



BLOOMING GLEN FARM

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Newsletter

Issue #19

BloomingNow!

Features Fresh from the Farm

Community

Supported

Agriculture

From the field...

We hope that everyone enjoyed their bountiful last pickup. We are happy to end on such a high note, though a hand-numbing one for the harvesters! We have included a few of the 150 survey responses for your enjoyment. We appreciate the feedback as we evolve as a farm. We are currently working on updating our website, which will include an online calendar. We hope this will help end the confusion over when work opportunities and other events are held. We will also add to the FAQ section of our website this winter, so keep an eye on that as well. There were requests for cooking classes, demonstrations, more recipes, even shared child tending on pick-up days or work days. In our view, this is where the Community aspect of CSA comes in. If these are things that interest you, we encourage you to organize them. Not able to do your work hours in the field? Send in recipes. Research storage tips. Write an article for the newsletter—interview someone in

the community doing something interesting in the field of sustainability—there are lots of you out there! Trade a service that you are talented in. Organize a cooking class (“Cooking Greens 101!”) or preserving demonstration, or a kids craft on pick-up days. Contribute to the children’s garden. Help grow our CSA community! Reflecting on the past season we are thankful for the incredibly generous weather we experienced this year. We look back with sympathy at growers in many parts of the country where weather caused severe problems. Extreme drought in the Southeast, heavy rains and flooding in Texas, Oklahoma, Minnesota and Wisconsin (we got a little taste last season of the long term impact 12 inches of rain in a week can have on your crops), wildfires in California, lost fruit in the Midwest. We in the Northeast have much to be thankful for. No matter how long or hard a work day, we sure ate well. Though we were disappointed in our dismal

potato yields and early wet weather also contributed to poor spring pea germination, the rest of the season overall was more than bountiful. Each share, for example, consumed a whopping 54 pounds of tomatoes (compared to 36 pounds last season) and 12 pints of cherry tomatoes, 33 cucumbers, 34 pounds of onions, 26 pounds of summer squash, 14 quarts of string beans and 12 melons, and took home 12 bouquets of flowers. As much as we the farmers would like to take all the credit, a look around the country puts things in perspective. Some years are good, some are bad, and most are somewhere in between. And next year we get to do it all over again, starting from the tiniest seed! This Thanksgiving we will be sure to count our blessings: for a *really* good season, for the opportunity to farm this land and to nourish our bodies with the fruits of our labors, and for family and friends and our local community. Thank you! PEACE! Tricia and Tom

Survey Says

“Your food is the staple of my diet. I lost 25 lbs. since March (under the care of a nutritionist) and lost 50 points off my bad cholesterol. My food spending begins with your CSA.”

“The freshness made it tasty and last longer in the fridge. I like supporting a local farm and being able to bring my son so that he doesn’t forget that food is not a product of a factory.”

“I even got my kids to eat mashed turnip in place of potatoes—score one for mom!”

“Would be great if there were more fruits offered.”

“You can’t imagine how I brag about our crop to friends.”

“I would love to have seen more kohlrabi— I grew up on that stuff!”

“As a first time member, I felt like I was experiencing the true taste of certain vegetables for the first time.”

“Could have done without the corn (too much work and space for little product and even less nutrition).”

“Loved the variety— more corn please!”

“I love getting a weeks supplies all at once, and then creating meals from what I have.”

“It has strengthened our view that local agriculture is not only important, but economically feasible as well.

“The whole farmers market concept was odd. The idea of the CSA seems to get lost in the Capitalism.”

“the colors and shapes and smells— the pleasure of the cherry tomato rows!!!”

“Cooking the food has become a sacred event, the way cooking should be.”

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Product Labeling Alert

In the larger world of sustainable agriculture, the internet and our inbox is abuzz with the latest news. Specifically, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has decided to enact a ban, effective January 1st, on all dairy labels indicating that artificial hormones, antibiotics or other chemicals have not been used

in the process of bringing the product in question to market. The intended effect is mostly focused on the elimination of claims that dairy products are free of rBST/rBGH (a controversial artificial growth hormone given to cows to increase milk production). This has broad implications in the debate

over consumers right to know what is and isn’t in their food and to choose accordingly. You can read more in depth in a New York Times article in the Business section on Nov. 11, 2007. Cut and paste the following link: http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/11/business/11feed.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

Things I've learned as a CSA member, by Mikaela Martin

Belonging to a CSA definitely requires a bit of extra time and energy, as does any new method or way of doing something. Once that habit is formed though, it really does become second nature. This was my second season at Blooming Glen and already I've learned and changed and incorporated so much! Things like...

