

Pinehold Gardens *Field Notes*

Vol. 25, Week 15

October 16, 2019

In This Week's Box (only weekly members)

- Carrots, Rainbow
- Cabbage, savoy
- Winter squash, Acorn
- Peppers, sweet, Carmen & bell
- Celery

Next Weeks Box?

(Everyone gets a box)

- Winter squash, Butternut
- Carrots
- Onion
- Peppers
- Potatoes
- Kale
- Turnips, salad, Hakurei

A DAY IN THE LIFE

I apparently confused some people in last week's newsletter about our retirement plans. We plan on offering our CSA program for at least the next two seasons. After two seasons we will be at our full Social Security retirement age and our only two debts, our mortgage and our newest tractor, will be paid off so we will have some wiggle room to decide on our business plan for farming during our "retirement years".

In the mean time our days are filled with many immediate decisions to make, all of which are not fun right now. Each day we decide which of the partially rotting or soon to be rotting crops should we spend our time harvesting....carrots, winter radishes, sweet potatoes, potatoes? Will it really freeze or frost tonight so do we need to pick peppers?

I took a pass this past Friday on my birthday as we spent the late afternoon harvesting peppers before an expected freeze. All I wanted to do on my birthday was go to the local pub, The Cellar, and eat a Friday fish fry and watch a baseball game. Our block does not have access to cable so no baseball

games. We are lucky if we get decent cell phone service. We use our phones as a hot spot for Internet access.

Problems aside, we have a great worker share crew who once again got everything harvested and clean and had a good time (we hope) doing it. They have become friends over the past years that they have worked here, welcoming with open arms any new workers. We love our harvest crew.

The crew also provides perspective for us. Rita said that we have really connected her family to their food and what is going on with the weather. Becky said that unless you experience the mud and muck while digging carrots, you will never understand. Amen.

And I will be enjoying my fish fry and watching baseball this Friday as there are very few peppers left to harvest.

FIELD NOTES

We lost track of the rain totals this fall. We think it is 6 inches for October as we received 1.7 inches last Thursday night into Friday. September was probably 9 inches. The yearly total is at least 13 inches above normal. Standing water in the fields has been the status quo for the last month or so. Standing water means saturated ground, which in turn means anaerobic soil conditions, which leads to rot. We hope the ground dries out enough in the next month before the ground freezes so we can plant garlic. Garlic is a bulb which needs to be planted in fall. Think of the results of planting a tulip or daffodil in the spring and you will understand why we cannot plant garlic in the spring with good results.

BOX NOTES

Acorn winter squash— See last week's newsletter. PLEASE let us know if you receive a water logged one and we will replace it.



The pumpkins have made it through heat (not much), bugs (not too many,) disease (a good dose), and flooding rains (plenty of that) and are awaiting the children who might come this Sunday, October 20, noon - 4pm, to pick one out.

Peppers — All are sweet: bells, Italian frying Carmens and orange Oranos

Cabbage— We try not to deliver two cabbages in a row, but we had to harvest them and had no available cooler space. My favorite way to cook it? Saute some garlic and onion in olive oil in a skillet, slice it thin, toss with the garlic and onion and add some salt. Cover with a lid. Toss occasionally.

Celery—Our best yet. It loves water.

Carrots—Tasty but will not store for long.

PUMPKIN UPICK

Kids, unfortunately not kids at heart, will be allowed to pick one pumpkin as our 242 pumpkin plants only yielded about 140 pumpkins. We will provide two chilis, cider and some corn bread. If you want to bring something, great: chili, bread or a dessert? It is casual, so stop in anytime.

Food Tips: Celery



Giving food a French name or phrase seems to elevate it to a higher level and so we give you mirepoix. (Pronounced “meer pwa”). “Mirepoix is used in most cooking in some form or another as the basis of stocks, soups and stews in European and American cooking but also in other cultures,” says Chef John Reiss in the Culinary Arts Department at MATC. Referred to as the holy trinity some combination of these items is used in Cajun and Creole cooking and usually consists of bell peppers, celery and onions or scallions.” Italians call the trinity soffritto, while Caribbean and Spanish cooking uses soffritto with slightly different ingredients, Reiss says. Why these three were used is hard to say except that cooking them until they are soft, not browned, provides a sweetness to whatever is added next. Onions play the dominate role with carrots and celery offering supporting roles based on the proportion of their use. You may find, as we do, that our celery has a strong but sweet taste. Raw it will be chewy, but cooked it is superior to store-bought.

SAVOY CABBAGE SOUP

from *Vegetables Every Day* by Jack Bishop

- 1 small head Savoy cabbage, about 2 lbs.
- 4 Tbs. olive oil
- 2 medium onions, chopped fine
- 3 medium garlic cloves, minced
- 7 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 6 slices country white bread, 3/4 in. thick
- 6 Tbs. grated Parmesan cheese

Slice the cabbage crosswise into thin strips. Heat 2 Tbs. of oil in a large casserole or Dutch oven. Add onions and saute over medium heat until golden. Add garlic and cook for about one minute more.

Add cabbage and stir to coat. Cook until slightly wilted. Add stock, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium low and simmer until cabbage is tender, about one hour.

When the soup is ready, preheat the broiler, brush remaining oil on both sides of the bread. Place the bread on a cookie sheet and broil until crisp on the first side. Turn the bread slices and sprinkle the cheese on the unbrowned side. Broil until this side is crisp and cheese is melted.

Ladle soup into bowls and place the croutons on the top.

MAKING STOCK

We’ve have made our stocks for cooking so long we can’t remember ever buying stock. We have a refrigerator freezer compartment just for them. We do it in part because it’s easy but also we can control the taste with the ingredients we choose.

The basics include: celery with leaves, carrots, onions with skins for a darker stock, peppercorns, and bay leaf. To this you can add cut up chicken for chicken stock or beef bones for beef stock. If you steam or boil vegetables you can add that water as well. Cook slow and low, strain it and freeze it.

There’s specific recipes and techniques in cookbooks and online. Do it regularly and you will always have stock on-hand.

