

Pinehold Gardens Field Notes

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Briefs

Remember the season starts July 13

June Field Notes will have drop-site information

Strawberry and pea u-picks will be some-time in June (Look for that June Field Notes)

Possible new dropsite location: The Public Market downtown. Let's us know if you are interesting in using this site.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

And what did we do on our winter vacation? We cooked some delicious meals and took time to relax and enjoy the museums, some movies and a few good books. But we really never did get a chance to take a complete break from farming, which is necessary to recharge our batteries after a long season of 14-hour days. For the past two years we have been at the wonderful Milwaukee County Winter Farmers Market on Saturday mornings in November and December. During January and February about 80 hours are spent ordering seeds and preparing taxes. The greenhouse that is filled

with tomatoes in the summer is filled with spinach in the winter. Hundreds of pounds were harvested, washed and delivered to two restaurants, La Merenda and Cuisine in February and March. We continue to do weekly food waste pick ups from MATC's culinary school and La Merenda to feed Peaches our pig and our compost pile. Planting seedlings indoors started in early March with onions and herbs. Most of the other seedlings are started in April and hopefully in early May we are transplanting those seedlings and direct seeding crops in the field. With the slightly warmer weather we're back outside repairing equipment, clearing downed trees, and working on infrastructure. We also both worked part time, myself as Box Office Manager at Next Act Theatre and David helped out his former employer filling in as an editor. As I tell everyone we grow sustainable food, but haven't yet figured out the sustainable life part.

FIELD NOTES

This spring weather is a perfect example of why we made the decision last year to delay the start of our CSA season until mid July. For deliveries to start mid June, planting in the fields must begin next week as most vegetables take a minimum of 60 days to mature. The soil also needs to warm up for seeds to germinate and not rot. Right now our fields are cold and wet. We are many weeks away from being able to take a tractor onto the fields. Our farm is located in a great place because of its proximity to

our customers, school groups and farmers markets. But it is also very close to the lake and its cold breezes and fog. Our water table is also high, and our heavier soil type, which produces some of the best tasting food, is slow to dry out and cannot be worked wet.

FARM LIFE

We have some sad news to share with everyone. On January 16, on a sunny Sunday afternoon, our wonderful Golden Retriever and official farm greeter, Claire, died. Although just two months shy of her thirteenth birthday she never acted her age and was always adding bounce and joy to our every day lives. We will especially miss finding her in the fields harvesting her own strawberries, raspberries and peas and digging carrots. We thank all those folks who sent us condolences and for sharing our loss.

This weekend we welcomed new members into our farm family, 15 baby Silver Wynodette chicks. We keep a small flock of laying hens for our personal use, our family and friends and some of our CSA members that pick up at the farm. Our hens have a good life free ranging in our young orchard in the summer and bathing in the sun and warmth of a winter greenhouse. Once past their egg laying days, they enjoy their retirement here at the farm.

OPENINGS

For whatever reason, CSAs that would have been sold out long before now, including ours, still have openings. Spread the word.

The Seed

The man pulling radishes
pointed the way
with a radish

— Issa

It's not possible to say what the future of food will provide as it's not possible to say what this year's harvest will be. Feel rest assured, however, the seeds of the future have been planted, the ground is fertile and the breezy promise of hope has been given body. Young people who have come to know the work, the tedious, backbreaking, soulful work, and have come to know the possibility of making a meager living have taken up the hoe and plow for themselves. They recognize that business is a shade of green that a farm isn't and they are turning to the profession of growing food because it is good work. They are showing us and a younger generation that work can be good and believing you can make a difference is not something to be taken lightly. It is to be encouraged. The work and what it stands for is what will hold them to the land and raise food as though it were a sacred obligation to do so, which, of course, it is.