



# This Week's Word From the Farm

## Week of 9/14/09

### What's In Your Box ?

- Tomatoes
- Husk Cherries (pop these out of their husks and into your mouth for a fruity treat!)
- Carrots
- Potatoes
- Cucumbers
- Peppers
- Tomatillos
- Summer Squash
- Eggplant
- Garlic
- Onions

Walking the fields of Riverhill Farm day after day, season after season, I've gotten to know the nuances of soil and slope that make this place what it is. There are areas of deeper soil and areas where soil is shallow, areas that tend to be warmer that are good for tomatoes and peppers and areas that are cooler and good for leafy greens and lettuce. I know where the tree frogs cluster to breed in the Spring, and hear the moment in summer when frog song gives way to the stridulating of crickets. In the afternoon, I look toward the setting sun to admire the flashing of light on the wings of dragonflies. There are areas of this farm best left alone to serve needs and purposes besides the production of our food, and other areas that welcome the cultivation we do.

I first came to know the place that is Riverhill Farm without the structure of the farm in place. Everything that is here now that relates to the farm's production of food—the shape and layout of the farm fields, the fencing, the irrigation lines, the farmstand, the hedgerows and flower borders, the fruit trees—came to be out of my early observations before the farm was developed. The farm was started cautiously and deliberately. We first brought just 2 ½ acres into production, then gradually expanded as demand for our produce grew and our comfort with the farm as a farm increased. But I've never lost sight of the farm as first and foremost a natural place without the hand of man upon it. Most of those early observations have proven to be valuable in guiding our farming practices and have helped us to create the structure of the farm while minimizing disruption of the natural processes that have taken place here since before it was homesteaded by Europeans in the late 1800's.

Familiarity comes with keen observation over time. It may also be true that familiarity breeds something more than just knowledge of a place, a more intimate relationship which can only be compared to respect or, even, love. Far from thinking that natural landscapes need to be preserved only as wilderness, I accept that for us as humans to live on this planet we need to use the places in nature that lend themselves to our needs. Still, to sustain the richness and diversity that is human culture on this planet, to do more than live but to truly prosper, we need to sustain the richness and diversity that is nature itself. We cannot subordinate all of nature to our immediate needs for food, clothing, and commerce. We need to use the natural places of the earth wisely and with care for what they are.

Our great hope for this place that is now known as Riverhill Farm is that it will continue to serve this community in many ways for generations to come. We hope that it will continue to feed this community with wholesome, nutritious and tasty food. We hope that children will come here and learn what there is to know about the bounty and diversity of nature and the care we need to exercise in using it for our benefit. We hope that the place will continue to thrive as a natural environment where in the midst of peppers and tomatoes, frog can eat insect, bird can eat frog, and bobcat can eat bird (and we can eat peppers and tomatoes!). We hope that our fellow citizens can pass here and find beauty and sustenance of a kind that fills their bellies, and fills their hearts as well.

# Recipes of the Week:

## Salsa Verde

- 2 Anaheim chile peppers, roasted, peeled, and chopped
- 1 pound fresh tomatillos, peeled, stems removed, about 10 to 12
- 2 fresh Serrano chilies, cut in half
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 medium clove garlic, minced
- 1/4 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon lime juice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Pulse tomatillos in food processor until coarsely chopped. Add peppers and next 3 ingredients; pulse until small dice, but do not over process. Pour into a serving bowl. Stir in the olive oil, lime juice, and salt until well blended. Enjoy with chips and a beer!

## Roasted Peppers

Anaheim, Bell, New Mexico Chiles, Pasilla, and Ancho peppers are all best roasted or grilled. To grill, place them on the grill over medium-high heat. Otherwise, broil them in your oven. Roast until blistered and blackened but not burned, remove from heat and place them in a plastic container with a lid, a plastic bag or a paper bag to steam for fifteen minutes. When cool enough to handle, remove the skin. Use them in salsa or as an ingredient in another recipe (try the internet), or eat them tossed with oil and vinegar and salt to taste with bread. Toss with pasta and fresh tomatoes for a delicious and simple meal.

## Roasted Carrot Soup

- 1 lb. carrots (about 4 or 5), cut into chunks
- 2 small potatoes, or equivalent, cut into chunks
- 1 large onion, cut into chunks
- 5 garlic cloves, peeled
- 2 to 4 tablespoons olive oil
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 hefty thyme sprigs
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 quart vegetable stock
- 1/2 cup light cream (may omit, if desired)
- 2 to 3 tablespoons sour cream, stirred
- 2 teaspoons minced parsley

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Toss the veggies with the olive oil and season with 1/2 teaspoon salt and some pepper. Put them in a large baking dish with thyme and bay and roast until tender and glazed, about 1 hour, turning them 2-3 times. Transfer the veggies to a soup pot, add the stock, and bring to a boil. Simmer until the carrots are soft, about 20 minutes, then puree till smooth. Return the puree to the pot, taste for salt, and season with pepper. Stir in the cream, if desired. Ladle into bowls and swirl a spoonful of sour cream into each. Add a little chopped parsley and serve.