

Pinehold Gardens Field Notes

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December/January, 2010/2011

2011 Membership Checklist

- Nutritious Produce
- Reasonably Priced
- Convenient Dropsites
- Most Local Option
- Fascinating Newsletter
- Checks cashed Jan 3
- Let's do it

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Happy Solstice to everyone! It's not the first day of winter, it's the first day of longer daylight. We continued to be busy right through the 23rd with fall projects, field cleanup, selling at six Saturday morning Milwaukee County Winter Farmers markets and, well, like everyone else, everyday life.

David has been busy with the morning animal chores, the Farm Fresh Atlas committee and helping to plan a new food and farming curriculum for our area's

technical colleges. If all goes well, there is a chance that future farmers might be able to pursue an associate degree in sustainable farming from MATC, Gateway Technical Institute or WCTC, and learn the things that we wished we would have known before we started on this farming adventure.

We both are taking time to read and plan to take the entire next week off from all things related to farming. Then it's on to ordering seeds, taxes and, weather permitting, building

projects and equipment repair.

The chickens have a nice "solarium" greenhouse so they can step outside of their coop and enjoy the winter sunshine snow free and warm. While they miss their clover and grass they enjoy the kitchen compost and kale we harvest for them.

Peaches, the pig, is sad we did not finish her indoors quarters, but she has plenty of straw in her pigloo thanks to the Milwaukee Public Market, which recycled their

fall decorations to our farm. She is also enjoying discarded food from Brightonwoods Orchard, Breadsmith and the MATC culinary school.

The house pets are doing well although Claire is knocking on the door of 13, pretty old for a Golden Retriever, and her age is beginning to show.

FIELD NOTES

The mild November not only kept things growing, but enabled us to finish some of the fall field work. We mulched the garlic with two garbage trucks full of leaves this year instead of oat or wheat straw. For the past three years, our straw mulch has had grain left in it which sprouted and became more of a weed problem than the weeds. Plus leaves in

From Door to Door

The word threshold seems inexplicably bound to the verb to thresh. The former refers to an architectural feature, and the latter an agricultural act. Yet they share an etymology for a reason that I think will be clear, and together they seem to define farming sustainably in terms not often enough considered.

Threshing means to separate the seed from the straw, leaves and other debris. In the past grain was beaten or trod on until the grain seed was dislodged. The seed was then winnowed by tossing it against a wind that at the right velocity conveniently blew the lighter debris or chaff away, leaving the heavier seed behind. When farm work was also community work, there would be thresheries where many hands made light work, a tradition that continued even with the introduction of large mechanical threshers. But community involvement died out when mobile combines came on the scene, which did all the human work involved in separating grain.

The threshold is, of course, the wood trim on the floor or more commonly the zone between the door framing. It is the location where one transitions from one place into another. This has metaphorical and literal meaning.

At the core of this act of crossing a threshold is the sense of leaving the place where one has

been and entering a new place. Not unlike threshing grain where only the germ of new life in the seed is, in a sense, carried forward.

There is a Zen quality to this notion of thresholds and threshing. If one was to consider each moment as an opportunity to step through a door and carry with one only that which has present meaning, then each threshold crossing becomes a threshing moment and a paring down of essentials — a life of simplicity moving from door through door.

Farming is nothing if not crossing thresholds. Planting and harvesting in a continuous succession. Plowing in the remnants of the harvest each time. Caring for the essence of life in the seed, in the soil, in the food. Sustainable farming means leaving behind unnatural processes and holding precious the ways of nature, moving ever through the present into new seasons.

We pass now also through another threshold in the fall and leave behind another season come winter, and then spring. What each season will be, we won't know until we enter it. What each day will be like, we won't know until we experience it. We hope you consider joining us next year as we continue with our 17th season. We also hope that you are healthy and free to make your own crossings, leaving behind what you must and taking with you what you should into this season and next year.

Best Winter Recipes

SOFT MOLASSES COOKIE, Grace Howaniec, *The Milwaukee Journal*, Feb. 2, 1992

I am not a great baker and I am definitely a-need-to-follow-a-recipe kind of person. While I did not receive a ribbon when I entered these cookies into the Racine County Fair baking contest this recipe has never let me down and has become a favorite in our house. Ironically, my banana bread using the recipe from the banana bag did win a blue ribbon.

