, each contributing to the growth and well-being of the others. The corn supplied support for the beans to climb on, and shade for the squash plants during the heat of the day. The squash plants large leaves shaded the ground, prevented weeds, and deterred hungry wildlife that didn't like to walk through the fuzzy vines. The beans fixed nitrogen in the soil to feed the corn and the squash.

Squash seeds have been found in ancient Mexican archeological digs dating back to somewhere between 9,000 and 4,000 B.C. The first European settlers originally thought squash to be a type of melon since they had never seen them before.

Winter squash comes in many varieties and sizes. Unlike its summer counterparts, winter squash is harvested at a mature age, which makes the skin hard and inedible. The skin, however, is protective and increases its storage life. Winter squash can be stored for 3 months or longer in a cool, dry place between 55° and 60°F. Because of this, they were eaten all winter long, hence the name "Winter Squash."

Higher storage temperatures will shorten storage time, but will not alter the flavor. Storage temperatures below 50°F (as in a refrigerator) will cause squash to spoil more rapidly. If the squash needs to be refrigerated, it can be stored for 1 to 2 weeks. Cut pieces of squash should be tightly wrapped and refrigerated. Cooked, pureed squash can be frozen for use later as a side dish or to thicken, color, or flavor soups, sauces, or stews

The yellow and orange flesh of the winter squash is more nutritious and richer in complex

carbohydrates, such as beta carotene, than summer squash. Winter squash is always served cooked and, because of its tough skin, only the inside flesh is eaten.

Winter squash comes in a variety of sizes and shapes, from the over-sized Hubbard to the dainty Sweet Dumpling. We grow a number of varieties that you can expect to find in your share during the coming weeks.

Acorn

This acorn-shaped squash is one of the most widely available among the small winter squash. It measures about 6 inches around and weighs 1 to 2 pounds. Acorn squash is a good source of calcium. Baking is an excellent way to bring out the flavors of this squash.

Buttercup

This stocky squash is 6 to 8 inches in diameter, averaging 2 to 4 pounds. Its popularity stems from its sweet and creamy orange flesh. Its shortcoming is that it tends to be a bit dry. Baking or steaming can solve this problem; the dry flesh becomes smooth and tastes similar to a mixture of honey, roasted chestnuts, and sweet potato. Even more than baking, steaming softens the flesh and creates a thick puree.

Butternut

This elongated bell-shaped squash measures about a foot long and weighs an average of 2 to 4 pounds. Its popularity is due to its meaty, yet moderately sweet golden orange flesh. Because of its thin skin, this squash can easily be skinned with a vegetable peeler, which makes it easy to cut and prepare. Baking enhances its sweet, moist, and nutty flavors.

Delicata

A long oblong-shaped squash with a cream colored, green striped thick outer skin and a golden fine-textured inner flesh. Considered as a novelty squash, its size may range from 5 to 10 inches in length with an average weight of 1 to 2 pounds. This is one of the tastier winter squashes, with creamy pulp that tastes a bit like sweet potatoes, hence its other name—the Sweet Potato Squash.

Hubbard

This tear-shaped squash comes in several varieties: green (true), golden, blue, and baby blue. It ranges from dark green to orange and weighs from 5 to 50

pounds. Because of its size, Hubbard's popularity has decreased over the years. However, pre-cut portions of green and orange hubbard can be found in markets. Green hubbards are thick, sweet, and dry. Golden Hubbards—a smaller squash than the green or blue—are fairly sweet, but have a bitter aftertaste. We grow a smaller variety of Hubbard that is a little easier to manage.

Spaghetti

This oval-shaped yellow squash is also called the vegetable spaghetti. It averages 9 inches in length and may weigh 2 to 3 pounds. When cooked, the crisp, tender, spaghetti-like strands yield a mild lightly sweet and fresh taste. Keep in mind that the larger the vegetable, the thicker the strands and the more flavorful the taste.

Sweet Dumpling

This solid round squash is a perfect serving for one person. It is about the size of a large apple and weighs up to 1 pound. The skin is a warm cream color striped with ivy green, and it changes to butter color and orange during storage. The skin is relatively tender and can be eaten. The pale-yellow flesh is smooth, fine, and dry as a potato and produces a rich starchy, light to mild. Carnival is similar to Sweet Dumpling, but a little larger and streaked with orange. The flesh is also more orange than Sweet Dumpling.

Uses

To a certain extent, all of the winter squashes are interchangeable with the exception of the spaghetti squash. The darker the flesh, the richer the flavor tends to be. Acorn, Sweet Dumpling, and Carnival work well for stuffed squash recipes (you know—the ones with apples, raisins, brown sugar, and cinnamon). Because of their size, they are also a little more work to extract the flesh. Bigger squash=less work per cup of useable squash.

Baked Squash with Apples

This butternut squash casserole includes apples and is topped with a buttery spiced crumb topping with brown sugar.

1 small butternut squash (or other winter squash)
(about 2 lbs)
2 apples, cored, peeled, sliced
½ cup brown sugar, firmly packed
4 tablespoons butter, cold

1 tablespoon flour
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon nutmeg

Peel, seed, and cut squash into small slices. Place squash and apple slices in a baking dish, about 11-x 7-inches. Combine brown sugar, flour, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg; cut in butter with fork or pastry cutter until crumbly. Sprinkle crumbs evenly over sliced squash and apples. Cover and bake at 350° for 45 to 55 minutes.

Crockpot Squash with Apples

5 pounds butternut squash (or other winter squash)
4 cooking apples
½ cup butter, melted
1 cup brown sugar, packed
2 tablespoons flour
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon ground mace, cinnamon, or a combination

Cut squash in half and remove seeds, soft pulp, and fibers; peel and cut in 1/2-inch slices. Peel and core the apples; cut in 1/2-inch slices. Combine the melted butter, sugar, flour, salt and mace or cinnamon. Layer half of the butternut squash in the bottom of the crockpot; top with one half of the apple slices and half of the sugar and spice mixture. Repeat layers. Cover and cook on HIGH for 1 hour, then switch to LOW and cook 3 to 5 hours longer, or until butternut squash is tender.

[Summer Squash with Basil Chiffonade](#)

Follow the link to get the recipe complete with video.