

LET THE SEARCH BEGIN

As a continuation of last week's newsletter on building the community amongst Sweet Top's members, we would like to share with you a bit more information about the land where your vegetables are grown now and the search for where they will be grown in the future.

This is our second season farming on our own and the second year that we are farming on land owned by members Mike and Jeanne Kinney. The four of us were connected two and a half years ago when we were searching for land to rent to start our farm business. Mike and Jeanne wanted to support beginning farmers and had some acreage they were willing to let us use. Additionally, we were able to put up a greenhouse and other infrastructure to help us get started. We had a great first season in 2012, and all of us agreed to another year on the same land.

If anyone has witnessed firsthand the difficulties of a cold, wet spring for a vegetable farmer, it has been Mike and Jeanne. When we thought the rain would never end and the summer crops sat in the greenhouse impatiently waiting to be planted, it was the Kinney's who agreed to let us have access to additional land that drained quickly and allowed us to plant most of the crops you will see in your box in the coming months. We are grateful on a daily basis for their understanding and continued support.

From the start of our time on the Kinney's land, we knew that one day we would need to start looking for a farm of our own—not just for the reason of growing our business to a size that can provide 100% of our income but also because that is where we want to raise our children. We also want to be a part of strengthening rural communities. For the past 7 months, we have been perusing farms for sale in St. Croix, northern Pierce, western Dunn, and southern Polk counties without much luck. We had been told by experienced farmers that a lot of farmland changes hands without ever being listed and heard from new farmers like us of their struggles to find enough *affordable*, tillable land with a livable house.

The latter is not an uncommon story for beginning farmers. With the current commodity-based agriculture system, many people are viewing land as an investment and seem to be less concerned with the human and community connections that farms historically brought to our communities. This is pushing more and more farmers off the land and making it very difficult for beginning farmers to access land.

As CSA members, you are helping to strengthen local, family farms, and for that we are grateful. Now, we are asking for your assistance as we continue to look for land in an area that will be close enough to continue being your farmers and providing sustainably grown food to Hudson, North Hudson, and River Falls. Please be an additional set of eyes and ears for us. Tell your friends and family about our search for a farm. If you see or hear of something, let us know. Please email us if you would like more details about specific requirements for our future farm.

In the meantime, we thank you for supporting beginning farmers. We would love for you to support new farmers across the country access land to truly transform our food and farming system. Here are some easy ways to get involved:

- Buy local foods from local farmers
- Tell your friends and family that there are beginning farmers out there and that they need farm land
- Invite us to talk about land access at a social/community gathering
- Join Land Stewardship Project, a local organization working on land reform
- Contact your local, state and national representatives and let them know that beginning farmers are critical to our rural communities and that they are struggling to access land.

We are passionate about what we do and believe that your support will help change the food system. For that, we thank you.

FARM NEWS: What do you get when the sun shines for 10 days straight? BUSY! Megan's parents arrived from New Hampshire for their annual farm-cation and were put right to work either making dinner or completing a list of tasks around the farm. Last week was hands down the busiest week of the season so far with a mix of just about everything you can imagine—weeding, harvesting, weeding, planting, tractor work, weeding...it was one long week! Needless to say, we got a lot done thanks to our NH helpers and ate well to boot.

Now it is your turn. Want to volunteer weeding carrots? The first **volunteer day will be Tuesday July 16, 9-11am** (unless weather dictates otherwise). Email us if you plan to come out to the farm, and we will give you additional information. Hope to see you then!

Enjoy this week's harvest.

Your Farmers, Megan and Adam



In Your Box This Week:

| | Where does it go? | |
|---|-------------------|--------------|
| | Fridge? | Plastic Bag? |
| SALAD MIX | yes | yes |
| We washed this once and recommend that you wash it and spin it again before enjoying. This will be the last of the mix for a few weeks. | | |
| NAPA CABBAGE | yes | yes |
| Some refer to this as Chinese cabbage. It is great in a stir fry or used as a wrap for spring rolls. You can also chop it and eat it raw in a salad. Looks like lettuce but leaves feel rough when rubbed. | | |
| LETTUCE | yes | Yes |
| One head: Either Red Leaf, Green Leaf, or Romaine. Last of the lettuce for a little while. If possible, take the time to wash and spin your lettuce and put in a bag with a paper towel. | | |
| GARLIC SCAPES | yes | yes |
| The green curly Q's in your box. Store well in bag in your crisper drawer if you don't use them right away. Last of the scapes until next year. | | |
| SCALLIONS | yes | yes |
| Our favorite item to add flavor to anything from eggs to sandwiches to stir-fries. | | |
| SUGAR SNAP PEAS | yes | yes |
| Last of the sugar snap peas for the year. | | |
| BROCCOLI | yes | yes |
| Just a little taste until the larger broccoli heads of fall arrive. | | |
| GREEN KALE | yes | yes |
| First of the season! Check out this week's recipe or look back at 2012's recipes for ideas on how to use up this highly nutritious curly green. | | |
| CHIOGGIA BEETS | yes | yes |
| Yahoo! This candy striped beet is the first of the season, and the greens are beautiful too (so don't throw them away!). Lightly sauté the greens in olive oil, add dash of salt, pepper, and balsamic vinegar, and you have a great side dish. | | |
| CILANTRO | yes | yes |
| A fresh herb that's fantastic in salads—try it in last week's Warm Coleslaw—and any Southwest style dish. | | |

Recipes

Kale, Broccoli, and Feta Sauté

From your box: Broccoli, Kale

Cook broccoli florets and chopped stems, ½ tsp salt, and dash of black pepper in olive oil in a larger skillet over medium high heat, stirring occasionally, until tender. Add one bunch of torn kale leaves and stir until leaves start to wilt but remain bright green. Fold in ½ cup of feta cheese and ¼ cup of pitted, chopped kalamata olives. Serve warm.

Adapted from Real Simple Magazine

Chioggia Beet Salad

From your box: Chioggia Beets, Scallions

Chioggia beets, also known as striped beets, have red and white concentric circles that show when the beets are sliced. They are known to be the sweetest and mildest of the different varieties of beets. Tender and mild, Chioggia beet greens can be substituted for spinach in any recipe.

- 3 Chioggia beets, with 1" of stems
- 2 tablespoons scallions or other onion, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons raspberry vinegar (or other vinegar)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
- 1 tablespoon grated orange zest (optional)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ cup olive oil

Cover beets in water and simmer in a covered saucepan for about 30 minutes. When easily pierced by a fork, they are ready. Drain and rinse in cold water. When cool, slip off skins. Slice beets ¼" thick.

To make the dressing, add scallions, vinegar, lemon juice, mint, zest, salt and pepper in a bowl. Add oil slowly, whisking until blended. Add beets and toss. Add more vinegar or salt as needed.

Adapted from EPICURIOUS.COM.

UPDATED WEEK TWO DELIVERY SCHEDULE

HAWC—2:00

635 Gilbert Road—2:15

Whole Earth Grocery—3:00

North Cove Road—3:15

1412 Wisconsin Court—3:30

1417 Boulder Point Dr—3:40

1217 5th Street—3:45

396 Pineview North—4:00



Above: Megan taking a 4th of July break along Willow River.

Below: Chioggia "Candy Striped" Beets

