

Supplying local produce and supporting local farmers for 19 years.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Extend Your Season!

There are just three pickups left in the regular season. Want more? Sign up for our extended season delivered to your depot in November and December.

November share consists of two pickups at your depot, two weeks apart, this year on Nov. 3rd and Nov. 17th. Each pickup is about double the large share size, consisting of both fruits and vegetables.

Bulk order comes at the end of the regular season. Look for the form in late October. We will deliver to depots only on Thursday, November 10th. We typically offer carrots, potatoes, squash, onions, apples, maple syrup, and more—it's a great way to get your Thanksgiving goodies and stock up for winter, while supporting local farmers.

December Share (Formerly "Winter Share") will be delivered to your depot in early December (date TBD), if you've signed up. That single large pickup offers a final hurrah from every share type: bread, a wedge of cheese, an herb, and lots of veggies, apples and cider. For more details or to sign up, email Tamara@farmdirectcoop.org

New Trees Grace the Depots

Members in Marblehead and Salem may notice new young trees at their depot locations. These were planted with permission of the parks departments at request of our manager Julie Pottier-Brown. This past week marked six months since her husband Bill Brown passed away. Bill was our eastern route driver on Tuesdays since we started the Tuesday Coop. Saturday, October 1st would have been their 26th wedding anniversary. To celebrate, Julie and her sons, with friends and family, planted the trees in a simple ceremony. In Salem, the tree is a 14' disease-resistant elm transplanted from Harmony Grove cemetery with the help of the shade tree division of the city. In Marblehead, the tree is a 10' tulip tree, purchased with the help of longtime member and garden designer Larry Simpson. (www.simpson-garden-design.com). Larry and the FDC have worked together over the years to enrich the Marblehead depot with bayberry, blueberry, spicebush, and other native plantings.

As the season draws to a close, and especially next year, when the new plantings leaf out, please take a moment to contemplate the gifts of nature and hope, and those who made a difference in your life.

Bring your flashlight

Sunset will be around 6:45 this week. If you can't make it earlier, contact your depot coordinator to see how she can help.

FDC Fresh Ideas

By Julie Pottier-Brown, Operations Manager

There's a new item on the block: sweet potatoes. Rob from Riverland described the five steps to harvesting them in his last newsletter:

"Sweet potatoes are in a whole different crop family from potatoes, and they act like it. Sweet potato vines, unlike potato vines, do not begin to die back when the crop has matured. The vines would just keep growing with no "end point," so we must first contend with the thick mat of foliage covering the field. We mow the vines with a tractor-mounted mower and then go through each bed with a tractor-mounted disc set up that cuts the vines in between the rows of sweet potatoes. These two steps make it possible to go through each bed with our potato digger without getting bound up on the vines.



The digger is a simple yet awesome machine. It has an undercutter bar followed by an inclined "bed chain" powered by the tractor. The chain moves in an elliptical motion around a number of sprockets, lifting up all the dirt and crop that the undercutter bar loosed. Most of the dirt falls through the chain so when the sweet potatoes come off the back of the digger they are dropped back onto the surface of the soil. The fourth step is picking up the crop into five-gallon buckets. When we've picked a bed, we transfer the harvest into grain sacks— two buckets per sack—and leave the empty buckets back on the ground at the correct spacing for harvesting the next bed. The final step in the process (this is looking like a few more than 5 steps!) is picking up the bags and stacking them on pallets, five bags per layer. We fit 20 bags per pallet, meaning that each pallet is a nice and tidy 1,000 pounds.

"Six of us spent all of Wednesday harvesting just over 6,000 pounds (that's 1,000 pounds each!) of gorgeous sweet potatoes. We still have about 4,000 pounds remaining to harvest, but we left the field feeling a little tired yet very satisfied. The sweet potatoes are now in our greenhouse curing (turning their starches into sugars and sweetening up). They cure best at 90 degrees and 90% humidity, which we can get close to achieving in the greenhouse."

Each week, I cross my fingers for the new items to make the "take" interesting. Last week, we purchased broccoli from Lakeside Organics, fully expecting to get Riverland's broccoli this week. This is the note I got from Rob: "Bad news on the broccoli... the planting that we were hoping to pick from this week has been hit with alternaria (a disease that puts black spots all over the heads) because of the continuous rain. We have another broccoli planting behind this one, but it is right next to this planting and I'm worried that if the rain keeps up it may share the same fate... I'll keep you posted."

Those who experienced the deluge of rain early Tuesday morning can attest that this has been a season of extreme storms. Because our mission is to support local growers, we experience wonderful bounty when the weather is good, and fewer options when the weather is bad. New England has never been an easy place to farm, but fortunately, most of our growers have managed to keep the staple crops healthy this year, and we have gotten a few nice surprises. As we continue to help them through this particularly difficult season, let's enjoy the bounty we do have and embrace the sweet potatoes, apples and garlic of fall!

Cheese this week is a feta from Valley View Farm in Topsfield. Look forward to Great Hill blue and one more selection before the end of the year. Enjoy!

Julie

The Secret to English Roasted Potatoes

By Linda Malcolm

Regularly a part of an English dinner, roasted potatoes are crackly and perfectly browned on the outside and soft on the inside.

