# Newsletter, October 15-18, 2013

Volume 10, Issue 19

## ***Farm News***

We cleaned and put away the plow for this season and turned under the last of this year's crop stubble. With the days getting noticeably shorter, this is the last time to successfully seed and establish a winter rye cover crop. These cover crops are the off-season workers on the farm: they grow organic matter, feed the soil (and the next season crops), provide the shade that prevents weeds from germinating, and their root system keeps our top soil in place when the spring thaws come around.

Where we had some weather related trouble in the beginning of the season, we think this fall more than makes up for the losses. Looking in newsletters from earlier years, this fall weather is treating us very nice. No snow. No hard frosts. And gratefully, no hurricanes. Do we hear someone knocking on wood right now?

A great example of the outcome of good weather is the fall lettuce. We were able to plant on time, and got enough growing days to get the heads nicely sized up. You can see the results in your shares. Right now, most crops grow very slowly, basically "waiting" to be harvested. If we'd had to plant a couple of weeks later we would have had 'baby lettuce'.

**Garlic update:** For everyone who gave us a hand with the harvest of the largest garlic crop to date, we'd like to let you know that we've "sold out". Between the CSA shares, the purchases from the Honest Weight Food Co-op, a couple of substantial seed orders, and some sales to many CSA members we moved all the garlic we harvested a couple of months ago. We're very appreciative of your help: the garlic sales provide the farm with a late-season cash flow, which greatly helps to make the payroll. What remains is garlic for the shares, and yet a larger amount of garlic to plant. We're looking forward to seeing you all around the last weekend in July next year to help harvest again!

**The 2014 CSA Season & membership referral:** At this time, almost everyone should have received a copy of our 2014 CSA information and sign-up package (if you pick up in Altamont, we will be handing you this information on Friday). We started to receive completed membership forms: the 2014 CSA is growing! We are looking forward to continue being *your* farm and farmers for the years to come, and we would be delighted to grow for you and your family again next year. Completing the membership form and returning it with a $100 deposit guarantees your participation in one of the premier CSA farms of the Capital District.

We're calling on your help: historically, our renewal rate is around 80%, which means that we'll be looking for about 75 new CSA members next year. We encourage you to share your enthusiasm for your farm with friends and neighbors. We offer a member referral discount - $ 75 for each full share, $ 50 for each medium share – in the form of a credit towards your 2015 CSA share. Just refer them to our website (www.foxcreekfarmcsa.com) for more information on how to join!

**About this week's share:** Full share members will receive Butternut winter squash, kale, potatoes, head lettuce, onions, spinach, green/turning tomatoes and garlic. We are rotating the last cauliflower and parsley. Many recipe suggestions for kale and green tomatoes follow – don't miss out on these unusual treats! The Butternut squash suffered early foliar dieback this year which led to less mature and sizeable

**Fox Creek Farm CSA**
**U-Pick: *Ready to harvest***

| | |
|---|---|
| Thyme | Basil |
| Oregano | Chives |
| Marjoram | Scallions |
| Parsley | Sage |
| Leaf fennel | Cutting Celery |
| Dill | Cilantro |
| Flowers | |

*Harvesting in the U-pick garden is part of your CSA share – come anytime!*

squash. Along with increased disease damage, we don't recommend you store these squash but eat them within the next few weeks (any damaged skin should be peeled off before use). As always, medium share members will be getting a variation on these items.

Your farmers,

Raymond & Sara

## RECIPES & SUGGESTIONS FOR GREEN TOMATOES

**Keep them over – they *will* turn red!** Now the green tomatoes have appeared in the CSA share, we thought it would be good to give you some suggestions as to what to do with them. For starters, you could hold them over: wrap them individually in paper or put them in a box, and they will eventually turn red. They will not taste like the delicious sun-ripened tomatoes you've come accustomed to, but a ripe tomato from your farm when it is freezing outside is a treat. If you decide to go the 'keep them over'-way, please check your stored tomatoes periodically. If one tomato goes bad, it will contaminate the whole batch, so cull aggressively.

