



This Week's Word from the Farm

11/8/10

What's In Your Box?

- Kohlrabi
- Cabbage
- Bok Choy
- Beets
- Peppers
- Lettuce
- Green Tomatoes
- Onions
- Potatoes
- Garlic
- Shallots
- Jerusalem Artichokes
- Kale
- Strawberries – as available

Yesterday, I spent the day in the familiar act of planting cover crop seed into some newly tilled fields. A cover crop typically includes a grain and a legume, such as the rye and vetch we use. As it grows through the winter months, a cover crop protects against the damage to soil that rain and snow can cause, and when tilled back into the soil come spring, has many benefits to fertility and soil quality.

I worked fast over the course of the day to get done what I could before today's rain arrived. I managed all right, though I'm pleasantly sore today. To plant the cover crop, I rely on a method as ancient as agriculture is to humanity. Timed to the rhythm of every other step, I throw the seed forward in a gentle arc, covering an area about five feet by ten feet with each toss, stepping forward and doing it again and again until the seed is evenly distributed across the length and breadth of the field. Although there are many ways to do it, I've grown fond of doing it this way. There's no tractor noise and no diesel exhaust. Instead, I can listen to what songs the birds have to offer while I walk; I reacquaint myself with the farm and consider the end of another farm season.

We've spent many months calling forth great abundance and sustenance from the fields of Riverhill Farm. Walking every inch of the farm hundreds of times over, we've seeded, transplanted, irrigated, weeded (and weeded), staked and trellised, harvested and done it all over again and again. Now, with a respectful bow to the new season that blows in, we're taking down all the evidence of our hard work and giving the farm and ourselves a rest. For us, it's difficult to give the mind an equal rest, but we'll do what we can to entertain ourselves with a few good books, a trip or two away from the farm, and more time with each other that's not spent working or contemplating the work that needs to get done today or tomorrow. We'll let things take their course out in the fields until, come February, it's time to do it all again.

Mostly, when we think back on the season, we'll think of the many kindnesses that you've shown us. After a long day spent harvesting and providing you with your CSA share, Jo often tells me about the many compliments she heard from folks picking up their boxes. We appreciate that. As hard as farm work is, it wouldn't make any sense without the satisfaction of knowing that you gain some measure of pleasure in your visits to the farm and in the tastes—unusual and familiar—of the produce we grow.

It's also important to us that you know what *your* participation means to us. No matter what you've come to understand about the popularity of local agriculture, be assured that it's a challenge to make it work economically at this scale. As much as we value farming and feeding you, we wouldn't be able to do it again next season if we weren't able to make a living this season. By participating in our CSA, you've brought this farm one season closer to becoming a lasting part of this community and have helped to ensure that this farm remains a part of an emerging local food economy in Nevada County. For that, we thank you deeply. We've managed to feed a good number of people these past four months with the best we had to offer of the food we've grown. It's not just that we've filled your stomachs. We hope that the food we've grown has become the basis for your continuing good health, your pleasure and satisfaction, and more.

To be sure, we'll rest this winter. But we'll also be thinking about what worked well this past season, and about many improvements we can make. By February, we'll be sending out an email announcing our 2011 CSA season, and we hope that you will choose to sign up and join us again for another season. As a small farm, we depend greatly on word of mouth. If you know of friends or acquaintances that might enjoy participating in our CSA, please do suggest that they sign up on our website to our email list to receive announcements about our 2011 season. The work and business of farming aside, it's been a great pleasure to serve each and every one of you. We'll look forward to seeing you about town during the winter but, most of all, we'll look forward to the day next June when we see you walking up the flower path to the farmstand and we can again provide you with all that this beautiful farm has to offer. Kindest regards and best wishes, Alan and Jo

Recipes of the Week

Sweet and Sour Cabbage

- 3 tablespoons butter
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 2 tart green apples, peeled, cored and chopped
- ½ cup or more water
- 1/3 cup red currant jelly (optional)
- 1/2 cup cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 head cabbage, cored, trimmed and finely chopped

Melt butter in heavy large pan over low heat. Add onion and cook until tender. Add apples, water, jelly, vinegar, sugar. Season with salt and pepper. Simmer until jelly melts. Add shredded cabbage and mix until coated. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook until cabbage is tender, stirring occasionally. About 45 minutes to one hour. Add more water if necessary. Serve hot

Curried Potatoes - delicious with the green tomato chutney from last week's flyer!

- 1/2 tablespoon olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 4-6 medium potatoes, scrubbed and sliced in ½ inch thick slabs
- 2 teaspoons curry powder (or more, if desired)
- 1 cup vegetable or chicken broth (more if needed)
- 2 tablespoons scallions, minced
- Diced hot pepper to taste (optional-use only if you like a spicy curry)

In medium saucepan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add garlic and onion and cook, stirring, until softening. Add potatoes, hot pepper and curry. Stir to coat the potatoes. Add broth. Cover and simmer for about 20 minutes or until potatoes are just tender. Uncover and continue to cook for a few more minutes in order to reduce the liquids. Sprinkle with scallions and serve.

Kohlrabi StirFry with Rice Noodles

- 8 cups water
- 10 ounces dried rice noodles
- 5 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon dry white wine
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon Chinese chili oil
- 3 tablespoons peanut oil
- 1 pound kohlrabi-peeled, halved and thinly sliced
- 1 sweet pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 1/2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 scallions, sliced on the diagonal

Bring the water to a boil. Remove from the heat, add the rice noodles and let soak until the noodles are tender, about 7 minutes. Drain well. In a small bowl, stir together the soy sauce, white wine, sugar and chili oil. In a large skillet or a wok with a handle, heat the oil. Add the kohlrabi and cook over moderately high heat until browned, about 3 minutes. Stir and cook for 1 minute. Add the pepper and garlic and stir-fry until the garlic is fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add the eggs; stir-fry until just set, about 30 seconds. Add the rice noodles, scallions and the soy sauce mixture. Cook over moderately low heat, tossing gently, until the noodles are heated through and coated with sauce, about 1 minute. Transfer the noodles to plates or bowls and serve at once.