



HARVEST HILL CSA NEWSLETTER

WEEK 12: SEPTEMBER 1, 2016

FALL STORAGE CROPS: GETTING BACK TO OUR "ROOTS"

As we transition towards fall, here on the farm we're just starting to harvest our fall storage crops, such as carrots, beets, cabbage, garlic, onions, and potatoes. Bill will store these crops in his cooler and the barn through the fall and into the winter, and they'll provide a crucial source of income for the farm after your final CSA box has been delivered in late October. You might be wondering: what makes a storage crop a storage crop? How can food be stored at above-freezing temperatures for such a long time without spoiling? The key is the process of respiration, through which plants metabolize carbohydrates and other key nutrients and produce carbon dioxide. When still in the ground, plants can replenish the carbohydrates and nutrients they use in respiration; after harvest, crops will continue to use the nutrients they've stored, but over time they'll deplete them, leading to a loss of nutritional value and quality the longer crops are stored. However, some crops naturally have very very low rates of respiration once in storage, meaning that the reduction in quality over time is almost negligible. These crops include apples, beets, onions, carrots, potatoes, and garlic—our storage crops, basically. In addition to the crop's natural respiration rate, storage conditions obviously play a major role in how well a crop will store. For many crops, such as carrots, cabbage, and potatoes, cool temperatures and a high relative humidity are both crucial to preventing water loss (aka shriveling) during storage. Historically, before modern refrigeration, root cellars were dug below buildings or out in the woods; British colonists in New England relied on this storage technology to survive our long, cold winters. Another important factor is the quality of the soil the crops are grown in, as deficiencies in minerals such as calcium can negatively affect a crop's storage capability. Finally, when it comes to long-term storage for some crops, it might be surprising to know that "a little dirt never hurt"; some studies show that leaving dirt on carrots and beets during storage prevents decay, as the bacteria in the soil protect the crops from fungus. Apparently, science and history collide in our farm cooler. How cool!

THIS WEEK'S BOX

- ✧ Basil
- ✧ Green beans (small amount)
- ✧ Broccoli
- ✧ Carrots
- ✧ Corn
- ✧ Cucumbers
- ✧ Yellow squash and zucchini
- ✧ Tomatoes (smaller amount)
- ✧ Onions
- ✧ Stoke peppers

NO LETTUCE, FOR NOW!

We're sorry we couldn't provide our normal amount of lettuce last week or this week; unfortunately, recent high temperatures, wet soils, and other issues with the lettuce field have led to rot and other problems with the lettuce. Thank you for your understanding!

QUESTIONS? FEEDBACK?

If you will be on vacation and can't pick up your box, let us know and you will get extra produce in a different week.

Email us at:
abigail.bok@gmail.com



ABOVE: Although still producing yummy fruit, the tomatoes are definitely slowing down. Summer is ending!

BILL'S Funky MINUTE

The farm is slowly transforming from summer to fall. There's a hint of orange on the maples, our pond water is too cold for me to get into, the potato vines are dying back, tomatoes are disappearing from the main greenhouse, and the new planting of fall raspberries in one of our greenhouses, planted this past May for my wife Ellen, is loaded with buds. The winter squash is starting to mature, and the crew can't wait for the summer squash to stop producing.

It is hard for me to believe that it is now September. The cooler weather has energized all of us. It is a good thing, as I know the physical challenges that lie ahead now that it's fall harvest season. Fortunately, I have a set of forks for the Kubota tractor to help with the after-harvest weight. Instead of lugging 50-pound bags of potatoes, carrots and parsnips or heavy boxes of storage cabbage and winter squash in from the field, we first put our fall crops into a 15-bushel crate that we then move to the barn using the tractor. It makes the process of getting crops out of the field, washed, and distributed or into storage much easier on our muscles and backs.

It is an exciting time for me as I look forward to the coming harvests, as well as an important time for the financial sustainability of the farm. It is also an easier time for me to manage the daily routines, as pretty much all we do now is harvest, harvest, harvest.

Enjoy and be well,
Bill

BAKED STUFFED TOMATOES

INGREDIENTS:

- ✧ 2 medium or large tomatoes
- ✧ Salt to taste
- ✧ ½ cup bread crumbs
- ✧ 1 clove garlic, minced
- ✧ ¼ cup basil, finely chopped
- ✧ Freshly ground black pepper
- ✧ ½ cup grated Parmesan
- ✧ ¼ olive oil

INSTRUCTIONS:

Preheat oven to 400°F. Slice tomatoes in half horizontally and scoop out pulp and seeds. Salt insides and let sit upside down over a sheet pan for about 15 minutes to extract juices. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, mix bread crumbs, garlic, basil, pepper, ¼ cup grated Parmesan, and oil. Stuff tomatoes with the filling, being sure to press it in well and mounding it on top, sprinkle with remaining Parmesan, and bake until tomatoes are cooked through and tops are golden brown, about 30 min.

Adapted from a recipe from The Food Network:
<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/sunny-anderson/stuffed-tomatoes-recipe.html>

FUSILLI WITH CORN SAUCE

INGREDIENTS:

- ✧ 5 oz fusilli, farfalle, or other curly pasta
- ✧ 3-4 ears fresh corn
- ✧ 1 large onion, chopped (about 1 ½ cups)
- ✧ 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- ✧ 4 tbsp grated Pecorino Romano or Parmesan cheese
- ✧ Salt to taste
- ✧ Freshly ground black pepper
- ✧ 6-8 fresh basil leaves, stacked, rolled, and thinly sliced
- ✧ 2 tbsp olive oil

INSTRUCTIONS:

Bring a large pot of salted water to boil and cook the pasta until it is al dente. While the pasta is cooking, shuck the corn and rinse it under running water, removed as many of the silks as you can with your hands. Rub two of the ears over a coarse grater set over a bowl to catch the milk and pulp. Cut the kernels off the other 1-2 cobs with a knife (tip: cut corn in half crosswise first and stand on the flat cut end while scraping kernels off). Keep the whole kernels separate from the milk and pulp. Pour the oil into a large skillet set over medium heat. When the oil starts to shimmer, add the onion and garlic and sauté until tender. Add the corn kernels and sauté for just a few minutes, until the corn softens slightly and brightens in color. Stir in the corn milk and pulp and turn off the heat. Cover to keep warm. When the pasta is al dente, drain it (reserving ¾ cup of the water) and add it to the skillet with the corn sauce. Toss to combine, adding a little pasta water if the sauce needs loosening. Stir in the cheese, add salt as needed, and grind in plenty of fresh black pepper. Stir in the basil, scoop everything into a bowl, and serve. *Source: Adapted from a recipe in Eat Your Vegetables by Joe Yonan, copyright 2013.*