



WEEKLY NOTE Week of Sept. 12, 2016

Fresh from the Farm!

Seems like the Summer Share is coming to rapid conclusion. I don't know how this happens, but after this week, we have just 2 weeks left of the Summer Share!

We've dropped off some of our standard summer crops in exchange for a decidedly fall feel in the new crops emerging. This week broccoli comes on the scene (big, beautiful heads) along with our first pick of winter squash. As I write this, I look over the marsh, with gray clouds heavy over head. Tonight's rain will be followed by much cooler temperatures and we'll all be reaching for sweatshirts. Corn and bean fields are rapidly turning, you can spy a tree here or there beginning to blush. It's transition time.



And as our regular harvest crops like beans, zucchini, cucumbers are no longer on the task list, demands on our time shifts. We keep taking advantage of dry windows for potato harvest. Our goal is to finish the remaining 8 beds of potato harvest by end of September. October will be focused on carrots and winter squash.

When the Summer Share ends, we will transition directly into our Fall Greens Share. This is a two week share made up largely of...you guessed it...greens - kale, lettuce, spinach, and mustard greens. We also include some beets, carrots, onion, and potato. If you have not signed up and can't bear to see the end of weekly deliveries, well boy howdy, you should sign up! Contact us at the farm. The share is \$60.

THIS WEEK

- Lettuce
- Kale/Chard
- Tomatoes
- Green pepper
- Colored peppers
- Broccoli
- La Soda Potatoes
- Onions
- Acorn Squash
- Fresh herb - look for a box with bunches of Italian Parsley, Cilantro, or Basil - your choice at each of the pick up sites.
- Cabbage - *at Belmond, Garner, Farm, and Clarion pick up sites*

GO GOURMET

- Dragon Tongue Beans
- Cherry tomatoes

Saturday we took some time off the farm to attend a field day about hazelnut production. We wanted to



learn a little more about this crop. And learn we did. Jeff Jensen, of Nut Haven, near Fenton, was a wealth of informationand passion! Jeff told us, quite frankly , that hazel nuts, as a cash crop, are not viable...yet. Genetically, they are one generation removed from wild plants and thus have tremendous variability in production between plants. They are very attractive to critters like squirrels , deer (which you have heard way too much about from us this summer),

blue jays, and rabbits. There are some bug concerns like weevils. Hand harvest and multiple steps with rather expensive equipment is necessary to get crop from bush to plate. Jeff's jazzed about the dual role this shrub can play as both potential cash crop (well maybe in 20 years) and conservation planting. Jeff works for Trees Forever and sees hazelnuts as one of the ways we can , in his words, "grow ourselves out of this nutrient reduction strategy problem". Fun to see the hazelnut plantings and to hear all that Jeff had to offer, but we're happy to leave him to the hazelnut growing.

Vegetable in the Spotlight

Acorn squash - These little beauties are ready when they have a splash of orange. With a 90 day maturity window, they are right on schedule. We planted the seeds on June 17. We have been fortunate to have extraordinary growing conditions for these squash. The major pest, cucumber beetle, did not arrive until well after the plants were established and then have only been present at low level. The vines, as you can see in the photo, filled out beautifully. This photo is of the very beds of acorn squash that we picked for this week's supply.



Acorn squash, like most other squash varieties, can be baked, sauteed, steamed, stuffed, or mixed in with other meat and vegetable dishes.



Acorn squash has a long list of health benefits, including boosting the immune system, preventing certain types of cancer, improving vision, reducing blood pressure, maintaining fluid balance, and more than I can fit in this box!

Fresh herbs - More and more folks are reaching for fresh herbs. We've included several supplies through the Summer Share and this week you'll find a choice of cilantro, basil (thinking tomatoes) or parsley (thinking soups and stews) at your pick up site. There will be enough bunches for you to find one to meet your needs. We are packing a few extras of each variety in case there's a heavy favorite. But first come first serve is still the ruling mode of operation. I'm not expert on using fresh herbs, but chop them in fresh to a little salsa, top the tomatoes with some fresh basil, throw a handful into a leek potato soup. If using fresh herbs is still new - just give it a try and enjoy the experimentation. For over winter supply - blend any of these with some olive oil, pack into an ice cube tray and , when frozen, pop them out and store in the freezer

Cooking...Out of the Box

I got to looking through one of my favorite cookbooks - Simply in Season - over the weekend and found myself making a list of recipe after recipe that I want to try with the still summer crops we have on hand...before there's a complete change in eating ingredients.

