



# Notes From the Pea Patch

Foxtail Community Farm ~ Vol. 10, No. 2 ~ January 19, 2015

## Farmer's Notebook

It's January 19<sup>th</sup>, 30 degrees, ice everywhere, and we're harvesting greens and packing share boxes. The inaugural winter CSA is hitting its stride and what a difference from a harvest day in August! But believe it or not, winter is already half over. Here in Greenville, our coldest point of the year is January 21<sup>st</sup>, after which the days start getting warmer (on average). A comforting thought as the winter winds howl outside.

Harvest day notwithstanding, I spend most of these cold winter days at the computer, with a blanket and a cup of coffee. On Friday I sent in the farm's seed order. This year we are ordering over 200 varieties of vegetables, herbs, and flowers! Planning our crops, compiling the list, and ordering the seeds usually takes me about a week. I have detailed spreadsheets on every crop: when to seed it in the greenhouse, when to plant it in the field, and when it will be harvested for share boxes. Now, in the dark of winter, is when I fill out all these spreadsheets so that when summer comes and there are 101 things to get done, my spreadsheets tell me what to do when.

Though our seed order does not change dramatically from year to year, we do tweak things based on our member surveys. Last year you told us to plant more basil, beets, cherry tomatoes, garlic, kale, potatoes, summer squash, and tomatoes. You wanted fewer hot peppers, radishes, turnips & rutabaga. We are doing kohlrabi again this year (a member survey request from last year) and have decided to omit okra. A few varieties have changed, as they do every year, but otherwise things are pretty similar to years past. Now with our seeds ordered, we wait for warmer weather and a brighter sun, to sow the seeds we have bought, and harvest their fruit on some warm summer morning in August. Happy New Year!

~ Eric

## This Month's Harvest

*Our best guess for what will be in this month's share boxes – subject to change at harvest & packing time.*

**Brussels Sprouts** – this likely will be the last delivery of this crop for the season. Peel away and discard any blackened outer leaves. Snap the buds from stalk and refrigerate in a plastic bag. Trim stems and wash well. Excellent steamed, sauteed or roasted.

**Fennel** – this didn't make it into the December boxes, but has held up surprisingly well in storage. Fennel can be eaten raw or cooked; cooking enhances and deepens its natural anise flavor. Refrigerate wrapped in plastic. To prepare, trim off upper stems, thick bottom core and any tough outer layers of the bulb.

**Potatoes** – from The Farm at Miller's Crossing (Columbia County). A traditional rough-skinned, brown Russet variety, excellent for baking but may also be roasted or boiled and mashed. Keep the larger spuds for baked potatoes, and try the smaller ones in the “popcorn potatoes” recipe on reverse. Store in a cool, dark, well-ventilated area apart from onions – may be refrigerated.

**Savoy Cabbage** – we are not very happy with the storage quality of this variety and likely will try a more traditional green leaf cabbage next winter. Savoy is a looser-headed cabbage with soft, crinkled pale leaves and mellow flavor. Store tightly wrapped in fridge. Trim and discard the stem and core, rinse leaves well. Try it in a seasonal soup, stir-fry or sauteed as a side dish.

**Also... Acorn Squash ~ Carrots ~ Celeriac ~  
Fennel ~ Garlic ~ Lettuce ~ Onions ~ Pie  
Pumpkin ~ Popcorn ~ Rutabaga ~ Spinach**

*for storage and preparation instructions on all crops, refer to the December 14 2014 newsletter, archived at:*  
[foxtailcommunityfarm.com/MemberNewsletters.html](http://foxtailcommunityfarm.com/MemberNewsletters.html)



## Recipe of the Week: Popcorn Potatoes

*I'm indebted to our friends and fellow farmers Chris & Samantha Kemnah for suggesting the novel combination for this fun & tasty snack.*

- small brown or red potatoes
- coconut oil
- sea salt
- fennel seeds

Scrub and trim potatoes as needed, but leave peels on. Cut potatoes into quarters, halves or leave whole to make generous bite-sized pieces – try to make the sizes relatively uniform to promote even roasting.

Heat oven to 400°F. Put a few spoonfuls of coconut oil (solid at room temperature) in a baking dish or rimmed pan and place dish in oven to melt the oil. Remove pan from oven, add potatoes and toss to coat with oil. Sprinkle generously with salt and fennel seeds. Return to oven and roast for ~20+ minutes until brown and slightly crispy, stirring every 10 minutes or so.



### *From the archives*

Need more recipe ideas? Foxtail CSA newsletters back to 2010 are on our farm website.

[www.foxtailcommunityfarm.com/MemberNewsletters.html](http://www.foxtailcommunityfarm.com/MemberNewsletters.html)

Here are a few favorites to re-visit this month:

*October 29, 2012*

~ Pumpkin Cornbread

*September 30, 2013*

~ Acorn Squash Stuffed with Pears & Wild Rice

*October 13, 2013*

~ Bengali Dry Cabbage Curry

*October 27, 2013*

~ Fennel, Cabbage & Apple Salad

## Foxtail Farm...pass it on



We have a few CSA shares available for the upcoming summer season. Word of mouth from current members is by far our best advertising, so please spread the word! Space is very limited at Capital District sites, with more availability for pick-up here on the farm in Greenville.

Please direct anyone who may be interested to our website:

[www.foxtailcommunityfarm.com/CSAMembership](http://www.foxtailcommunityfarm.com/CSAMembership)

## One more recipe: Rachel's Curried Carrot Soup

*This is one of my favorite year-round soups. Full disclosure: none of my kids like it. Hopefully you have less picky eaters in your household.*

- 1 tbs butter
- 4 ¼ cups water or stock
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 tbs minced fresh ginger, or 1 tsp powdered
- ½ tsp curry powder
- 1 ½ pounds carrots, coarsely chopped (*that's about half the carrots in your Jan share box*)
- 1 cup orange juice
- ½ cup cream or milk
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

Melt butter in a large soup pot. Add onion, garlic and curry powder and cook until tender but not browned, about 5-10 minutes. Stir in carrots, stock or water, and orange juice. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer until carrots are tender, about 20-30 minutes.

Remove from heat. Puree soup smooth using an immersion blender (or in batches in a standard blender). Return to soup pot and stir in cream or milk. Heat soup gently just to re-warm. Season with salt and pepper to taste.