



This Week's Word From the Farm

Week of 9/22/08

What's In Your Box?

- Salad Mix
- Tomatoes
- Cherry Tomatoes
- Tomatillos
- Green Beans
- Scallions
- Peppers
- Eggplant
- Summer Squash
- Potatoes - Yukon Gold
- Cucumbers
- Basil
- Garlic
- Green Beans
- Cilantro

Dear Friends,

By now you've all probably noticed that the fields are a patchwork of planted areas and newly bare soil. We're preparing for winter. As individual crops are finished, we're taking them out to begin preparing the soil for the cover crop which will grow through the winter. By the time the last week of the CSA is here, the only plants left in the fields will be those from which we are harvesting your last box for the season.

We'll clear the plants and make large compost piles of the plant waste. All of the irrigation equipment will be removed from the fields, and I'll till the soil with the tractor. A mixture of grain and legume seed will be broadcast on all the fields and lightly harrowed in. At that point, hopefully by around the 17th of October, we'll get some soaking rains to germinate and support the early growth of the seed. By early December, it should look like a green meadow around here.

Cover cropping is an integral and very important part of the farm operation. The cover crop protects the soil from the rain, preventing erosion and soil compaction. The roots of the cover crop make the soil more permeable to the rain, increasing water infiltration and reducing runoff. The cover crop itself takes up residual nutrients left over from the summer crops, and helps to hold them in the soil and prevent leaching. The legumes fix nitrogen in the soil, reducing the need for expensive purchased nitrogen next season. And, in the Spring, I'll till it all in to increase organic matter in the soil, a critical part of soil health and growing healthy crops.

Enjoy an abundance of tomatoes and peppers this week. Make salsa, tomato soup, chili, chile verde or rojo. It's all good!

Recipes of the Week:

Tomato Basil Soup

- 3 tbsp. butter
- 1 lg. carrot, peeled & grated
- 4 – 6 ripe tomatoes – seeded and chopped
- 1/2 c. slightly packed chopped fresh basil
- 1 lg. onion, sliced
- 3/4 tsp. sugar
- 1/8 tsp. ground white pepper
- 1 3/4 c. chicken broth

In a large saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion and carrot and cook until onion is transparent, stirring frequently. Stir in tomatoes, basil, sugar and pepper. Heat to boiling, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered for 20 minutes. Cool slightly. Pour into food processor or blender and puree until smooth. Return to pan and stir in broth and salt (if you want a creamy version, you can substitute cream for broth here). Heat until steaming. Ladle into individual bowls and float a basil leaf in each bowl. Serve with grated parmesan cheese.

Vegetarian Stuffed Bell Peppers

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| 4 bell peppers | 2 carrots, julienned |
| 1 tbsp. olive oil | 1 c. diced zucchini |
| 1 sm. onion, chopped | 1 tomato, diced |
| 1 clove garlic, minced | 1/2 c. finely chopped walnuts |
| 1 tsp. oregano | 1 1/2 c. cooked rice |
| 1 tsp. basil | |
| 2 to 3 c. tomato sauce (your favorite bottled or homemade) | |

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Wash and clean peppers. Cut off tops and remove seeds and membrane. Blanch prepared peppers in boiling water for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat oil in wok or large skillet, add onion and garlic. Saute 1 minute. Add herbs, carrots and zucchini. Continue to cook 3 to 5 minutes or until carrots are tender, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and add the tomato, walnuts, brown rice and 1/2 cup tomato sauce. Heat through.

Stuff mixture into peppers. Spread 1/2 cup sauce in bottom of baking dish. Stand peppers upright. Pour remaining sauce over the tops of peppers. Bake in oven for 30 minutes.

