



Hilltop Community Farm

JULY 2011



July 9 CSA Share. Photo by ES



Total June rainfall was 2.67 in.

What's in your July CSA Shares?

Despite June predation via our furry neighbors, your produce appears to be on the rebound and set to peak with the mid-summer heat. Enjoy the heated tastes of summer featured in your July shares including:

Greens - Summer lettuce mix, Cherokee Red head lettuce

Alliums - Garlic, Summer Onion - Ailsa Craig, Chives

Beans - Green, Purple, Dragon's Tongue varieties

Brassicas - Beets (don't forget to eat the greens too!), Cabbage, Radish, & Chard (we hope:-)

Potatoes & Carrots

Raspberry - Black cap, golden, red

Currants - Black, Red

Black Cap Raspberries

Plums

Herbs - Tarragon, Savory, Parsley, Thyme, Marjoram, Dill, Chervil, Rosemary, Basil, Cilantro, Mint, Sage

Summer Squashes - Zucchini - yellow crookneck, green, patty pan

What's on the August Horizon?
Look for more zukes and cukes, potatoes, onions, green beans, scallions, carrots, beets, fresh herbs, red cabbage, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, blackberries, possibly pears, apples, hardy kiwi (though the latter fruit is more likely in September).

The SMALL Issue

We are small farmers of course, and Erin duly celebrates the fact in the article overleaf. But the small I'm concerned with here has to do with the size of the shares so far this year. If you're a regular, you know that they're running a bit behind where they've been in the recent years.

The return of the woodchucks -- as we've aggrievedly recounted in our weekly calls to you -- has something to do with it. They're certainly the reason that only a handful of you so far have gotten a taste of broccoli. (The beasts are single-minded in their pursuit of this crop.)

But, as I mentioned last month, the return of drier than normal weather for the first time in several years has also had a significant impact. With roughly 2/3 normal precipitation for two straight months, and several 90°+ days, nearly everything is behind schedule despite regular watering. Last year by this time (bag #8) you'd received three weeks of chard, two deliveries each of summer squash, peas, scallions, wild raspberries and broccoli, and a first

head of garlic. Save for the broccoli and chard (another fave with the woodchucks), all other absences are down to the warm and dry.

Summer squash, raspberries and garlic should all be along next week, probably with sweet peppers (paprikas) -- and perhaps cucumbers and beans -- showing up by bag #10. Red raspberries and tomatoes are likely toward the end of July as well.

Strangely, carrots are one of the few items that are earlier this year than last. Slow growers in the best of seasons, this week's round are modest-sized but should fatten slowly over coming shares. As with the radishes, we've left the tops on the first time around, though just the roots will appear in future weeks. If any of you would like your tops (they're popular with chickens and rabbits)(and woodchucks...), let us know and we can bag them up separately. The alliums are also ahead of schedule, so we've thrown in a "summer onion" as the market lexicon has come to refer to them. These are palatable as large scallions, and farmers use the opportunity of their harvest to cull out fat-necked plants which would go on to produce shorter-lasting bulbs. -RM



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For the Love of Being, Staying Small

- It's approaching mid-summer on the farm-marking the return of cicadas, the bounty of berries, the fire-cracker blooms in the prairie and that turning point toward winter as evidenced in shorter days - sigh. It's also the time of year, where you size up and cut your losses (sorry no spring broccoli again this year-we're still sorting out boundaries with critters) yet are still able to see the abundant harvest of peppers, squash and kiwi among others that lie ahead (keep your fingers crossed). O.k. so I get reflective this time of year and I wanted to share with you thoughts surfacing that have helped me see beyond the broccoli browse and reinvigorate my sense of purpose of being and staying small-scale. Returning from Lake Superior's immensity in water, ancient shores and boreal treelines humbled me. Standing on the Northshore, gazing south from Canada to WI, I thought of how the land shapes people and how people shape the land and how we might find, in our own small ways to positively impact place and leave proof in the rocks for those to discover in their own quest for harmony and resilience in geologic time. On my 'Gitchee-Gami' Tour, I also had the fortune to help shape a new collaborative movement happening in the Ashland-Bayfield region. I helped facilitate and participate in workshops and conversations around Discovering Abundance Amidst Scarcity. Highlighted were hundreds of small projects - from family based learning, theater

