

Pinehold Gardens Field Notes

Vol. 19 No. 2

Spring, 2013

A DAY IN THE LIFE

A nice break from the tedium of winter's piles of paperwork and snow has been my meetings with some of the chefs that we will be working with this year. By meeting before the season begins we can plan what to grow and have the assurance of a market for our produce, similar to a CSA farm. We hope the sales to the restaurants will replace most of the lost sales from not attending the South Shore Farmers Market. As we mentioned in a newsletter last fall we decided not to attend

for specials last year and with the addition of a new chef, Darin Yenter, more of our items will be incorporated into the menu. Dave Boucher and Stephanie Shipley, owners of Amaranth Bakery & Café, have a sizable garden next to their café, but count on us for kale and fall storage crops. Executive Chef Dan Van Rite and Sous Chef Paul Funk of Hinterland Erie Street Gastropub change their menu daily so they will literally work with whatever we have to offer. And lastly we are pleased to continue our commitment to working with

about substitution so if you are lacking a key ingredient you will have help in finding another that will work with the recipe.

The Box Notes column will focus on identifying more carefully the vegetables that are in the box along with more detailed storage and care instructions.

CROP UPDATE

Last year we trialed a wonderful cherry tomato in the greenhouse and we will be growing enough for the CSA this year. Growing cherry tomatoes outside can be a challenge because they split easily, making them difficult to grow, harvest and send. We will also be putting up some temporary hoop houses to grow some specialty varieties of tomatoes for the CSA.

We are dedicating a shadier area of our farm that had been in an alfalfa cover crop for a few years to growing greens, lettuce and spinach-like crops. We will have to cross our fingers that our solar electric fences will protect the crops from deer traffic as the count last week was 18 deer passing through that field.

FIELD NOTES

While the calendar says Spring has sprung, the jet stream is sending us another message. Accuweather.com predicts that the overall weather pattern into the first part of April will continue to run about a month or so behind schedule with some warm, sunny days probably still being outnumbered by days with clouds, showers and chilly conditions.

This Midwest's spring weather is more typical of a Pinehold Gardens' spring with

cool lake breezes and hazy, foggy mornings. It's been four years now since we decided not to rush into the season and take a tractor onto fields that were too wet or plant seeds and risk them rotting in the cool soil. So while farms and CSAs that want to start harvesting in mid June are facing a tough planting deadline of April 15th, Pinehold Gardens has a little wiggle room and can wait to start to plant until early May for our early July CSA start. As most gardeners know, the only things that mature in less than 60 days are radishes and some leafy greens.

Our germinating chamber is full of onion and greenhouse tomatoes seedlings growing under florescent lights and waiting for warmer nights when they will be moved to the transplant house for a few weeks until they are transplanted out at the end of April. By mid April thousands of pepper, field tomato, zucchini, lettuce and greenhouse cucumber and bean plants will take their place in the germinating chamber.

CSA SIGN UPS

We are at 65 percent of our goal of 175 members. Again, we thank everyone who has already signed up and especially those who have referred new members to us. Here's a brief review of the facts. The price for returning members is \$420, new members are \$435. It can be paid in post-dated check installments. And do remember and tell your friends that we have an Assistance Fund that offsets up to \$100 of the cost. If you are unsure if we still have openings, that information is posted on the CSA page of our website.



Spring at Pinehold Gardens.

that farmer's market as the customers and the market have changed since we first started selling there 11 years ago.

We also are beginning our sixth year as one of the local suppliers to La Merenda. We have established such a close relationship with the owner Peter Sandroni that we can almost predict his weekly order.

We began working with Justin Aprahamian, the new owner of Sanford restaurant, last summer. Justin enjoys shopping at the farmers markets and looks to us for a few specialty items.

Juniper 61 used our produce

MATC and the students of their Specialty Foods class and the student restaurant Cuisine.

BOX NOTES

I had dinner with Annie Wegner LeFort, our recipe expert, to plan our newsletters for the season. We agreed that we should have some general, loose adaptable recipes and our usual two to three more structured recipes. The former will encourage some experimenting while the later will provide the step-by-step approach like any cookbook recipe. Annie will also be including more ideas