



Frame of capped honey on top with bees still working on capping the lower half.

ROCKY HISTORY

This week, we spent a half a day picking rock in a two-acre field at the west end of our property. We spread manure, disced and planted winter rye in the space with plans to grow a majority of our produce in this "new" area in the spring. The soil in this field has a sandy texture compared to the heavy clay we have been working on the east end and the drainage is much better. The soil doesn't clod into large chunks when wet and we find fewer rocks.

As a farmer, it doesn't take long to realize that every step in the growing process hinges on our soil type and condition. From seed germination and water retention to laying plastic mulch and getting into an area with a tractor. Rather than forcing the process in an unsuitable area, we are taking the operation to better ground and can not wait to see what this new ground will bring. And for once we feel like we are putting the horse in front of the cart getting some cover crops in rotation before produce.

So while we are out in the field picking up rocks, we can't help but look around at the piles of moss-covered rocks scattered here and there in each of our fields and pastures. The piles are quite large and centered to make the shortest walk from any part of the field. Some of our piles have rocks as large as a 55-gallon drum! It makes a person wonder about the people who put those rocks there. Who were they? What tools did they have to make the job easier? We know some of these piles were started back in the late 1800's when this area was homesteaded. Were their children in the field helping or off climbing in the trees along the wood's edge? What would they think about their land today? Did the deer come eat on their crops like ours today? Were predators a problem for their livestock? Did someone have their hands on this huge rock and try to get it out of the ground a century ago only to find it too large to budge? What it must have been like here when those rock piles were started? How much harder they had to work? How much their lives depended on their ability to be successful in their growing season? How much they relied on community support?

Humbly picking our rock,

Eric & Rebecca

IN THE CRATE

Butternut Winter Squash

Hot Shot Mixed Greens

Mixed Kale

Brussel Sprouts

Carrots

Apples

Yellow Onions

Garlic Bulbs

Mixed Herbs

Peppers (*family shares*)

Tomatoes (*family shares*)

A significant part of the pleasure of eating is in one's accurate consciousness of the lives and the world from which food comes. - Wendell Berry

OH HONEY

We plan to extract honey this weekend and with any luck, should have some for sale. After a poor start of swarm after swarm, hives without queens, splits not flourishing and slow growth, the bees seem to have put it into high gear this fall. Once the golden-rod and asters opened, the bees started really bringing in nectar and filled several supers with honey for us to harvest.

Members, please send a message if you need honey and we can put some aside for you. Quarts are \$15 and pints are \$8. We sold out quickly last year, so please send us a message right away.

Raw honey has an indefinite shelf life. It will crystallize over time, but can be easily remelted by placing in a pan of warm water.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH

Butternut squash has a smooth texture, easy-to-peel surface and rich, sweet flavor. It presents the home cook with many culinary possibilities. You can place it on a cookie sheet skin side up and bake in the oven until easily pierced with a sharp knife (about an hour). Or remove the skin and cube for steaming or sauteing. Once cooked, mash it, puree it for soup, fold it into a pasta or risotto dish, or simply savor your butternut squash as is with simple herb dressing. Once cubed and cooked, it can be canned or frozen. It is fun to disguise when cooking for kids - think mac and cheese with butternut hidden in the sauce!

To prep your squash for cubing, cut off both ends and scoop the seeds out of the opening with the wide end with a spoon. Wearing an apron, hold the squash against your chest and remove the skin with a peeler, working toward you. Cut the squash where the body becomes bulbous; halve each section lengthwise and dice. You can roast butternut seeds like you would pumpkin seeds.

For wonderful recipe ideas, I encourage you to take to the internet. In a short time, I found lots of ideas including roasted butternut squash lasagna, squash hash with kale and baked eggs, butternut squash pizza, chili-lime roasted butternut salad, butternut squash and bacon quiche, and the list goes on!

Properly cured butternut squash can be stored at room temperature for several weeks or in a cool root cellar all winter.

HOT SHOT GREENS MIX

This flavorful mix includes three different types of mustard, arugula and tatsoi. Similar to horseradish, the heat of mustard greens will hit you right in the nasal cavity, but does not linger. We prefer to combine with mild greens in a fresh fall salad. Like kale, mustard greens hold up great in dressing and won't get soggy quickly. Paired with a sweet fruit like pears slivers and mild flavored nut like pecans, you can't go wrong. Make your own lemon, balsamic vinegar, and honey dressing and you won't be disappointed.

APPLES

Your apples, with a great sweet-tart balance for baking, were grown on an old tree along our pasture. People in Wisconsin are fortunate to be able to grow great apples. We find a myriad of apple varieties growing on unpruned trees in every fence line around our farm. Some look to be 100 years old. Apple seeds are open pollinated by insects, so they are not true to parent and you will get a mixture of characteristics from the parent

trees. Unless you are grafting, no two trees are exactly the same.

You can eat your apples fresh, our kids love to take them as a school snack, but you might find them too tart. The versatile fruit can be used for everything from cobbler and pie to sauce or juice. One of the simplest apple desserts we often throw together is a "crisp." Apple crisp is simply baked apples with a mixture of flour, butter, sugar and oatmeal on top.

Keep apples in the fridge of longer life.

FRESH HERBS

Please don't forget that you can easily dry or freeze herbs that you don't have time to use fresh. Simply hang the herbs from the stems in a dry place out of the sun. We like to place them in a small paper bag to keep flies or dust off while drying. You could also chop and freeze the herbs in ice cubes trays with olive oil or water. Pop cubes from the trays when solid and store in a freezer safe bag for handy single servings over the winter.

RECIPE: BUTTERNUT SQUASH PASTA SAUCE

Ingredients

- 1 medium butternut squash (about 1 1/2 pounds)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon dried rubbed sage
- coarse salt and ground pepper
- 5 cloves garlic, peel on
- 1 cup half-and-half
- pasta (such as cheese ravioli or any short pasta)
- toppings, such as grated Parmesan cheese, chopped toasted walnuts, finely chopped fresh sage

Directions

Preheat oven to 375°. Prep squash into 2-inch chunks using previous instruction; transfer to a small rimmed baking sheet. Toss with oil and sage; season generously with salt and pepper. Scatter garlic around squash. Roast until squash is very tender, about 40 minutes, tossing once halfway through.

Remove and discard skin from garlic. Transfer squash and garlic to a food processor; puree. With motor running, add half-and-half through the feed tube; process until smooth. Add 1 to 2 cups water; continue to process until smooth, adding water to thin if necessary. Season again generously with salt.

Prepare cooked pasta. Reserve 1 cup pasta water; drain pasta and return to pot. Pour sauce over pasta; toss to coat. Add some pasta water to thin sauce if necessary. Serve with desired toppings.

PHONE: 715-427-1002 or 715-905-0431

EMAIL: farmer@wegrowfoods.com