



September 4, 2012

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Supplying local produce and supporting local farmers for 20 years.

Food for Thought

Flower Farming Partner Wanted

Melissa Glorieux from Aster B. Flowers is looking for a business partner for next year. "I have had a great first year growing 1/4 acre flowers but I now know I can't do it alone. The reception my flowers have received has been awesome and I feel like next year could be even better with the right help. I am looking for someone to split the work and the profit with me. Flower knowledge is great but not critical. Farming experience would be very desirable. Mostly I'm looking for the right fit - someone I click with and also someone with similar goals for the business. If you know of someone who lives in or near Essex and might be interested in this arrangement, please send them my way. I would love to collaborate with this partner while planning for the next season." For more information please email Melissa Glorieux of Aster B. Flowers, melissa@asterb.com. You can visit Aster B Flower's website at www.asterb.com.

Place Bulk Orders Now!

Looking for bulk paste tomatoes? They are now available to order through our bulk tomato form, along with field and heirloom tomatoes. Place orders here <http://blog.farmdirectcoop.org/2012/08/bulk-tomatoes/>

Have you tried Just Add [Fruit] local pie crusts yet? They are made by our very own Melrose depot coordinator Jacq Bastoni. They are once again available to order online here <http://blog.farmdirectcoop.org/2012/07/just-add-fruit-local-pie-crust-order-form/>

Don't miss out on Magic Moon soaps, handmade in Salem. All soaps are phthalate, sulfate, paraben, dye and cruelty free! Samples are available for you to peruse at the depots. Be sure to note your favorite and then place your order online on our website at <http://blog.farmdirectcoop.org/2012/08/magic-moon-soaps-handmade-in-salem-ma/>

Looking to order anything else not mentioned above? Just send Julie an email and if it's available she will try to get it for you. Email Julie at julie@farmdirectcoop.org

Please note: Bulk order payments over \$20 are COD and due at time of pickup. Thank You!

FDC Fresh Ideas

By Julie Pottier-Brown, Operations Manager

We are in another "holding pattern" of summer veggies. We have tomatoes, lettuce and choices of other items, but some things are starting to fall off the list like cucumbers. I am hopeful for a few new items soon like potatoes, leeks, and broccoli.

For those of you who are active on our Facebook page, you may have read about the giant snafu we ran into last Thursday. The western truck broke down just outside of Montague, MA after picking up all



Bulk Heirloom Tomatoes
Photo by Liz Foulser, Melrose Depot

of our produce (including those delicate raspberries). Loud noises and lots of smoke turned out to be a bad brake cylinder. Luckily it was a cool outside, and the truck stayed in the shade for most of the day. Budget corporate has a very different idea of customer service than we do. Instead of sending another truck right away to get us on our way, we endured waiting for a tech to assess the situation, waiting for a tow truck, being towed to Chicopee, MA, the repair of the truck and finally a departure time of 4pm on the traffic laden Mass Pike. A record split time in Salem (20 minutes) got us opened at 7:30pm in Salem, and 8pm in Marblehead and Melrose. All members pitched in to help, bringing flashlights and staying until 10pm and later. A truck breakdown like this hasn't happened in more than 10 years and we have never had to postpone the opening for so long, for this we are grateful.

Julie

The Quality of Corn

As those of you who are members of our Facebook group are probably aware, there have been several complaints about the organic corn we have been receiving lately. Some members mentioned their corn was rotten, tasted old or was shriveled, chewy, mushy and not so sweet. Other members seemed to love the corn they were receiving. If the quality of the produce you get on your pickup day is not up to par, please let us know. Keep in mind the occasional bruised fruit or bad pepper may happen. However, when something is really awful or you have a number of one item and they are all bad, please let Julie know.

Since the quality of corn has been variable, it is hard to say exactly what is happening. All of the corn we have received so far has been certified organic and it is normal to have an underdeveloped tip and an overall smaller ear. This year we have received corn from two different suppliers and the only other sources we have available to us are not growing certified organic corn. We can get IPM or conventional corn that will cost us much less. In MA, IPM and conventional are basically the same thing. All corn gets managed as needed. If moths or worms are trapped, the corn is sprayed. If it is organic, it just gets sprayed with USDA approved products. The main difference between IPM and organic corn is in the fertilizer and the seed. The problem may be in the variety of corn available in organic production. The seed available to plant for organic corn is limited. The seed from the great, proven varieties are just not available organically. If anyone wants to give IPM corn a try, we have weeks of corn available to us and opinions are welcome.

What is Wwoofing?

By Jean Callahan, Marblehead Depot



The homestead where Julia is working as a Wwoofer.

Last week, my daughter Julia, 24, hopped on the Bolt Bus from South Station to wend her way (via New York City and Washington, DC) to a small organic farm six miles outside Chapel Hill, North Carolina where she will be living and working as a volunteer through an international organization called WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms). Wwoof links people who want to volunteer on organic farms with farms that are looking for help.

