

# CSA Newsletter, Week 16 of 20

September 23, 2007

This is a Healthy Alternative 'B' week.

## Farm Report

*by Farmer Tim*

Hello from Erehwon!

Our warm-weather crops that nearly succumbed to the mid-September light frost are showing new life and the heirloom tomato plants that are still in the ground have put on some new tops and we may get a small bumper crop if the warm weather holds! At Konen's farm we are harvesting fall broccoli and cabbage and continuing to gather up pumpkins, winter squash, and gourds. We've been giving out a fair amount of winter squash over the last few weeks and if they are starting to pile up, find a cool dry place and they should last quite a while. Beth made some squash soup from a buttercup squash that was absolutely delicious (*See last week's newsletter for approximate recipe. Tim wants me to promise to make it at least once a week.—Beth*). There are no excess squash here at our house!

At Mongerson we continue to nurse the melons along and last week we picked several ripe cantaloupes and we hope to have a few to give out this week. We are still puzzling over how to decide when the watermelons are ripe. A Google search (what ever did we do before we had Google!) pulled up lots of ideas about how to tell a ripe melon but most people came to the conclusion that watermelons are just difficult. We are cleaning up the field and this week we liberated our tiny orchard from the tall weeds and found some bushes still alive – a miracle given the poor treatment they have received by a certain "Farmer T..." In an effort to rejuvenate our small asparagus patch we mowed everything down and covered it with mulch for the winter. Jenny Gresko and Izabel Kowalski have been cleaning up the raspberry patch and are planning to add new vines and to increase size of the strawberry field. We are looking forward to enjoying the fruits of their labors next year!

At HPM our fall crops are doing well and we should be harvesting some nice red butterhead lettuce, white beets, Swiss chard, kohlrabi, summer squash, radishes, and even a small bit of late-planted okra. Spinach is coming up in several rows (finally!!) and we even have some late green beans with blossoms and tiny fruit. "Global Warming Hedge Garden" is the official name of this small plot north of the hoop house. Plans are in the works to add capacity for extended-season crop production, an improved produce processing area, and other site improvements. Our staff is voting for a washing machine that will take the dirt off the squash, pumpkins, gourds, and root crops. (*How about a sauna for easing those aching muscles?—Beth*) However, if we do get one, I'm sure everyone will miss the fun of filling up the garden trailer with water, dumping in the squash, and a rather moist crew splashing, gabbing, and scrubbing away!

Robin Migalla, Steve Trisko, and Chuck, “Renaissance Man”, Wettergreen came out to help clean out the hoophouse, plant, and harvest. Steve brought us a tub of garden chili he had cooked up and Chuck delivered a freshly canned jar labeled “caponato” and laced with a mixture of spiced eggplant and other goodies from his garden. We are truly being sustained by this group of volunteers! (*Hmmm ... sustained agriculture instead of sustainable agriculture? Now there's a concept!—Beth*)

We are beginning the process of planning next year's CSA and would appreciate your inputs about how to make the program better. We are planning to improve our crop planting schedule to provide increased quantities of favorite vegetables. We also will be adding more varieties. If you have ideas about what varieties would like us to add next year, please let us know. We would also like to do some cooking demos – I know our subscriber base includes many excellent cooks. If anyone would be interested in preparing a dish to sample at our Wednesday or Friday pickup we would be happy to supply you with extra produce and make copies of your recipe to hand out. A dish made from squash, kale, Swiss chard or Asian greens would be especially appreciated.

## **Come see us at Prairie Fest**

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin is once again hosting their annual Prairie Fest, a festival of ideas and information for sustainable living. We will be there giving out information about our farm and the CSA, and Farmer Tim will be speaking from 10:00 to 10:45 about CSAs. To find out more about the event and get directions, go to the Prairie Fest web site at <http://www.uuceprairiefest.com/>.

## **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 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 5:00 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. We are cooking veggie pizzas on the grill and a nominal fee (\$10 per family) will be charged to cover our 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](mailto:alpropst7@yahoo.com) or call the store at 630-715-5475 to make your reservation or sign up when you pick up your share.

## 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](http://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 me 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:**

This week everyone should get a pumpkin (before we sell them all at the Farmers' Markets) except for Healthy Alternative Group A, which will get them next week. There will also be more winter squash—they will keep quite a while on your counter in the kitchen and even longer in any cool (50-55 degrees), dry place. (Or you can spend an afternoon cooking them, scooping out the flesh and freezing it so that when you want to cook with it later all you have to do is take it out of the freezer.) Also look for potatoes, summer squash, lettuce, cabbage or broccoli, possibly some herbs, and a few other things.

