

# Fair Fields News

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## On the Farm

Heat wave! It may be a little late for most of our crops, none the less we are very much enjoying the warmth of this late summer weather. I hope some of the hot crops still producing, tomatoes and peppers especially, will have one last hoorah. The heat has certainly been good for curing the onions, the squash and the sweet potatoes.

Our raspberries are also liking the heat. They are plentiful at this point, so it is a good time if you plan to do some U-pick. The quality has been fairly good, however we have had some mold pressure recently, so make sure to keep them cool and covered, and eat them quickly.

Many of the big harvests are now done. All of our onions and squash and most of our potatoes are out of the fields. We have trimmed most of the garlic.

## Pretty Parsnips...

Our parsnips are looking much nicer this year. We would like to claim it is our cultivation methods, but I think the reason is actually a switch in varieties.

In past years we have used open pollinated (OP) varieties, mostly Harris Model. OP varieties are seeds that if grown out properly

The last big harvest will be of our pumpkins. If you are a parent with kids, or simply have a youthful pumpkin carving spirit please let us know if you would like a jack'o'lantern. There are about 30 good ones, so not enough for every share, however, we have many pie pumpkins for cooking with.

With all of the warm dry weather, we are fully caught up on field work. The weeding is mostly done for the season, there is only garlic for 2018 left to seed and our rye covercrop is mostly in. We will continue to plant rye into areas of the garden as we finish with them for the season. Rye has the advantage of growing well in cool weather and overwintering, making it a great covercrop for an area with late season harvesting. It also grows fast, suppressing weeds and catching nutrients in the fertile bare field, where they might otherwise leach away with fall and winter precipitation.

will produce seed that is "true," or genetically the same as the parent plants, making it easier to save your own seed. Heirloom varieties are all OP. Finally, OP varieties are usually cheaper and not patented in the same way as hybrids, so not likely to be owned by large agribusiness companies like Monsanto.

We are pleased to say we will be giving garlic till the end of the season and will have some for bulk sale at the last pickup. Some other organic growers we know have had trouble with insects and disease this year, leading in some cases to almost complete crop failure. With this and the wet cool conditions, we were worried about the longevity of our garlic. It seems to be holding up fairly well and we hope to have lots left over at the end of the season.

The regular farm work has been slowing down enough that we have started thinking again about long term projects. Over the next few weeks we hope to be able to start picking away at our barn addition, orchard maintenance and fixing tools and field implements. Firewood is also on the list, especially now that we are heating mostly with wood!

OP seeds do have some disadvantages. They are often not as vigorous or uniform as hybrids, whether it be in their growth habit, maturity date, flavour or shape. We certainly found all of these problems with Harris Model. At harvest, some roots would be huge, others tiny, some short and squat, others long and slender.

## Harvesting

- **Beets**
- **Cabbage**
- **Carrots**
- **Celeriac**
- **Chard**
- **Garlic**
- **Kale**
- **Lettuce**
- **Onions**
- **Parsnips**
- **Potatoes**
- **Raspberries**
- **Spinach**
- **Squash**
- **Tomatoes**



When we put in our seed orders for 2017 we ordered Harris Model, but there was some production failure in the supply chain. We were offered a substitution with Albion, a much more expensive hybrid variety. With the difference in quality and uniformity we are seeing, I don't think we will go back!

# Celeriac

We will be giving celeriac next week, and as we have some new members, we thought it would be good to explain a bit about this odd looking vegetable. Celeriac is one of my favourite vegetables and one I hadn't heard of before starting to work at a CSA operation. This wonderful root vegetable, also known as turnip-rooted celery, celery root and knob celery, is of course closely related to celery! They are both part of the family Apiaceae that includes dill, fennel, parsley, parsley root, cilantro, parsnips and carrots among others. Like many other root vegetables in the family, celeriac is ready at the end of the summer or early fall and stores well through the winter.

Celeriac has a flavour very similar to celery, however, being a root vegetable it also has an earthy nutty sweetness

that we really enjoy. It goes well in most dishes you would use celery, such as salads, soups, stews and stocks. We also roast it with other root vegetables. Celeriac goes well with fish, seafood, meat, poultry, fruit, nuts... just about anything!

When using celeriac in salads it is important to cut it fine, we prefer to julienne it. It is also important to get some acid on it after it is peeled and cut, otherwise it will oxidise and turn brown, like potatoes, sweet potatoes and apples. We solve this by making the dressing ahead of time and tossing the celeriac with it as soon as it is cut.

In soups and stews, celeriac can be cubed and added along with other root vegetables. Celeriac also makes very nice pureed soup, especially when blended with pomme fruit like apples or pears, or with potatoes.

One of my favourite uses for celeriac is in scalloped potatoes or gratin. I like to alternate layers of potatoes, onions and celeriac. Celeriac works equally well in many other potato dishes, especially mashed potatoes.

However you prepare it we hope you will enjoy this funny looking vegeta-



## U-Pick Raspberries

For CSA members this year, in addition to the pints we pick for you, we are offering **4 u-picked pints free** per CSA share **for the season**.

We will be charging **\$3.75 per pint** or **\$7.50 per pound** (the same price as for non-members). There

are pint containers for return, or for purchase for 10 cents each. We also encourage you to bring your own containers. If unsure of the volume please weigh your containers on the scale in the garage when you arrive.

Picking days will be Thursday to Sat-

urday 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 plant to come pick, please let me know ahead of time so I can confirm picking conditions with you.

## 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!