



Notes From the Pea Patch

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Farmer's Notebook

At this point of the farm season, there has been a massive influx of squirrels and chipmunks to the area around our packing shed. They consume everything they can find- corn cobs, nuts, small children- and are a general nuisance to our farm. If, when you show up to pick up your share, you are approached by one, please do not feed it. Instead, you can choose 1 of 2 things- you can fight it off with a vegetable from your share box, or you can run for your life (be careful, however- they can smell fear).

We are currently working to drive them out of our area, either by shooting them or trapping them. If you see a chipmunk dead in a trap, do not touch it. Chances are, we will find it soon or our cat will lovingly bring it into our house and leave it for us to find at a later date. If I continue to write sections of the newsletter, you may find recipes containing chipmunk and squirrel. Do not be afraid to try new things- it probably tastes like chicken.

An increase in the number of rodents may have also brought some unwanted guests- a fox killed one of our turkeys and a skunk killed over 20 chickens. It comes with the profession- every year, American farmers lose over 40 million livestock to wild animals such as foxes and coyotes- but the effect has never been so profound in one year on our farm.

Along with the previously mentioned groundhogs, these trespassers have done a considerable bit of damage. But on the plus side, catching them has provided endless entertainment for myself and our other young male workers. With my new found interest in reigning in these "foreign invaders", I can only assume that they will either be driven away or I will lose interest and they will soon dominate our farm and take over, much like in Planet of the Apes. ~ Garrett

This Week's Harvest

our best guess for what will be in this week's share boxes - subject to change at packing time:



Fennel - an odd-looking combination of a thick layered bulb, stringy stalks, and feathery green top. The treasure is the sweet, licorice-

flavored heart enclosed within. Munch the bulb raw like an apple; roast or grill to yield a delicate flavor. Store wrapped in fridge for several days. To prepare, trim off stems above bulb and any tough outer layers of the bulb. For a traditional Italian preparation, serve raw sticks or wedges with olive oil and sea salt for dipping. Any remaining leaves can be chopped for seasoning.

Gilfeather Turnips - several years ago, traveling in rural Vermont, Eric & I picked up a few of these impressive roots at a farm stand. The



shopkeeper proudly educated us on its heritage, stating confidently that they grow only in Vermont. So of course, Eric then went looking for some seed, which it turns out will also grow pretty well in upstate New York. We've since read up on its heritage dating back to the 19th century farm of John Gilfeather in Wardsboro, VT which celebrates its legendary root with an annual festival and even a signature song! A cross between a turnip and rutabaga, Gilfeather is a special root with excellent sweet flavor, smooth texture and good storage life. Store in a cool dark area or refrigerate.

also...

arugula ~ broccoli/ cauliflower (rotating shares) ~ carrots ~ kale ~ lettuce (large shares) ~ onions ~ white potatoes

Coming Attractions

pie pumpkin ~ brussels sprouts ~ daikon radish



Recipe of the Week: Indian Spiced Turnips (Shalgam Masala)

I am very fond of both turnips and Indian food, which happily go together nicely. This recipe is from tigersandstrawberries.com.

- 2 Tbs cooking oil
- 1 onion, thinly-sliced
- ½ tsp fresh ginger
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 fresh chili peppers, thinly-sliced
- 1 tsp each: mustard seeds, coriander, cumin
- 2 cups fresh or canned diced tomatoes
- ½ tsp turmeric
- 2 cups turnips, peeled and diced
- ½ tsp brown sugar
- ½ cup fresh cilantro, chopped

Mince garlic and ginger, then combine and crush into a paste. Set aside.

In a heavy-bottomed pot, heat the oil and fry onions until golden. Add the ginger-garlic paste, chili peppers and mustard seeds. Cook, stirring, until the mustard seeds pop. Sprinkle the ground cumin and coriander over the onions. Continue to cook, stirring, until fragrant. Add tomatoes (with their juice), turmeric and 2/3 cup water. Stir to combine well.

Add the turnips, and cover. Bring to a boil, then turn down to a simmer, and cook until the turnips are softened, but are not falling apart. *Note:* if the water simmers away before turnips are fully cooked, add more.

Sprinkle the vegetables with the sugar and add salt to taste. Stir in the cilantro just before serving.



Another Recipe: Gilfeather Soup

I would guess there have been many versions of this recipe to be sampled at the annual festival in Wardsboro. This one is adapted from theheartofnewengland.com.

- 5-6 Tbs unsalted butter
- 3-4 onions, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 5-6 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 2-3 pounds of Gilfeather turnips (or other turnips and/or rutabaga), peeled & chopped
- 1 cup milk or half-and-half (or combination)
- pinch of nutmeg, plus salt & pepper to taste
- a handful of Gilfeather green tops if available or other seasonal greens (optional)

In a large soup pot, sauté onion and garlic until soft. Add stock and Gilfeathers. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer until roots are tender. Drain, reserving the liquid. Puree the vegetables and return to soup pot. Stir in milk/cream and seasonings, then add back enough cooking liquid to thin to your preference.

In a small pan, sauté your greens in some olive oil until wilted. Garnish each bowl of soup with some cooked greens.

One more: Fennel & Apple Salad with Cider Vinaigrette

it's lovely to come across a recipe calling for exactly the seasonal ingredients you have in the week's share box. This one is from epicurious.com

- 1/2 cup apple cider
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1 large apple, quartered, cored, thinly sliced
- 1 fresh fennel bulb, trimmed & thinly sliced
- 2 cups arugula
- 1/2 cup pecans (about 2 ounces), toasted

Whisk first 4 ingredients well, seasoning with salt and pepper. Combine apple, fennel and arugula, and toss with dressing to coat. Sprinkle each serving of salad with toasted pecans.