½ cup unsalted butter, softened	2 ¼ tsp baking soda
½ cup solid vegetable shortening*	2 ¼ tsp ground ginger
1 ½ cups sugar plus sugar for garnish	1 ½ tsp ground cloves
½ cup dark molasses or sorghum*	1 ½ tsp ground cinamon
2 eggs, lightly beaten	
4 cups all purpose flour	
½ tsp salt	

*I use Spectrum organic palm oil shortening, Rolling Meadows Sorghum, fresh spices purchased in bulk, organic flour and sugar

In large mixing bowl, cream butter and shortening until well mixed, 1 to 2 minutes. Add sugar and beat until light colored and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Beat in molasses and eggs until smooth; set aside. In another large mixing bowl, whisk together flour, salt, baking soda, ginger, cloves and cinnamon. Gradually mix dry ingredients into creamed mixture until dough is blended and smooth. Roll dough into 1 ½ inch diameter balls. Dip tops in granulated sugar. Place 12 on a greased cookie sheet. Bake in preheated 350 degree oven about 11 minutes. Do not over bake or cookies will lose their chewy interior. Remove from sheets to wire rack to cool completely. Store in tightly covered container. Makes 4 dozen.

VEGETARIAN CHILI, *Another Little Book of Beans 2000*, Recipes from Beans & Barley

A favorite winter thing to do is to have brunch at Beans on Sunday and then go to a movie at the Oriental. While my choice for a Sunday brunch is the tofu scrambler, my choice for a winter lunch is the chili. We make lots of one pot meals during the winter using canned, frozen and celled produce and when we can't get to Beans, we still enjoy the chili.

2 cups small red or kidney beans	1 tsp black pepper
1 large onion, diced	1 Tbsp salt (I use 2 tsp)
2 large carrots, finely diced	¾ cup bulgur wheat*
4 stalks of celery, diced	2 15 oz cans tomato sauce
1 medium green bell pepper, diced	1 Tbsp cumin
1 Tbsp minced garlic	1 Tbsp dried basil
1 tsp dried thyme	
1 Tbsp dried oregano	
1 Tbsp chili powder*	
1 tsp cayenne pepper*	

*I use Spice House regular chili powder, which has no heat, but a great chili taste. I use less cayenne or just jalapeno peppers. Bulgur really bulks up so I use a ¼ cup.

In a saucepan, bring the beans and about a quart of water, to a boil. Pour off this first water through a colander, and transfer the beans to a large, heavy-bottomed soup pot. Add about 2 quarts of water and the salt, and cook the beans for about an hour, or until the skin of a bean peels back when you blow on it. Add the cut vegetables, and all the herbs except the basil, and cook for about a half hour, until the vegetables are tender. Add the bulgur and tomatoes, and simmer for another 15 minutes. Add the basil, taste to see if you need more salt, and serve.

BAKED DINNER, David Kozlowski

When I'm working late at the theatre David uses the opportunity to make one of his favorite dinners. It relies entirely on Deborah Madison's dictum: "Food is cooked in the field and finished in the kitchen."

Carnival or acorn squash, cut in half seeded and placed cut side down on baking sheet	Sweet potato Baking potato, such as Butte or Gold Rush Salt, a good beer and a good book
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Take the time to enjoy family, friends, and food this season.
Sandy and David

general are a good soil amendment. And in our continual effort to improve our soil and water issues we are tweaking the field layouts and planting systems for next year.

SIGN UP FOR 2011

Although it might seem like our season has ended, our garlic has already set roots so our growing season really never stops; it just changes speed.

What also never stops are bills and what pays our bills is our CSA program. At risk of sounding like a Public Television pledge drive Pinehold would not be here if not for you. CSA members are what help make many small farms successful.

If you would like to join us for another year we would really appreciate hearing from you. Any checks sent now will not be cashed until Jan. 3. We also have the installment option where you can send two checks with one post-dated for July 1. Assistance funds up to \$100 towards the cost of a share are also available because of the generosity of others contributing to the fund. And, of course, please do not hesitate to call us to make other arrangements.

Why is it important that we hear from you now? Before we sell anything we sow we will have spent about \$40,000 on living and farm expenses. Also, each year we are fortunate to have a list of interested possible new members waiting to hear if there is room for them in our CSA. So even if you decide not to continue your CSA membership, it helps us to hear from you and we hope that you continue your support for local food.