

CSA Newsletter, Week 15 of 20

September 17, 2007

This is a Healthy Alternative 'A' week.

Farm Report

by Farmer Tim

Hello from Erehwon!

The main event last week concerned the weather—a predicted record low of 33 degrees for Friday night. Friday afternoon we scurried around the herb garden covering the basil to hopefully minimize the damage, and we sent subscribers out to harvest a big bag for pesto in case this turned out to be their last chance. As it turned out, Nature was just teasing us a little and although we recorded 33 degrees, the basil came through with only minor damage and the remaining tender plants escaped with only a few blackened leaves around the edges.

At Konen's Farm we continued to harvest fall crops and pretty much cleaned out the tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and potatoes. Plenty of winter squash, pumpkins, and gourds remain. Since we were unable to raise a squash harvest crew on Saturday, we'll continue to harvest them as we need them. Mike also mentioned that he has a few of his free-range chickens left in his freezer; if you are interested in them, you can contact Mike at 630-391-2470.

At Mongerson we continue to monitor our late melon patch watching for our small watermelons to ripen. Last week Beth looked up some information in Johnny's Seeds catalogue and they suggested three criteria for determining ripeness (other than destructive testing! ;-)
This is Tim's favorite method of quality control for foods--especially cookies! Beth) First, look for a yellow spot where the melon touches the ground. Next, the melon should separate easily from the vine. Finally, they suggested tapping the melon to hear a "pink", "pank", or "punk", the "punk" sound indicating ripeness. We harvested a couple of likely candidates and all afternoon people were tapping away and guessing which one was riper. (It doesn't take much to keep us and our crew amused over an extended period!) One melon, everyone agreed, had a sound which was the epitome of "punk" so with a flourish we chopped it open but were disappointed to see an unripe melon. Then we were off to the supermarket to purchase what they called a "personal watermelon". After sufficient "pinking" and "panking" (we couldn't raise any "punks") we purchased a "pank", raced back to the farm, and sliced it open. Perfectly ripe! So there we are, not knowing much more than before. Our quality control department will continue to work this issue...

At HPM Robin Migalla and Chuck Wettergreen attacked the jungle in the hoophouse and by day's end we had some beautiful new planting beds for our late fall crops. After the tomato vines were dragged out and spread as mulch we found a few hornworms crawling around looking somewhat dazed and trying to find something to climb on. The pests were immediately dispatched to the peacock pen.

On Friday night a small group assembled for the potluck and good food and conversation was enjoyed by all. The weather was a bit brisk, but not too bad, although seats by the fire were definitely very popular. The good news was—no mosquitoes! We suspect they aren't completely done for the season and this week's warmer temperatures may resuscitate some of them, but—we hope—the hideous swarms of the past few weeks are a thing of the past.

Volunteer Days/Customer-Subscriber Potluck

The remaining volunteer day and potluck will be on October 06. We will be harvesting **pumpkins and ornamental gourds**. Gourds are small, and we also have a lot of mini pumpkins, so this might be a very good activity in which to involve smaller children.

Volunteers will meet for lunch at Heritage Prairie and then caravan down to the Konen Farm to harvest squash about 1:00. (If you can't get there for lunch, 1:00 will do the trick.) Around 4:00 the caravan will head back to Heritage Prairie, where we will be setting up for another Subscriber/Farmer potluck. Volunteers who are attending the potluck can leave their dish at HPM before going down to the Konen Farm. The potluck will begin at 4:30 and end around 7:30. You do not need to volunteer in order to attend the potluck. In fact, those hungry volunteers will need lots of hearty food to feed the hearty appetites they will have worked up harvesting squash. Squash harvesting is a good family activity, but possibly physically difficult for smaller children. We have decided to provide some items and a nominal fee (less than \$10 per family) will be charged to cover these costs. We would like an approximate count so that we can be sure to have enough yummy items on hand. E-mail Beth at alpropst7@yahoo.com or call the store at 630-715-5475 to make your reservation.

Subscriber News

Robin Migalla invites everyone to attend a showing of "Sweet Misery" on October 2.

