



# This Week's Word From the Farm

## Week of 9/28/09

### What's In Your Box ?

- Delicata Winter Squash
- Romano Beans—use these Italian favorites any way you would use green beans
- Tomatoes
- Tomatillos
- Basil—now is the time to freeze pesto for winter
- Peppers
- Eggplant
- Chard
- Summer Squash
- Desiree Potatoes
- Shallots
- Onions

### Dear Friends,

Sparrows returned yesterday to Riverhill Farm, joining us now for the coming winter. We delight in their morning song, delivered as an excellent four-note whistle. Even in the midst of what feels like endless, hot summer weather, nature shifts about in response to timeless clues: changing day length, cooler nights, the availability of food. The weather forecast for this week points in an unmistakable direction that we farmers welcome—cooler days and nighttime temperatures below 50 degrees for the first time in months.

Unlike factory-based industrial production which continues unabated whatever the weather, our farm changes along with the changing of the seasons. Plants that have yielded hundreds of pounds of food for your boxes are slowing down in their productivity, their leaves yellow and dry. We're clearing the fields and planting for the winter, readying ourselves in our own way for the change. Farms are inextricably linked to the natural systems on which they depend.

In our capacity for works of great scale—skyscrapers, bridges, freeways—we express our capacity for works that seemingly defy nature. Some of these works are things of great beauty that continue to inspire many people for many generations.

More humble in scale yet still beautiful in their own way, farms reflect the more fleeting aspects of nature. Lettuce thrives in cool weather but bolts when it gets hot. Squash plants can produce an apparently endless supply of zucchini and patty pan but when day length shortens and the first cold spell arrives, they stop flowering and yield nothing further. After the meticulous care we've provided these plants for months on end, they weaken, they wither, they die. Anyone with the desire to do monumental acts had better look elsewhere; as a farmer you survive only as long as your humility remains intact.

And so, as hard as we work to do what we do—apparently with only ephemeral results—the question inevitably arises: what are we doing this for? With nothing to show at the end of the season for all our hard work, why do we continue? When we can no longer farm, what will remain of all our effort?

For lasting and meaningful results coming from farming, we have to look elsewhere. Our soils provide nutrients to plants which in turn nourish you. You and your children grow strong and healthy. The pleasure you find when you arrive at the farmstand to fill your box to overflowing, greeted by the ever-kind and gracious Jo, is reflected back on your families and friends when you arrive home to prepare dinner. As you come to better appreciate your dependence on nature for your sustenance, you find yourself to be part of a web of life that is directly rooted in your own community.

These things, though less tangible and certainly less monumental than many things we accomplish as humans, are meaningful things in their own right. As lasting as the pain that we humans inflict on one another and on nature is, we hope that peaceful and loving acts may be as lasting. We prefer to compare these acts to ripples on a pond. What we give to you, you give to another, and so on. In another generation, this farm may no longer exist to grow food for this community, yet the effect on you of picking and eating a ripe strawberry may, in the end, be lasting, great and meaningful.

As always, we thank you for your support.

## Recipe 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 (or veggie 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.