



Shareholder Newsletter July 22, 2009 Vol. 10, #4
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Farm notes:

Our 2009 newsletters are now on our website! go to the "Farm News" page and scroll to newsletters at the bottom, then click on the date.

Our tomato plants look great but the tomatoes have been especially slow to ripen this year. We're just starting to get some cherry tomatoes, though, and the big ones aren't far behind. It looks like two or three plantings are going to be ready at once, so when we do have tomatoes there will probably be a lot of them.

We've been happy with our potato harvest this year and hope you've been enjoying them. This will probably be the last week we have them.

Our spring lettuce plantings are almost all finished and we won't have lettuce in the shares again until September.

We've started taking the row covers off the winter squash and the plants look good. We're hoping for another big winter squash year after last year's disappointing crop.

Our first melons are coming in and you should see one in your share this week or next week. Wait for the color behind the melon's rough, tan "netting" to look yellowish-orange so you know it's ripe and ready to eat.

We have 2 kinds of eggplant in the shares, Italian and Asian— the egg-shaped Italian type comes in varieties that are black (Black, Beauty, Nadia), bright purple (Dancer) and striped (Zebra). This type is firmer and best for broiling, roasting, pickling, or Baba Ganouj. The long, slender Asian eggplant is the mildest and softest. It's great in curries or stir fry. Neither type needs salting or peeling because they're harvested at an immature stage and are so fresh— very different from the woody, bitter grocery store kinds. Look on our website for great eggplant recipes.



Above: bringing in the onion harvest. It has been a very good year for onions. Last week we brought in our sweetest onions— Walla Walla and Stockton Sweet Red— they're now curing in the greenhouse until the outsides are all dried out. The storage varieties— Candy and Big Daddy (left in the photo)— will be brought in to cure after the tops are dry in the field. We'll be doling them out throughout the season.



The tomato hunt: Above, Isaac finds a tomato. Is it ready yet? No. But look at the big healthy plants and all the green tomatoes! Below, Nicholas has had better luck in the cherry tomatoes— look in his basket! Isaac still needs to work on discerning ripeness.



Meet an Intern...

Holly has been here with her husband James since the early spring. It has been great to have her on our crew this year— it’s the first time we’ve had someone who grew up on a vegetable farm. She’s very familiar with the work, is quick and quick to learn. We hope that learning about our farm’s systems will help her have great success on her own farm some day.

Hello Waterpenny Farm CSA Members,

Summer is in full swing! The sun is long and hot in the sky, and the daily checking of the forecast for rain is telling of its need here. Squash is being picked everyday; we have buckets of cucumbers; tomatoes are just ripening; eggplant is brilliant in its purple skin; melons are getting bigger; and it seems like most of our time here at Waterpenny is spent picking vegetables.

All of these vegetables **and** warm weather bring me back to my younger days of growing up on a “u-pick” farm in southern Arizona. I grew up in Willcox, AZ in a family of five sisters and one brother; you could say farming was a “family affair”. On 80 acres, we produced many of the same vegetables you receive from Waterpenny.

After leaving high school, I attended Arizona State University, with every intention to stay far away from the farm. Life has a funny way of coming around full circle, and in this case it has. While living in the city, I started to crave green spaces and fresh vegetables. One of my sisters mentioned the idea of starting a community garden. After a year of searching and researching, I proposed a 1/8 acre garden in our community. That was 5 years ago, and the garden is still being managed by the community and producing for its members.

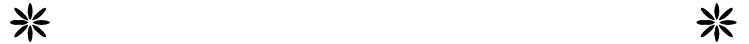
Here I am today, 27 years in, and I can say that on the farm is exactly where I want to be. The entire process, from preparing the soil-to assembling CSA boxes, is satisfying. It is especially enjoyable being in Rappahannock County; working alongside the wonderful crew of interns and farmers, Eric and Rachel. We work hard, eat well, and get to enjoy the peace of the mountains. I look forward to many more years in agriculture. Thank you for supporting Waterpenny and through that, supporting local agriculture.



Holly sent us this photo of an eggplant head created by herself and Miranda. It’s unusual to find one with not only a nose, but a hairstyle as well. What a cutie!



Chocolate Zucchini Cake



This recipe comes from Eric & Joanna Reuter, who volunteered on our farm a few years ago and went on to start their own farm (Chert Hollow Farm) outside Columbia, Missouri. Rachel asked for this cake for her birthday.

- * 2 1/2 cups flour
- * 1/2 cup cocoa
- * 2 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- * 1 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- * 1 tsp salt
- * 1 1/2 cup sugar
- * 3/4 cup oil
- * 3 eggs
- * 2 tsp. vanilla
- * 2 cups shredded zucchini
- * 1/2 cup milk
- * 1/2 cup chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350. Grease & flour a bundt pan or square baking pan.

In a medium bowl, mix together flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda, salt, & cinnamon.

In a large bowl, mix together sugar, oil, and eggs.

Add vanilla & zucchini.

Alternately add dry ingredients & milk to zucchini mixture. Stir until just blended.

Pour half the batter into the pan. Sprinkle chocolate chips onto batter, keeping them away from the edges so they don’t stick to the pan.

Bake for 50-60 minutes, until a knife or toothpick comes out clean.

Let cool for 10 minutes in the pan, then remove from pan and cool on a wire rack.