and dance to finding ways to get local food to hospitals and schools that people in their communities were engaged in. They were discovering their own power for change and building resilience in their communities. This is inspiring and this is happening not just in Wisconsin, but throughout the nation and around the world. I take pride and have hope in the fact that small-scale sustainable agriculture is leading the way in a movement toward creating health, wealth, and increased community capacity. In America, we are constantly fed big ideas alongside Big Macs. Michael Pollan and others have provoked us into thinking about the busts of being big, focusing our thoughts to ponder where our food comes from. John Ikerd and Woody Tasch, have pressed us to think about the financial sustainability of Big Agriculture. All around us we see signs of reshaping and building a food and agriculture system that creates opportunities for smaller farmers, provides healthful, locally produced food for citizens, is good for the environment, and boosts local and regional economies. The question we turn to on our farm and in our community is, How do we make farming economically, environmentally and socially viable at a scale that satisfies the goals of localizing our agriculture and providing for a sustainable and regenerative future? Encouragingly, many are working on, well, making the economics work, such as the Abundance Collaborative, C.S. Mott Group for

Sustainable Food Systems, the Center for Rural Affairs, RAFI, the Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Program, various Grower Networks such as FRESH and the Midwest Organic Fruit Tree Grower Association that we are a part of and you the CSA member who believe in the return on your investment in receiving quality, local, organic food from small farms and the inherent benefits to the land, to the community, and to creating and retaining jobs. The predominant wisdom and myth has been that the larger the farm operation's scale the more profitable the operation is, based on price efficiency within the global marketplace. However, what is not stated is that over 70% of food is produced on plots of less than 2 acres and is done mostly by hand by rural women (UN FAO, 2010). Furthermore, the national increase of profitable, smaller-scale farms using primarily local markets is giving rise to the notion that profitable sustainable agriculture, supported by more-localized markets, is a realistic option. Perhaps more importantly is unpacking the myth that industrial agriculture feeds the world. When in fact, it's the 1,000's of small farms and the communities and businesses that make up our foodsheds that are not only feeding the world, but feeding our spirits. Next time you are gazing in a vast ocean of corn or perhaps the Pacific Ocean itself, let your mind wander to the immensity of impact you can have in being, staying and supporting small-scale. - ES-

Mixed Herb Crackers

- 1 C all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 2 TBSP chopped fresh chives
- 1 TBSP chopped fresh thyme
- 1 TBSP chopped fresh marjoram
- 4 TBSP cold butter
- 1/4 C sour cream

Combine dry ingredients. Cut in butter until crumbly. Add herbs and mix well. Stir in sour cream and mix until the dough comes together. Divide in half and roll each piece into a sheet 1/8 inch thick. Sprinkle with salt and press lightly. Cut into 2 1/2 inch squares. Place on baking sheet and pierce each cracker with a fork. Bake at 325 F until just brown and firm. Yields 24 crackers.

Note: you can mix and match any herb combination of your choosing and consider spreading your crackers with pesto, herbed butter or cream cheese.

KALE WALNUT PESTO PASTA

- 1 bunch Kale, coarsely chop leaves, discard stems. (note you can also substitute basil, parsley, and even garlic mustard leaves depending on the season).
- 1 pound gemelli pasta
- 1/4 cup copped walnuts toasted
- 1 clove chopped garlic
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese, plus more for topping
- salt and pepper
- 1/4 cup olive oil

In large pot of salted water cook kale until tender, 4-6 min. Remove using slotted spoon, transfer to colander and rinse with cold water. (if you're using basil or



parsley instead of kale, you don't need to cook the leaves). Add the pasta to the pot and cook until al dente. Drain reserving 1/2 cup pasta water. Return pasta to pot. While pasta is cooking squeeze water out of kale, add to food processor with walnuts, garlic, and parmesan cheese blend until almost smooth, season with salt and pepper, with machine running slowly add the oil.

Add the pesto to the pasta adding enough cooking water to loosen pesto as needed. Serve sprinkled with more parmesan.

From the kitchen of Debbie Taylor, fellow CSA member. Thanks for sharing!