



## GET TO KNOW YOUR FARMERS, PART 2

[CLICK HERE TO READ PART 1](#)

In the spring of 2010, Megan took course at a community college in Colorado called Small Business Management where she wrote a business plan for a CSA vegetable farm (completely fictitious at the time). While doing research, she stumbled across a course called Farm Beginnings, a beginning farmer business training program, put on by the [Land Stewardship Project](#) in Minnesota. Knowing that Colorado was not our “forever” place and feeling drawn back to our connections in the Midwest, we took this as a sign to uproot from the mountains and take the course to see if farming really was something we were meant to do.

Our parents probably thought we were crazy to give up jobs, health insurance, and the life we were building in Colorado to do something like farming. However, the Midwest has a steady growing number of small scale farms, a supportive network of farmers, and organizations willing to help beginning farmers. So, crazy as it sounded, we felt like we were on the right track.

After completing the classroom sessions of Farm Beginnings, we worked for two CSA vegetable farms in Osceola, WI. During that time, we decided to venture out on our own, starting our farm business—Sweet Top Farm LLC—on rented land in Hudson, WI in 2012.

While we intended to purchase a farm after a year on rented land, it turned out that finding a farm with the right amount of land in the perfect location wasn’t as easy as it sounded. We have spent three very different seasons (the second of which included the birth of our first child) on the same rented land while we search for a farm to purchase. We’ve experienced flooding and droughts, torrential rains and a May snowstorm, crops that grew well and others that were a complete loss. We’ve learned how wonderful it is to farm with a horse yet been thankful to have a tractor as well. Over the last three seasons, our decisions, mistakes, and successes have helped shape our visions and plans for our farm 5, 10, 20 years down the road. Even though we have had some fantastic adventures in our lifetime, this trumps them all.

So are there still times that we step back and ask ourselves, “Are we crazy for becoming farmers?” Yep, all the time (although our parents have come around). But we love what we do and believe in what small scale farmers can do for our country, the land, and the environment. We are happy to be able to share this with you and thank you for your continued support.

### VOLUNTEER DAY COMING UP

The time has come to hand-weed carrots, and that is always a more enjoyable experience—and a much faster one—when done with other people. So mark your calendars for **Saturday August 23<sup>rd</sup> (10-12pm)** and come out to see the fields and lend a hand. **Email us for more details.** Please wear close toed shoes and clothing appropriate for crawling on your hands and knees and bring a water bottle. If you can’t make this date, stay tuned for a save-the-date for the Annual CSA Member Potluck.

Enjoy this week’s harvest!

Your Farmers,  
Megan, Adam, and Edith

In Your Box This Week:		
	Where does it go?	
	Fridge?	Plastic Bag?
<b>CUCUMBERS</b>	yes	yes
Cool and refreshing on hot summer days. Try them on a sandwich with cream cheese or halved long ways with a dash of coarse salt.		
<b>SUMMER SQUASH and ZUCCHINI</b>	yes	yes
Try last week’s recipe for <a href="#"><u>Lemony Ricotta Summer Squash Galette</u></a> .		
<b>FRESH YELLOW AND RED ONION</b>	yes	no
Because this is a fresh onion, it needs very little or no peeling.		
<b>SCALLIONS</b>	Yes	yes
They’re back! A really fantastic addition to cucumber salad.		
<b>CELERY</b>	yes	yes
Celery grown in northern climate has a strong flavor that we love. However, not everyone loves the intensity, so instead of eating it raw, chop into ¼” pieces and freeze in one cup portions. It adds wonderful flavor to soups, sauces, or how about Thanksgiving Turkey Dressing?		
<b>HOT PEPPER</b>	yes	yes
Either a green jalapeno or a yellow Hungarian Hot Wax.		
<b>RED POTATOES</b>	no	no
From Threshing Table Farm.		
<b>GARLIC</b>	yes	yes
The garlic harvest was superb this year. This is a variety called Krautini that has a balanced spicy garlic flavor and is great roasted.		
<b>TOMATOES</b>	no	no
The tomatoes are coming on a bit stronger now, so we should have them in the box for several more weeks. As noted in the newsletter a couple weeks ago, the black spots are from bacterial speck—really just cosmetic.		
<b>EGGPLANT</b>	no	no
Sadly, this crop was hit by the Tarnished Plant Bug causing the plants to drop their blossoms. As a result, there are very few fruits, so you will only see them in the box sporadically. We love it sliced very thin and put on pizza.		
<b>BASIL</b>	no	Yes or in cup of water like a bouquet
Do not wash until you are ready to use. A lovely herb to pair with tomatoes. Also a great addition to cucumber salad.		

# Recipes

## Summery Cous Cous Salad

1 box couscous (10 oz. or about 1 ½ cups bulk couscous)  
6 oz. marinated artichoke hearts, drain and reserve liquid  
¼-1/3 c. finely chopped onion  
1 15 oz. can garbanzo beans  
1 cucumber, cut in small chunks  
1 c. tomatoes, chopped  
½ c. chopped celery  
¼ c. chopped fresh basil  
1 roasted chicken breast, cut into small pieces  
1 lemon, juiced  
½ c. olive oil  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Feta cheese (optional)

Cook couscous (if using bulk couscous, the ratio is 1 c. couscous to 1 ¼ c. water). Bring water to a boil, stir in couscous, take off the heat, and let couscous absorb water for about 5 minutes. Add artichokes, scallions, garbanzo beans, cucumber, chicken, and fresh herbs. Combine lemon juice and artichoke heart liquid. Whisk in olive oil. Add to couscous. Season with salt and pepper. Add feta cheese if using. Chill.

*From our farm friends Nick and Joan of Prairie Drifter Farm*

## Smashed Red Potatoes with Basil

1 ½ - 2 lb. red potatoes, scrubbed and cut into large chunks, 1-1/2 to 2 inches  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
1/4 c. olive oil  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1/4 c. finely chopped fresh basil leaves  
3/4 c. freshly grated parmesan cheese (optional)

Put the potatoes and 1 tsp. salt in a large saucepan or pot and fill with enough cold water to cover the potatoes by about 1 inch. Bring to a boil over high heat. Lower the heat to maintain a steady simmer, cover the pot partially, and cook until the potatoes are quite tender when tested with a fork, 15 to 20 minutes. Reserve some of the cooking water and then drain the potatoes. Dump them back in the pot and set over medium heat. Dry the potatoes by shaking the pan and stirring until most of the moisture has steamed off, about 2 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat. Using the side of a large metal spoon, cut through the skins and flesh of the potatoes, reducing the chunks to a very coarse mash. Stir in the olive oil and garlic. Add up to a couple of tablespoons of the cooking water to loosen the mash if necessary. Stir in the basil and cheese (if using). Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve immediately.

*Adapted from [www.finecooking.com](http://www.finecooking.com)*

### What do I do with CELERY?

Northern celery has an intense and wonderful flavor that is great used in soups, sauces, and salads. However, if it is more than you can use, simply chop it up, place it in a ziplock bag, and freeze it (no need to blanch it first). Then, come winter, you'll have celery to add to your holiday stuffing or to hearty soups.

### Eat Well, Feel Great!

Find other recipes on our website:

[www.sweettopfarm.weebly.com](http://www.sweettopfarm.weebly.com)