**Cook'em!** Green tomatoes' taste and texture are quite different from ripe tomatoes. One of the Southern classics is of course the *Fried Green Tomato*. Other suggestions are *green tomato "ketchup"* or *green tomato relish* (you'll find recipes for all these easily on the internet). Our long-standing favorite for green tomatoes has been a *green tomato gratin*. The recipe is as follows:

### Green Tomato Gratin

1 lb green tomatoes sliced 1/8 - 1/4" thick

**For mornay**
1 1/2 Tbs butter
1 small onion, minced
1 clove garlic, minced
2 tsp flour
3/4 C half and half
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 C parmesan
1/8 tsp nutmeg

**For breadcrumb topping**
½ C breadcrumbs
¼ tsp salt
black pepper
1 Tbs olive oil

Put the oven rack in the middle position and preheat to 450 degrees F. Mix all the ingredients for the breadcrumb topping together and set aside. To make the mornay, put the butter, onion and garlic in a small saucepan and sauté over medium heat until fragrant. Add the flour and stir for about 1 minute. Whisk in the half and half, and then add the cheese, salt and nutmeg. Continue whisking until the mornay thickens, then take it off the heat. Mix the slices of green tomato into the mornay and arrange in a small oven-safe casserole dish. Spread any remaining sauce on top of the green tomatoes. Sprinkle the breadcrumb topping evenly on top then place the dish in the oven. Bake for 10-15 minutes or until the sauce is bubbling and the breadcrumbs are golden brown. Serves 4.

# RECIPES & SUGGESTIONS FOR KALE

After a long hiatus, we are again growing (and harvesting) kale. Over the last few years, kale made a great comeback in popularity. We eat kale (or "boerenkool," meaning peasant's cabbage in Dutch) in a stew-like dish, called "*Boerenkool met worst*" (kale with sausage). It's easy to prepare and uses one pot. Use a tall pot, and on the bottom place cut potatoes and some salted water, in the middle cut-up kale leaves (stems removed), and on the top a kielbasa sausage. Cook until potatoes are tender. Remove the sausage, drain the water, and mash the potatoes and kale together. Add some milk and butter if additional moisture is needed, and flavor with some mustard, salt and pepper. Serve with slices of the kielbasa (can be put right back on top of the potato-kale mixture), and more mustard.
**What about the kale stems?** Until a few weeks ago, we would have brought the kale stems right to the compost pile. That was until we had some pickled kale stems … they are delicious!

**Pickled kale stems:**

Stems from 1 bunch of greens, leaves removed
½ cup vinegar
½ cup water
3 medium garlic cloves, chopped
¾ tsp salt
1 T sugar
Zest of ½ lemon
4 thin slices fresh ginger
1 dried hot pepper, opened
½ tsp whole black peppercorns

Cut stems to two-inch pieces, reserve in a container with a lid. Mix remaining ingredients into a saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and pour immediately over stems. Close lid and let sit for about 20 minutes, then refrigerate for at least 24 hours. Serve as an appetizer or chop finely and serve as a relish.

**Pictures:** front – Washing potatoes. Second page: root washer in action (3x) – hauling in winter squash from the field. This page. Fall sunset at Fox Creek Farm – Raymond seeding rye and red clover cover crop. *Most pictures by Johanna.*

**Farm visits:** Please feel free to come and visit your farm and enjoy the free CSA member U-Pick! We have an 'open door policy': you can come anytime, no calls necessary. Come and see your beautiful farm – but please acknowledge the following rules for you and your guests: Stay clear of the electric fences; remain out of the planted fields; no swimming in the ponds; supervise children; no climbing on equipment or woodpiles; lastly, due to our livestock, dogs need to be on a leash (and you need to clean up after your dog).

**Directions to the farm:** From Altamont: Follow Rte. 146 towards Gallupville. Approximately 10 miles out of Altamont, make a right on "Larry Hill". (*) Go up for ¼ mile (there is a blue sided house on your left). Just past the blue house, you'll find Fox Creek Farm Road on your left going in the woods. Follow this road to the end. From Rt. 443: Turn on 146 in Gallupville for approximately 2 miles. Make a left on "Larry Hill". Follow directions as above (starting at (*)).
**(from Schenectady:** take rt. 7 to Delanson, in Delanson, make left on Darby Hill – first right is Gallupville Road – this becomes Larry Hill when crossing the Schoharie County line).

***Support a viable, small family farm and eat some of the best locally grown produce available!***
Fox Creek Farm, c/o Sara and Raymond Luhrman, 182 Fox Creek Farm Road, Schoharie, NY 12157.
Phone: (518) 872-2375 - foxcreekfarmcsa@earthlink.net - www.foxcreekfarmcsa.com