

Fair Fields News

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On the Farm

We had our first frost scare last week. It wasn't even calling for any chance of frost, however, for two days running we woke up to find small patches of it in our yard. Thankfully none of the frost seems to have affected our crops. Of particular concern to us were the peppers, tomatoes and flowers, some of which have only just started to produce.

We have been impressed by our melons this year. Though not the sweetest we have had, they were surprisingly ripe given the cool weather this summer. Sometimes it is good to have faith and not get too worked up I guess...

Our onions are ready to harvest. We bent over the tops last week. This pinches off the growing tip, stopping the growth of new leaves and allowing it to seal at the top for better storage. Over the next few days we will pull all of the

onions out and lay them on drying tables in our barn. By mid to late September we will be giving larger quantities of cured onions that can be stored normally, in a dry dark cool part of your kitchen or basement. The cooking onions and shallots are ready and look great! Our red onions got into the ground a bit late so they will be a week or so behind the rest.

The squash is also ready for harvest. Most years the foliage of our squash is still alive at this time and so we wait to harvest our squash so they can grow and mature as much as possible. This year the cool wet weather led to a lot of early powdery mildew, which has decimated most of the foliage of most of our squash varieties. As a result, our squash are about as mature as they are going to get. We will start giving delicata and acorn squash this week and in the weeks ahead we will give butternut, buttercup,

hubbard and spaghetti squashes of various varieties.

The fields are slowly being laid to rest for the winter. It is always a nice feeling to finish with a field for the season as it means no more destruction of the life and structure in the soil and no more field work for us. Last week we spread composted manure, cultivated and planted oats and peas in our field for next year's garden, garlic and strawberries. It worked up well. The oats and peas went in on time and we have had some good rain so germination should be good. Together, we hope the cover crops and compost will give the field better fertility and soil structure than we had in this year's garden.

Sweet dreams...

Harvesting

- **Beets**
- **Carrots**
- **Chard**
- **Garlic**
- **Herbs**
- **Kale**
- **Lettuce**
- **Melons**
- **Onions**
- **Potatoes**
- **Raspberries**
- **Spinach**
- **Squash**
- **Tomatoes**



U-Pick Raspberries

The raspberries are coming along. We will be giving picked raspberries to the CSA for the next 3-4 weeks, depending on the weather (as it cools the berries go downhill...).

We also invite you to pick your own berries. The last few years we offered unlimited u-pick. This year we are attempting to start

to build a u-pick business and as a result are only offering 4 u-picked pints free per CSA share for the season. After that we will be charging \$3.75 per pint or \$7.50 per pound (the same price as for non-members).

We have pint containers which you can return, or purchase for 10 cents

each. We also encourage you to bring your own containers.

Picking days will be Thursday to Saturday from 12-7 pm to begin with, though if we start getting a lot of berries we will also open Tuesdays. I will keep you posted on the latter. If you plan to come pick, please let me know ahead of time

so I can confirm picking conditions with you.

Please extend this information to any friends, family, neighbours and coworkers, you think might be looking to pick non-certified organic raspberries.

Hope to see you out in the patch!

Delicata and Acorn Squash



Delicata

This week we will be giving delicata squash. We hope to have enough for all members, though the lower yield we have this year (due to cool wet weather) means that some of you may instead receive acorn squash.

Delicata squash is treated as a winter squash, but is actually more closely related to summer squash cultivars such as zucchini, patty pan, crook neck and other members of *Cucurbita Pepo*. As with all other squashes, delicata is a new world crop. The first record of delicata squash comes from an illustration in the mid 1800's (Wikipedia).

Many squashes require a short warm dry curing period, to help bring out their sweetness and make them ready for storage. Delicata is an exception to this, being quite tasty from the get go.

As the name suggests, delicata has a very delicate skin that can be eaten along with the flesh. This makes the squash easy to cook and serve, as no peeling or scooping is necessary. We have two favourite methods to prepare this squash. One is to cut the squash in half lengthwise, scoop out the seeds, and baking cut side down in the oven for a half hour at 375-425 Fahrenheit. The other way we commonly prepare delicata, is to simply to deseed it and then chop it into bite size chunks and throw it into soups and stews, or roast it with other root vegetables.

As it is smaller and more tender than some other squashes and holds together well when cooked, it is also a good candidate for microwaving, steaming, sautéing and grilling.

Acorn

Like delicata, acorn squash is more closely related to summer squash than many other winter squashes. It benefits from a quick curing, for storage, but can also be eaten fresh.

Where acorn differs from delicata, is the skin and flesh. The flesh is less delicate and mild and more nutty than

delicata and the skin is very tough. It is also a deeply ribbed squash, making it hard to peel with a knife or peeler. For this reason, our favourite way of preparing acorn squash is to simply cut it in half, scoop out the seeds, and bake it at 375 Fahrenheit for 45+ minutes. We often start baking it flesh side down. Half way through we flip it around so it is skin side down, and then add into the cavity a dollop of butter, 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of brown sugar and a sprinkle of sweet spice such as cinnamon, nutmeg, clove or all-spice. Cooked this way it becomes a nice side vegetable for most meals.

Enjoy the first of the squash, there are more to come...



NFU Associate Memberships

For the last couple of years I have been a member of the National Farmers Union (NFU). This is a national and provincial level farm organization that stands for everything our CSA is about. They are the only voluntary national level organization committed to:

- Ensuring family farms are the primary unit of food production
- Promoting environmentally-safe farming practices
- Giving farm women equal voice in shaping farm policy
- Working for fair food prices both for farmers and consumers
- Involving educating and empowering farmers and consumers

- Building healthy vibrant communities; insuring an adequate supply of safe, nutritious food for Canadians

Progressive farm organizations, like the NFU, have been important in fighting for social and environmental justice. This includes issues not directly related to agriculture, like fighting for Medicare (publicly funded healthcare) in Saskatchewan and eventually the rest of the country. The NFU was also crucial in helping to keep bovine growth hormone out of Canadian dairies.

With the decline in the overall farming population most farm organizations have seen a corresponding decline in membership numbers. The NFU is

working to try to keep up membership and support for sustainable food production in a variety of ways. One strategy is to recruit associate members, who may not farm, but are committed to sustainable agriculture and social and environmental justice.

All of you already support these values through your membership in our CSA, and we thank you for it! If you are looking to further support this movement and would like to become an associate member of the NFU, you can do so at:

<http://www.nfu.ca/about/associate-membership>

A people united can never be defeated!