

# Pinehold Gardens *Field Notes*

Vol. 21 Week 7

August 19, 2015

## In This Box

- Simons Gardens sweet corn
- Yellow & green Romano beans
- Expression onion
- Garlic
- Fennel
- Slicing tomatoes
- Lovelock or Muir head lettuce
- Red Norland potatoes
- Kale or collards

## Next Week?

- Beets
- Onion
- Head lettuce
- Tomatoes
- Peppers
- Potatoes
- Parsley
- Sweet corn?

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

“Serendipity in a Box” was the headline of an article in *The New York Times* on August 13. Ignorant me, I thought it was an article that would mention CSAs. I was wrong. It was a piece about monthly subscription boxes “filled with a surprise mix of products picked out by a curator.” Everything from treats for your pet, young adult books, cosmetic samples to comics and toys can be found among the 1,200 companies that the service Subscription Addiction has listed in its subscription directory. They have found that most people that log into their account subscribe to seven boxes a month with a box costing an average of \$30 each. I looked into a few of them and logged into Blue Apron which mails its subscribers weekly deliveries of recipes and all the ingredients to make them. They ship three million meals a month nationwide. The website is lovely, the recipes nice and simple and tasty sounding, the instructions are very clear with great pictures of all the ingredients. And the cost for this “convenience?” \$9.99 a meal per person. I priced out the ingredients for a few of the menu items and it was about 25 percent of the cost. The infrastructure and the packaging needed to ship the ingredients is mind boggling to me. (How does one package 1/8 teaspoon of crushed red pepper flakes or 2 tablespoons of Mascarpone cheese?)

Meanwhile most of the Milwaukee and Madison area CSAs are still trying to fill spots

for the remainder of the season. Thank you for choosing Pinehold Gardens and we are so fortunate that we filled our minimum subscription goal just before the season started.

## FIELD NOTES

We are growing some great weeds. Weeds love water and heat. Weeds grow much faster than vegetables. Weeds will out compete a vegetable. We need to weed our fall brassica field. Our picking schedule limits our weeding schedule and now the frequent “surprise” rain events are putting a damper on our weeding effort as it is too wet to weed as we risk pulling up the plants along with the weeds. We now have had more rain in the last week than the entire month of July. Want to weed for an hour or two? Please join us Saturday anytime between 9am and 5pm. The upcoming weather looks great.

One might call me weather obsessed or at least water obsessed. But the timing of these wet times is not good. The onions are starting to die back and we don't want a repeat of last year's water logged rotting onions. The melons are starting to ripen and we don't want them to split. The rain is good for the small fall seeded crops like carrots, beets, radishes and turnips.

David continues to work on improving the soil structure on the farm by planting cover crops. He planted a small field in rye and vetch right before the rain, so that was good timing.

## BOX NOTES

Romano beans are a more hearty bean traditionally used in soups and stews.

The Expression onion variety is a mild Sweet Spanish type good for cooking.

You will be receiving sweet corn in two deliveries this year. This week's is a hybrid super sweet white variety, while next week will be an open pollinated, more old fash-



David and our employee Sarah with the help of Chris Simon and his son Jordan picked a brimming bin of sweet corn in about 35 minutes. That's production, and well over 1,000 pounds of corn.

ioned variety bred for organic production. It will be interesting to taste the difference.

The yellow shoulders on the tomatoes are from too much heat and sun in the greenhouse.

## TOMATO U-PICK

Here are some details about the tomato uppick. Knock on wood, the tomato plants still look healthy and blight free and the tomatoes are starting to ripen. We hope to start the uppick in a couple of weeks. Each CSA member family gets to pick a 2.5 gallon pail, about 11 pounds, of tomatoes for free. You do not need to make reservations. We will email everyone when the picking days and times are. If we have extra tomatoes we will sell them to our CSA members at our wholesale price of \$1.50/lb. The farm stand price will be \$2/lb.

## Pasta with Corn, Tomatoes and Cheese adapted from *blueapron.com*

Mascarpone cheese thickens this sauce for rich flavor.

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|--|------------------------------|
| 1 cup chopped tomatoes or halved cherry tomatoes | 2 Tbl. mascarpone cheese     |
| 3 cloves of garlic                               | 1 small onion, diced         |
| 1 ear of corn                                    | ½ cup Parmesan cheese        |
| 1 bunch of basil                                 | A pinch of red pepper flakes |

While the pasta is cooking, saute onion, garlic and corn, adding salt and pepper to taste, for 2 to 3 minutes. Add tomatoes and half the basil and red pepper flakes, stir for a 1 to 2 minutes. Add cooked pasta to the vegetables, with the mascarpone, and most of Parmesan with some pasta water to achieve desired consistency. Serve with remaining Parmesan and basil.

### Sweet Corn

While we've lengthened its season slightly, sweet corn still seems to be the preemi-



nent summer vegetable. It's a treat to be sure so, and it is also ephemeral, like a fine summer day. Sweet corn is best eaten as soon as possible. **Store:** While fresh sweet corn can be frozen by blanching the ears then cutting off the kernels and frozen, it is best eaten right away.

**Preparing:** Either soak in water and roast on the grill with leaves intact, or shuck the corn, boil it. **Use:** Raw, or cooked, grilled and roasted, sweet corn lends itself to a meal all by itself with gobs of butter and salt liberally applied or strip the kernels and use in soups and salads.

**Flavored Butters:** Sweet corn all by itself is just fine but most folks like to smear on butter. While the butter itself is yummy, you can also flavor the butter playing off the rather two-dimensional sweetness of the corn. Try adding minced jalapeño with lime juice and cilantro to softened butter. Or add lemon zest and lemon juice to softened butter with a little thyme. Or roast peppers, blend them or mince them and add a little garlic and apple cider vinegar to another take on plain old butter.

## Summer Minestrone from *How to Cook Everything*

Sure it's warm out but a bowl of this summer only soup makes a great lunch or breakfast.

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| ¼ cup olive oil                          | water   |
| 1 medium onion, diced                    | 1 cup chopped tomato  |
| 1 carrot, diced                          | 1 ½ cups potatoes   |
| 1 celery stalk, diced                    | 1½ to 2 cups Romano beans, summer squash, corn, kale or collards. |
| ½ cup prosciutto or other ham (optional) | ½ cup chopped fresh parsley                                       |
| 6 cups chicken or vegetable stock or     |   |

Saute onions, carrot and celery and add ham if using. Add potatoes, then stock and tomatoes. Simmer for 15 minutes or until the potatoes are fairly soft.

Add other vegetables and parsley. Cook until vegetables are very tender. Serve with Parmesan.

Variations include adding pasta or a dollop of pesto on the finished soup. Or a white bean.

## Baked Fennel in Stock from *How to Cook Everything*

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| 1 fennel bulb, cut in half and sliced thinly | 1 cup bread crumbs    |
| About 2 cups of stock                        | ½ cup Parmesan cheese |
| Olive oil                                    | Chopped parsley       |
| Salt and pepper                              |                       |

Put fennel in ovenproof dish and cover with stock to about ½ inch. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Top with bread crumbs and Parmesan. Bake at 375 degrees for about 30 minutes or until the fennel is soft. Garnish with parsley.

Variations: Add onion and garlic and splash of sherry, or balsamic or cider vinegar.