Wwoofers are people who want to learn about organic farming and country living and are willing to work in return for the education they receive. Although a majority are in their twenties (you have to be 18 to participate), people of all ages volunteer through the program. I recently heard about a woman in her 70's who was harvesting lavender in France through this program.

For many, Wwoofing is an opportunity to travel cheaply. There are farms that host Wwoofers throughout North America, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Wwoofers usually work part-time so they are also able to sight-see. Farms often host several Wwoofers and socializing is part of the experience. Country-style socializing: think camp-fire jam sessions, not trips to the multiplex.

The farm where Julia will work is a homestead. She will be harvesting crops, milking the goat, making goat cheese, feeding chickens and transporting produce to local farmers markets. If it's a good fit, she will stay through the winter and work on planting season in the spring. Wwoofers commit to stay for varying lengths of time - from just a week or two to a season or longer. For more information about this program, go to www.wwoof.org.

Beauty of the Night

By Lynda Morgenroth, Melrose Depot

Like many of us, I've stopped walking about at night. I'm exhausted, or besieged by chores, or avoiding the mosquitoes that my body calls in from the entire East Coast ("She's out! Let's bite!"). And while I greatly regret the mechanical difficulties suffered by our trusty FDC delivery brigade, I must say that last Thursday was one of the loveliest summer scenes I've observed this year.

The Melrose Depot is located just off Lynn Fells Parkway in a verdant spot known as The Knoll on the town's Ell Pond with its signature swans and cygnets. When I pulled up for the second time that day, I saw what looked like the John Singer Sargent painting, "Carnation Lilly Lilly Rose," before my eyes (in it, two little girls in white dresses are poised in a grove of dark green, their faces and the tall, white Asian lilies behind them illuminated by the orange and gold Asian lanterns they are carrying). A huge golden moon lit up Ell Pond and through the glade of the night, I could make out a procession of children and adults, a few waves at knee height (that turned out to be long haired dogs, fur rippling) and a series of small moving bright spots at various heights. As I moved closer I saw men wearing headgear with lights (who knew there were so many caves to explore in Melrose?) Several children used flashlights to make patterns in the night. Women used their dangling keychain flash lights to locate peaches and pears. The shapes of the fruit gleamed from the side as in classical still lifes. Raspberries were lush and velvety red.

The sound of the cicadas surrounded us, boosted by the acoustics of the pond and lay of the land. (For you science nerds and aficionados of insect choirs, there are wonderful online videos, such as <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mah26og11ms>. Go, cicadas!)

Freed from the ordinary and relieved that Julie and the crew were okay, and that gracious Michele was on the scene, our small community was chattier than usual and because the pickup hours were compressed, there were more of us assembled. More men, more families, more dogs. More chatting, more friendliness, and widespread marveling at the beauty of the night.

"One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well."
~Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

Roasted Eggplant With Penne Pasta

by Aileen Sheehan, Marblehead Depot

This is a recipe adapted from Alice Waters' *Chez Panisse Vegetables*, which I treat as a food bible of sorts during the summer months. Organized alphabetically by vegetable, it's a wonderful resource when you've run out of ideas of how to use up your eggplant/tomatoes/basil/kale, etc. I'm a huge fan of Waters conversational style and find her approach to "slow food" a wonderful fit for FDC members. This is a recipe I've been making for years and my family loves it. It's a great way to use up the summer eggplant and is a nice entry dish for those who aren't huge eggplant fans.

Ingredients: 2 large globe eggplants; 1 pound penne pasta (I use whole wheat - really stands up to the salty cheese); olive oil; sherry vinegar; one onion; 2 cups of tomato sauce (or I've cubed and roasted 2-3 summer tomatoes for a similar volume and deeper flavor); 2 cloves of garlic; red pepper flakes; 1 handful basil leaves; 1 handful parsley leaves; ½ lb ricotta salata cheese (you can get this at Whole Foods or other nice cheese shop; substitute feta (preferably sheep milk) if not available).

Instructions: Preheat oven to 400 degrees. While oven is heating, prepare your vegetables: cut the eggplant into cubes (about .75" - 1"); peel and thinly slice onion; mince garlic and chop the herbs. Set all but eggplant aside - toss eggplant cubes lightly in oil, then spread out (in a single layer) on sheet pan, place in oven and roast for about 25-30 minutes, until brown and soft. While eggplant is roasting, put on large pot of water for the pasta. Once boiling, put pasta on to cook (al dente). While pasta is cooking, heat olive oil in large sauté pan, add onions, and sauté until just caramelized. Add in the garlic, cook for a moment more (until garlic is fragrant but not browned), then add a splash of sherry vinegar to deglaze the pan. Add in your eggplant, the tomato sauce (or roasted tomatoes), red pepper to taste (just a pinch will do unless you like spicy), and the chopped basil. Heat the sauce to a simmer while you drain the pasta, then add the pasta into the simmering sauce and toss to coat. Top with the crumbled ricotta salata (or feta) and garnish with chopped parsley. Enjoy!