

Pinehold Gardens *Field Notes*

Vol. 22 Week 13

September 28, 2016

In This Box

- Megaton leeks
- Red & Gold potatoes
- Winterbor kale
- Encino oakleaf lettuce
- Plum Regal paste tomatoes
- Basil
- Carmen sweet pepper
- Broccoli or zephyr squash
- Fennel Flowers

Next Week?

- Winter squash
- Lettuce
- Broccoli
- Assorted peppers
- Carrots
- Onion

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Where does the time go? It seems like we were just sweating wearing t-shirts on harvest day and yesterday we were chilled wearing sweatshirts. The first migrating birds that I look and listen for in spring, the red-winged blackbirds, are in the treetops gathering to leave. The monarchs that were visiting our zinnia patch by the hundreds in the last few weeks are now gone and the bright colors of the zinnias have faded. Soon we will be into the brown season, what we call the season when the tree leaves have fallen.

And how did we get this old? Yesterday was David's 61st birthday. My 61st is in two weeks. Children that have been helping out at the farm since they were in grade school are now applying for college. Weren't we just turning 40 and trying to figure out this whole CSA farming thing?

FIELD NOTES

David is busy preparing the fields for next year. Land that was not used this year that was planted in spring with a soil improving cover crop has been replanted in a fall cover crop of winter rye. In conventional farming, soil can often be thought of as the medium that holds up the plant and absorbs water. All the nutrients are provided by petroleum-based fertilizers.

In organic farming, soil is the key as healthy soil yields healthy plants. Also numerous studies are showing that the increased microbial activity in the soil from having a high organic

matter content (which is where rye cover crops enter the picture) increases the nutritional content of the crop.

We have finished harvesting our winter squash and the yield looks decent, but nothing to write home about. The CSA, being as always our first priority, will get about the same amount as usual and our restaurant accounts will just be shorted.

Later this week we will be harvesting our sweet potatoes. From the few plants we dug up last week it looks like it will be a good sweet potato year as sweet potatoes love hot weather. It will be a while though until they will be in the boxes as they first need to be cured.

In two weeks we start planting garlic and next year's season will have begun.

HONEY

A limited supply of honey is still available at the farm for pickup either at the Saturday Farm Stand or anytime during the week. Just email us an order and we will have it ready.

BOX NOTES

The leeks in today's box were planted in our greenhouse exactly eight months ago on February 27 seed by seed into tiny cells. Leeks, onions and shallots are the first crops that we seed as they need to be at least two-month old transplants before they can be planted outdoors. The leeks did well this year. We are now buying very expensive hybrid seeds and we made sure that they were weeded and watered throughout their long growing season.

We wanted everyone to get a taste of the delicious new paste variety as only about 35 to 40 members were able to make it out to the upick. Besides being cooked into a sauce, they can be roasted. Quarter and place flesh side up drizzled with olive oil and sprinkled with salt in a casserole dish in a 300 degree oven.



The young rye crop was planted weeks after the oat crop to the left but will over winter and take off next spring. The oats will freeze out this winter. Both offer soil habitat for the immensely important microbes and insects.

Cook until you reach your desired consistency.

Last week the basil was a beautiful lush green and we planned on delivering a whole basil plant. This was a late planting of basil and we were waiting for it to get just a little bit bigger. Overnight most of the leaves turned yellow or black. Was it the recent rains, the colder nights or is basil like the trees and there is some inner plant mechanism that tells it that the season is over. Another thing has been added to my winter research list.

The catalog description for the Encino lettuce said it was an all-season lettuce. We tried planting it in early summer, but it bolted before it ever formed a head. As a fall lettuce, it grew beautifully.

Winterbor kale is the classic soup kale as it holds up well. It can still be sauteed, it just requires a little longer cooking time.

The Oneida Gold potato is a new variety, similar to Yukon Gold. Our yield and the tuber size was greatly diminished by the drought.

PUMPKIN UPICK

We have about 100 pumpkins for members' kids and grand kids. (And for those kids at heart.) Please email if you are interested in picking and how many you would like. **And please put Pumpkins in the subject line.**

Leeks

There will be no tears shed while slicing a leek except perhaps tears of joy. A member of the lily family, leeks are related to onions and garlic but are the shy cousin. Leeks were revered in ancient cultures and are a mainstay in European cuisine



but are sporadically adapted to American cuisine. Leeks can be the backbone to a simple soup, the bed of a grilled salmon steak or a side all their own, poached in butter and white wine until tender. **Store:** Keep leeks trimmed of dark greens and roots in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. **Preparing:** Leeks can have soil trapped in the layers so always slice length-wise and fan the layers under running water. Never brown them but cook them until tender. **Use:** Leeks are more delicate than onions so aren't a substitute for them. Give them recipes that let the leek flavor predominate and you won't be sorry.

Leek and Potato Soup

From *Vegetables Every Day*

3 to 4 leeks	1 bay leaf
2 Tbl. olive oil or butter	Ground black pepper
1 lb potatoes	Salt
4 cups chicken or vegetable stock	2 Tbl. minced parsley

Trim and discard tough, dark green leaves of leeks (or keep for stock.) Trim off the roots, and halve the white and pale green portions of the leek. Slice into thin strips. Rinse any soil out if necessary. Saute leeks in a pot in oil or butter until tender and just turning golden. Do not brown. Add potatoes, stock, bay leaf and salt and pepper and cook until potatoes are tender. Remove the bay leaf, crush some of the potatoes and add parsley.

Option: For a cream version, remove the bay leaf and before adding parsley, place soup in a blender. Return to the pot, add 1/2 cup of cream and the parsley. Heat until hot but not simmering.

Trout with Kale

From Peter Sandroni, owner and chef of La Merenda and Engine Co. No. 3

This dish was served at our first on-farm dinner, which will make a reappearance next year. The dish is simple and delicious.

1 10 to 12 oz. Rushing Waters rainbow trout fillet	1 lb potatoes, roasted and cut into 1/2 inch pieces
1 Tbs. wheat flour or brown rice flour	2 shallots julienned
About 4 oz. kale, destemmed and torn into small pieces	1 Tbs. garlic minced
	Salt and pepper to taste

Pre-heat oven and roast potatoes in oil and salt until tender, then set aside to cool. Using half the butter, saute shallots until translucent and then add garlic and cook for 1 minute.

Add kale and roasted cut-up potatoes and cook until kale is wilted. Season to taste and put aside.

Melt remaining butter in saute pan, score the skin side of the trout and dredge in salt, pepper and flour. Place trout skin side down in the pan first and cook until golden and then flip and cook for another two minutes. Remove trout and continue to cook butter until it browns. Place kale and potatoes on a plate, place trout on top and drizzle with the brown butter. Serves two.

Fennel Flowers: This anise-flavored herb can be used to season tomato sauce and other dishes. Both the flowers and tender seeds are flavorful.