Sweet Misery: A Poisoned World

Tuesday, October 2, 2007

Gail Borden Public Library

Elgin, IL

6:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Community Rooms

Are aspartame, MSG and other food additives making us sick?

Join us for a presentation of "Sweet Misery: A Poisoned World." This film takes a close look at some of the toxic effects of the most popular artificial sweetener, aspartame. Learn about aspartame's (a.k.a. NutraSweet) toxicity to human health and the corporate and government influences on our food. Members of the local Weston A. Price chapter will be available for discussion following the documentary. You can learn more about the film at:

www.sweetremedy.tv

In late February Gerard and Sandy Brillowski, long-time supporters of our CSA, are taking their Steel Drum Band, OD TAPO IMI, on a cruise and invite all subscribers to climb aboard with them! If you come along, you'll see Beth and I lounging around the pool thinking, "Spring!" You can get more details at <http://www.funconcert.com/>. If you can't make the cruise but would like to hear the band, they are appearing at Scarecrow Fest in St. Charles on Friday, October 05, from 6-9 pm. They are definitely worth seeing/listening to.

CSA Produce Forecast

by Farmer Tim

This week's offerings:

On Tuesday delivery subscribers can expect a big bag of Genovese basil for pesto (slight discolorations are okay to use), red onions, and a small bag of lettuce, winter squash, garlic, beets, baby summer squash and another green. Wednesday and Friday may have some other items.

Heritage Prairie Happenings

by Beth Propst

New Fall Hours

Starting October 01, we are going to fall hours. Monday – Friday we will be open from 10-6 and Saturday and Sunday we will be open from 10-4. These hours will continue until Christmas. We haven't decided yet when we will close for Christmas, but we will be open on a limited basis in January. By next week we should have a complete calendar of for the rest of the year in place.

Pages from Grandma Beth's Cookbook

by Beth Propst

Recipes on www.hpmfarm.com

Thank you to those of you who have added recipes to the recipe forum.

<http://www.hpmfarm.com/?p=cfbbs&a=forum.view&fid=11>

Anyone who has an account can post a recipe. Go to the website and click on "get an account" to get an account. Once you have completed the form, the web site will send you a password almost immediately. Depending on your security systems, this might go to your junk mail folder so check that folder if it doesn't show up in your regular mail folder within 10 minutes. (Once you

log in with this password you can change your password by going to the profile section and changing your password.) Anyone who is logged in can post on the forums.

Yesterday my son was visiting and asked me “Mom, when will you be making more of that squash soup?” So here is the recipe I used—but never followed exactly.

Creamy Butternut Squash Soup

Cut a **butternut squash** in half lengthwise. (It doesn't have to be a butternut, but I also tried this recipe with an acorn and found the flavor not as rich. A Hubbard or kabocha squash would probably be just as good, though.) Scoop out the seeds. Wrap in foil and bake on the bottom shelf of a 375 degree oven for at least an hour—until soft.

While the squash is cooking, sauté **onions** and **garlic** in butter until golden brown. Add to 3 cups of chicken stock. (If desired you can add a little **sugar** or **honey** for a sweeter soup.) Add **herbs** and **spices** to taste. (Suggestions are thyme, rosemary, cardamom, parsley, winter savory.) Scoop the squash out of the shell and add to the broth. Simmer for 10-20 minutes. Process the mixture in a blender or food processor until smooth. Add 2 cups **heavy cream**. Season with **salt and pepper**. Dust with **nutmeg** and serve.

Until next week...

Beth, Tim, Bronwyn, and Bob

P.S. Please email us with questions, comments, suggestions, recipes, and we will include them in future newsletters. We really hope to get a lot of recipes so that in a year or two we can create the Heritage Prairie Market Cookbook.

All newsletters will be posted on the HPM web site in the Forums section by 8:00 Monday morning.

If you need to contact us during the week, please call the Heritage Prairie Market phone (630-715-5475), Beth's cell phone (630-485-9964) or Tim's cell phone (630-485-9963). E-mail works if you do not have an immediate need, but response may take 24-48 hours during busy times. Thanks.