When I make roasted vegetables at home, I collect a variety of hardy root vegetables: potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, parsnips. Then I cube them into my big 60's barely-yellow mixing bowl, drizzle enough olive oil on to cover them, add salt and pepper – and maybe a little fresh chopped rosemary – and roast them in a 400+ degree oven. After fifteen minutes, I flip them so they roast evenly. They are OK, but they never come out with that great English crunch covering.

Last February, we visited my husband Bill's family in England during winter break. I was keeping his sister Anne company in the kitchen while she made dinner: Steak and kidney pie (steak and mushroom for me), roasted potatoes and parsnips, carrots, green beans, and gravy. We were just waiting on the roasted vegetables. I hadn't seen the beginning of the process, so I asked Anne exactly what she had done. Anne explained that she had peeled the potatoes and parsnips, cut them in half, and parboiled them for five minutes. Then she put them in the roasting pan with fat. I hovered to watch the roasting process, looking for the secret of why mine weren't English. After several minutes in the oven, Anne checked on them. She pulled the pan out, tilted it to one side, and spooned fat from the gully at the bottom of the pan over the potatoes. That's where I encountered *Stateside Problem #1: I never use that much oil.*

We had a brief chat about the difficulty of really getting them roasted properly, because there is usually something else in the oven that can't take the temperature that good roasted vegetables need. (My thought: make pot roast in the crockpot and roast veggies in the oven – that would work.) I glanced at the counter and saw an open empty can. Anne followed my eyes. "Ahhh, and that is supposed to be the very best for roasted veg. Goose fat." A whole can of goose fat was crisping up those spuds in the oven. Thus uncovering

Stateside Problem #2: No cans of goose fat at my local grocery store.

I had an extra helping of Anne's English roasted potatoes that night, knowing I wouldn't – and probably shouldn't – replicate them at home.

More go to Kale Recipes: Scalloped Kale and Potatoes

By Heidi Rubin, FDC Board President, Marblehead Depot

(Ed. Note: Heidi's Lemony Kale Salad, which appeared in the newsletter in August (and can be found on our blog: blog.farmdirectcoop.org/2011/08/1280) was such a hit that members requested she share her other favorite kale recipes. Watch for more yummy recipes in the weeks to come.)

This I serve in the fall and winter. I used this recipe for the first time on Thanksgiving. It was a hit with every Kale naysayer at the table.

Adapted from Vegetarian Pleasures. Given to me by Jessica Benedetto, Marblehead member.

- 1 large bunch of kale, leaves only; discard stems
- 5 med-large potatoes, thinly sliced
- 4 cloves garlic minced
- 2 cups grated Swiss cheese
- 2 Tbs butter, cut into bits
- ½ tsp salt
- ground pepper to taste
- 1 ¼ cup milk

1) Steam kale until wilted, about 7 minutes. Squeeze out excess water and chop. Set aside.

2) Preheat oven to 425°. Generously butter a large shallow baking dish (approximately 10" x 10"). Cover the bottom with potato slices. Layer on the kale and sprinkle garlic on top. Add half the cheese. Add another layer of potato slices, cheese, sprinkle butter on top. Add salt and pepper to taste.

3) Pour in milk and shake pan to distribute. Bake 50 minutes or until potatoes are tender and the top is nicely browned.

Editor's note: Got a favorite recipe to share with members? Want to tell us about a favorite shopping spot, or share your efforts at making perfect roast veggies, or anything else? The season is winding down, but we still want to hear from you! Email us at newsletter@farmdirectcoop.org

Look Out for Hidden Sugar

According to the Centers for Disease Control, half of the population age 2 and older consumes sugary drinks -- meaning soda, sweetened bottled water, sports and energy drinks and fruit drinks (but not 100-percent juice) -- every day. The new report also finds that quarter of Americans drink at least 200 calories per day -- the equivalent of more than one can of soda -- while a small percentage far exceeds that.

"There's a steep increase among the highest consumers," said Cynthia Ogden, Ph.D., a researcher with the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics and one of the study's authors. "Five percent of the population consumes more than four, 12-ounce cans of cola each day. That's a lot!"

According to an article in the Huffington Post, sugar hides in some other surprising places. Here are their top 10 foods that surprisingly have a lot of sugar: Frozen entrées, Low-fat or fat-free salad dressing, Crackers, Ketchup and BBQ sauce, Soy milk, Tomato sauce, Flavored yogurts, Fat-free "diet" products, Instant flavored oatmeal, and Specialty coffee drinks. Want to cut back? Here are some tips from the article:

- Flavorings like cinnamon, nutmeg or vanilla powder on your oatmeal or coffee, or lemon, grapefruit or mint in your water, can distract your tastebuds. You can also satisfy a sweet tooth with roasted vegetables. The roasting process brings out their natural sweetness and will satisfy your need for sweet.

- Take a walk: Studies show that you're much less likely to crave sweet foods after exercise. Even just a 30 minute brisk walk would suppress the craving and allow you burn calories to boot!

- Skip the sugar substitute: Recent studies suggest that the use of calorie-free sweeteners may contribute to over-eating and weight gain.

The article also suggests these reference points when grocery shopping:

Main dishes and desserts should contain no more than 4 grams of added sugar per serving

Side dishes should contain no more than 2 grams of added sugars per serving

In total, you want to keep your added sugar to less than 24 grams, or 6 teaspoons per day.