And as cooler weather brings soup season, I'm starting with a soup!

Autumn Vegetable Soup

1/2 C. Onion, *chop*

2 cloves Garlic, *mince*

In soup pot, sauté onion in 1 T. olive oil over medium heat until soft. Add garlic and sauté 1 minute.

1/2 C. each kale, cabbage, carrots, red or green sweet pepper, *chopped*

1/2 t. each salt, dried basil, dried oregano

1/8 t pepper

add and sauté a little, then turn heat down to low, cover pan, and let cook about 5 minutes. stirring occasionally

2 C. bean cooking liquid or vegetable broth

1 C. tomato juice

3/4 C. cooked beans (pinto beans work fine)

1/2 C. corn

2 t. instant barley

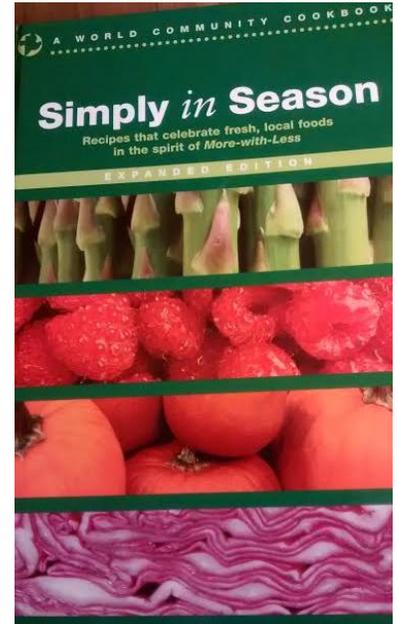
2 t orzo pasta

1 1/2 T. red cooking wine

add and bring to a gentle boil and simmer about 15 minutes.

1/2 C. tomatoes, *chopped*

1 T. fresh parsley, *chopped*



Soil & Soul - More Gastrodiplomacy: Interesting lunch guest Part II

Remember last week's column about gastrodiplomacy? Who'd have thunk we'd have an opportunity to try our hand at our own kind of gastrodiplomacy the very next week?

An opportunity for a conversation with Iowa Secretary of Agriculture, Bill Northey, which happened to fall over the lunch hour, gave us an opportunity to share the fruits of the farm's bounty...while we discussed all the great angles of CSA and local food we could pack in to a 2 hour discussion.

I think we sent him away well fed on some delicious food and with some food for



thought. But let me continue by saying Sec. Northey is the one who initiated the conversation. And it was Sec. Northey who posed the opening question "How can our department help support local food, what barriers can we help remove?" *Oh, I wish more people would ask questions like those!*

We had asked two key folks to join us - Leigh Trembath, long time OSTG farm member, thoughtful consumer, coordinator of Fresh on Fridays at Central Gardens in Clear Lake , promoter of the Central Garden's Children's Garden, and Vice Chair of Healthy Harvest of North Iowa. We also invited Xavier Briot, a graduate student from France, interning with ISU Local Food Team, and studying this past summer in North Iowa. This all made for a very interesting conversation that ranged from an overview of our farm to the local food scene in North Iowa to strategies to increase awareness of local food across Iowa to a point that we are striving to make local food on many fronts - geographically, economically, gastronomically :), and more.

We talked about One Step at a Time Gardens history and practices, Healthy Harvest of North Iowa, North Iowa Fresh, food hub development across Iowa. We talked about the bully pulpit Sec. Northey has to lift up the many opportunities represented in local food development across Iowa and the need for more public/private funding. We discussed the need to highlight all that is going on around local food in Iowa. We talked about the challenge of the hard, nitty gritty work to continue to assure the local food system is accessible not only geographically, but economically. We talked about the dynamics between conventional agriculture and niche agriculture. Bill took notes and seemed clearly to be seeking to broaden his own understanding of what's going on with local food in Iowa. He told us that he tries to weave visits such as the one we had into his regular travels across the state. It was a great, open discussion and grateful for the opportunity to practice gastrodiplomacy here on the farm.

Weekly deliveries Mid May to early July and August to September

Tuesdays – Mason City, Garner, Clear Lake

Wednesday - Belmond, Clarion, Farm

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