- ◆ How to cook daikon, watermelon, French breakfast, black and regular radishes.
- ◆ That Swiss Chard on a sandwich is quite tasty.
- ◆ That yes, children actually can get sick of pick-your-owns; and yes, so too can parents.
- ◆ The differences between a sunshine, blue hubbard, delicata, bon bon and butternut winter squash.
- ◆ That freezing string beans and summer squash is ridiculously easy, but freezing sweet peppers is sinfully easy.
- ◆ Trish's secrets to keep flowers producing in the garden and looking beautiful in the vase.
- ◆ That beets and carrots keep quite a while as long as you remove the greens.
- ◆ That chopping it up nice and fine and adding it to macaroni recipes is an easy way to get kale into my son's diet.
- ◆ That there are perhaps a bazillion different varieties of cherry tomatoes.
- ◆ And that Tom knows every single one of them.
- ◆ That watermelon looks just as good in yellow as it does in pink.
- ◆ What to do with celeriac.
- ◆ The mystery and romance that is an heirloom tomato.
- ◆ That simply is the best way to prepare fresh vegetables.
- ◆ That soccer moms, single parents, DINKs, singletons, yuppies, hippies, teachers, administrators, entrepreneurs, Women Builders, EMTs, corporate CEOs, nonprofit workers and retirees all belong to my CSA.
- ◆ That green tomatoes are great in stir fries, relishes and salads.
- ◆ How to put up tomatoes.
- ◆ That greens like turnip, beet and collards are really, really tasty and can be used in everything.
- ◆ That my son can be bought not only with sweet potatoes, but also sunshine winter squash.
- ◆ That there are some pretty adorable cows in Perkasio.
- ◆ The differences between scallions, onions, sweet onions, garlic, garlic scapes, leeks and shallots.
- ◆ That no matter how hard I try, I will probably never like radicchio.
- ◆ That stir fries and scramblers are a CSA member's best friends.
- ◆ To not peel root vegetables if you can help it.
- ◆ There is nothing on this planet that tastes better than a just-picked ripe tomato.

Surely, there are more. Perhaps I'll add to this list as the winter months creep in, our preserved CSA food supply dwindles and we can barely remember the feel of humidity on our skin as we pick quarts of string beans, strawberries and basil.

Sigh. Missing you oh-so-terribly already, Blooming Glen!

To read this article in its entirety, and to check out a great website, cut and paste the following link: <http://farmtophilly.com/index.php/site/C13/>

Survey Says....

"I am more impressed than ever at the capacity of the land to sustain us."

"I often think of you guys in the field on the days of extreme weather and it has grown my appreciation for the hard work required to cultivate our veggies."

"The vegetables are SO good and the pot-lucks are the best around."

"I could not believe the variety of food that thrives in this climate"

"The quality was always fantastic-not sure I can ever eat from the grocery store again."

"too many peppers, heavy on the radishes too."

"I didn't realize how easy it was to freeze the sweet peppers until it was listed in the newsletter."

"So much emphasis is put on the food, I forgot to mention how much I love the flowers. They represent, to me, a gift of pure love."

"I would ask for herbs like dill and cilantro to be pick-your-own"

"I was not wild about the picking part. Not that I have anything against picking, but not as part of my grocery shopping."

"Eating the delicious food was only the beginning. My children began to ask questions about where our food comes from, and who grows it. We have had conversations about sustainable living, vegetarianism, and all sorts of worthy topics over dinner after a farm trip."

"I would love to see cooking classes develop or perhaps guest speakers on occasion."

"my son said the other day, 'the farm makes the best strawberries and melons, they should do that all the time!'"

"Picking up our share has always felt like a gift."

"I'm sure you don't like doing it either, but picking your own vegetables in the fields on rainy days when dressed coming for work was not fun."

"I feel bad that with no external motivation, I wasn't responsible enough to squeeze in more than 2 lousy [work] hours. Um, maybe you could get some bossy CSA member to volunteer to harass lame-os like me next year."

"the further away we get from the soil the worse off we all are so I think it's extremely important for everyone to pitch in and see what it's like to get...as Tom calls it...'farmer's high'".

"More weekend work opportunities would be helpful."

"I enjoy the whole experience of the farm and it has become part of me and my life."

"It is the right choice for our health and the environment. Not to mention, it's a beautiful, peaceful, happy part of my week."

"I now never shop without thinking about the implications of the choices I make."