



## MAKING CONNECTIONS

This week we had a group of high school kids from Prentice come and tour our farm. They are part of a summer gardening class lead by Mr. Quan Banh. We've heard of the renowned Mr. Banh from others in our journey to try and integrate our farm into our own school district with little avail. The students toured several farms that day, visited the extension office and even came to see us again at the farmer's market at the end of their day.

The running theme of the day, aside from learning how to grow things, was that in rural areas, growing, selling and buying from local producers makes our economy go 'round. The dollar you spend on the tomato at our farm is paid to our worker Susan, who in turn pays buys eggs from her neighbor Don, who then buys a gift of pottery from Linda, who buys beans from us. And the example came full circle while the kids were at market that afternoon! Spending your dollar at a big box retailer may save you fifty cents, but the reality is, a majority of that dollar will never be returned to you like it would be if spent locally.

Mr. Banh is proof that it takes one person willing to go the extra mile to make a huge difference in the lives of these young people. Without ag or horticulture classes in school, a majority of our kids are not taught that they are capable of growing their own food. He goes above and beyond teaching them how to grow food, but that is topic for a much longer letter.

New farm connections come with each person who gets involved with We Grow. We purchased piglets from a family whose son started working for us shortly after. Turns out he also works for Jane Hanson, a new vendor at Rib Lake market. She was given our information by our volunteer Sally and knows Mr. Banh. Another new connection! The same thing happens when volunteers help us sell produce at the farmer's market. Customers recognize a face and make a connection to our farm.

The connections and word of mouth recommendations our CSA members and volunteers provide is invaluable. Tony Schultz from Stoney Acres told us this when we started selling shares back in 2014. We underestimated how important these connections would be in our success as we see the web of community support taking shape around us.

*Eric & Rebecca*

## IN THE CRATE

Mixed Tomatoes

Sweet Peppers

Green Beans

Red Cabbage

Cucumbers

Red Potatoes

Ailsa Craig Onion

Garlic Bulb

Zucchini or Patty Pan Squash

Mixed Carrots (*family shares*)

**Why try to explain miracles to your kids when you can just have them plant a garden.**

*- Robert Brault*

## PACK SHED

Finally starting! We have poured the slab for the pack shed and can not wait to get the rest of the building going up. The materials have been sitting in our driveway for almost two months as extra time has been a luxury thus far. We are elated to have an out-pouring of community support in this project from the concrete, to the framing, to the donation of recycled materials. Thank you! And bring a hammer if you plan to stop by in the coming month or so.

**words from our youngest farmers**

**"Start it up Dad! I want to see all the moving parts again."**

*- Gus, sharing the amazement of watching a combine extract grain*

## RED CABBAGE

The cabbage in your share this week is called red express. It is more dense than the green cabbage from two weeks ago, but can be used interchangeably in cabbage recipes. Red cabbage, which is actually purplish-pink when raw and darker purple when cooked, will usually stain the rest of your dish.

Red cabbage also has more anthocyanins which act as antioxidants, supporting the immune system. It also boasts double the amount of iron, more potassium, ten times more vitamin A and more vitamin C. The only thing that green cabbage has over red is vitamin K.

Remove the outside damage leaves and rinse before consuming. Cabbage can be portioned and stored a stored in the fridge for several weeks, but the cut edge will brown. Just trim to get a fresh edge before using.

## TOMATOES

We are offering a mixture of our first tomatoes this week. There is a mix of jasper cherry (smallest red), pink bumblebee (pink striped cherry), Washington cherry (large cherry), glacier salad (small 3-4 oz red), green tiger (oblong green striped), Dr. Carolyn, (yellow cherry), chocolate cherry and indigo apple (purple top).

Not all tomatoes are red when ripe, so it is best to give them a gentle squeeze. If they feel hard, they are not ready. If they have a little give and start to feel soft, they are ripe. The green tiger are especially difficult to determine ripeness. They will develop a slight yellow or pink hue in their green stripes and they are slightly soft to the squeeze. Of all the varieties we have been tasting, this one is our farm favorite. The non-purple part of the indigo will turn bright tomato red when ripe. Enjoy the first tomatoes of the season!

## GARLIC BULB

We started pulling whole varieties and this week you are receiving German Extra Hardy. This garlic has a strong, raw flavor and a high sugar content making it one of the best garlics for roasting.

## PEPPERS

There are seven varieties of sweet peppers growing in our field and most of them are starting to come in this week. None of them have any heat that registers on the Scoville Index, but there is always a possibility that one might stray. The variety called purple beauty is a bell that does well for us in our soil so we continue to grow it. This year we have added yellow wax which are small and pointy. Then there is a green bell called gilboa that is producing nice sized bells. The narrow green pepper that resembles an ancho pablano we aren't sure of the

name. It is came to us from Farm Shed's plant sale in Stevens Point when we lost about half of our peppers in the May 14 frost. We tasted it ourselves and found no heat, so we're not sure what it is called.

Peppers store well in the high humidity crisper drawer in your fridge. Being picked fresh, you should be able to keep it for up to two weeks. You might find the flavor is more strong than store bought, so adjust recipes accordingly. With all the rain we've had lately, two more inches this week, they are growing faster than usual.

## AILSA CRAIG ONION

Ailsa Craigs are the big ones! They can get up to 2 lbs in our field as was the case last year. They are a white Spanish heirloom variety of onion with delicious sweet flavor perfect for burgers and salads. Named for a perfectly round, solid rock island off the coast of Scotland. We bought transplants last season and loved them so much we decided to grow our own Ailsa Craigs from seed this season and it was a huge success. We have plenty to share! They have a short storage life compared to most onions - only stores up to one month. Store in a cool dry place while whole and store in plastic bag in fridge after cutting.

## ZUCCHINI/PATTY PAN

Our summer squash is coming in slow this season with many young fruits rotting on the vine due to too much moisture. As our soil improves this should remedy itself in the years to come.

We put zucchini and patty pan in the same section for two reasons. 1) They are interchangeable in recipes. and 2) You are getting one or the other, but not both. We use summer squash so many ways! Grilled, battered, roasted, pickled in turmeric, stuffed, fritters/pancakes or simply in a sauté or stir fry. Do not peel patty pan. The flavor is in the skin in both varieties.

## POTATOES

About two-thirds of you will receive Adirondack Reds. These are pink thru to the center. These are a healthier potato with lower carb ratio than yellow and white flesh potatoes. We filled in a few vacancies in the rows that drowned out back in June with Adirondacks that overwintered in storage. They are good boiled as the flesh gets a great creamy texture. As usual, potatoes should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place, but not in the fridge.

*We've prepared recipe cards for you to take home if you'd like ideas for using the vegetables in your share. Please feel free to share your recipe ideas with us.*

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