## **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 we will be open from 10-4. These hours will continue until Christmas, with three exceptions. We will be closed the entire Thanksgiving weekend, Thursday through Sunday, and we will be open Sundays during our two Holiday Shopping Extravaganzas (see below). We haven't decided yet when we will close for Christmas, but we will be open on a limited basis in January and February.

### **Holiday Shopping and Tasting Extravaganzas**

We are planning two fun weekends of tastings, demonstrations, and holiday shopping. Mark your calendars now—you won't want to miss these. The first weekend will be November 17-18 and the second will be December 01-02. We will be sampling many of our wonderful food items, some available only for the holiday season. We have invited additional artisans to display their wares, so there will be many items not available in the store. This is the perfect time to do your holiday shopping or order gifts and food items for pick up at the store the week before Christmas. We are still planning these events and we will keep you posted with more details as we pin things down.

### **Single Female looking for home without chickens**

Bob and Bron recently adopted a friendly, lovable dog who, sadly, does not fit in very well with all of the other farm animals. She is seven months old, weighs about 50 pounds, loves kids, plays well with other dogs, but does not get along at all with chickens. If you are interested, ask to meet Cordelia on your next visit to the farm.

## **Pages from Grandma Beth's Cookbook**

*by Beth Propst*

### **Recipes on [www.hpmfarm.com](http://www.hpmfarm.com)**

Don't forget to share your favorite recipes with other subscribers by posting them on the Heritage Prairie website <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.

## **Herbs**

Most of the herbs in the herb garden, except for the basil, do quite well in the cooler weather, so take advantage of our herb cutting garden in the few remaining weeks of the season. In addition to being tasty additions to almost any dish, here are some ideas specifically for herbs.

### **Pesto**

Although we think of pesto as being made with basil, the word “Pesto” comes from the same root as pestle and means to pound or crush. It is common to find pestos made with dried tomatoes or peppers, but you could try other versions. For example—a rosemary or sage pesto with roast pork, a mint pesto with lamb, a tomato-oregano-rosemary pesto on homemade pizza. Just take your favorite pesto recipe and substitute other ingredients for the basil. Of course, you probably want to make smaller quantities for trial.

### **Herbed butter**

Soften the butter to room temperature. Add quantities of either fresh or dried herbs and mix with a fork. If you whip the butter, then you get herbed whipped butter which is also nice, and very spreadable. After mixing, refrigerate until use. Some possible combos:

Honey mint—wouldn't that be good on scones or water crackers?

Dill—perfect for baked potatoes

Dried tomato, basil, and garlic—better than garlic bread!

Lemon thyme—yummy on chicken or fish

Parsley—good for potatoes or vegetables

### **Herbed oils and vinegars**

Although I have never done this, I understand it is relatively easy. The following recipe I got for herbed oil is from cooks.com.

Safflower oil

Fresh herbs, such as basil, thyme, marjoram, dill, garlic, tarragon

Rinse and towel dry fresh herbs, place in jar and mash with wooden spoon. You can use one herb or several in combination. Pour oil over herbs in jar, cover jar with cloth and tie with string. Set in a sunny spot for 2 weeks. Strain, pour oil in clean jar and store in refrigerator. Use for sautéing, dressings, or marinades.

If you use fresh herbs, you should plan on using your herbed oils fairly quickly as they can go bad. If you want your oils to last longer, use dried herbs.

For herbed vinegars, I got the following information from [gardensablaze.com](http://gardensablaze.com).

In herbed vinegars, the proportion of herb to vinegar is an important consideration as far as taste, and if you have a favorite herb, please adjust the herb proportions accordingly. One thing about making herbed vinegars is that if you make a mistake and the taste is wrong, you haven't spent much money, and you still have a decorative addition for the kitchen. As a baseline for proportioning the herbs, use three or four 2 inch sprigs of fresh herb per cup of vinegar. If using dried herbs, use 1/4 cup of herb per cup of vinegar. If using garlic, hot peppers, or something similar, use 1 garlic clove or 1 pepper per cup of vinegar.

Place the herbs in clean jars or decorative bottles. Gently heat the vinegar, but don't boil it. Let it cool down, then pour the warm Vinegar over the herbs in the jars. Place the jars in a dark place, such as a cabinet or shelf away from bright windows. The vinegars can be used in 3-4 weeks to up to a year later.

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.