



Stones Throw Farm

CSA Newsletter

Season 5 - Week 13

September 10th and 13th

www.stonethrowfarm.biz

Weekly News:

Welcome to Week Thirteen.

We've put together a share this week that holds tight to the summer vegetable lineage.

We've seen the end of the summer squash and melons and we're looking at the last week of the celery. Tomatoes, Peppers, and Eggplant continue in spite of the cool and wet conditions this week. Saladette tomatoes picked very poorly following the heavy rain brought by the remnants of Lee. Saturday shares will notice we've included some borderline "under-ripe" fruit. Anything remotely ripe exploded and split in the field. We're going to be relying on a few sunny warm days to bring a blush to Tuesday's saladette tomatoes (cross your fingers!).

We've added green tomatoes back to the mix and included the season's first tomatillos. Megan has included a great green tomato recipe and there are an abundance of others available out there. We're happy to have the first tomatillos of the year after speaking with a number of folks in the past week or two that have been mentioning how much they enjoyed them in years past. They are a lesser known and certainly underappreciated kin of the tomato. They are best known for their role in salsa verde but are delicious utilized in a range of other fashions. They are not typically eaten raw and their interesting earthy / sour / tart flavor comes out with cooking. We encourage folks to post and share any of their favorite uses and recipes!

On the farm "news" front...we want to mention that there is an abundance and great diversity of fresh herbs on the farm this time of year. Most weeks we'll likely still include a fresh bunched herb but if you're feeling inspired to do so folks are welcome to grab a bunch of any of the herbs that are growing around the farm.

Thanks and have a great week - Brian, Megan and Reed

The Farmer's Drivel:

Be forewarned this "drivel" is stepping further afield from the typical "farm logistics" that I've been primarily writing about this season.

The other morning on the way to the compost pile I noted just how thickly the Jerusalem Artichokes were growing in between the compost pile and the back of the greenhouse. Jerusalem Artichokes are a persistent perennial that produce a small edible tuber and incredibly large top growth that culminates in a profusion of yellow blossoms that smell like chocolate or more accurately like Tootsie Rolls. They aren't quite blooming yet but in the coming weeks check them out. If you'd like to, pull up a plant or two and take the tuber home, put it in an outback spot of the garden and stand back! That essentially has been our approach. Like some of the random herbs in the small bed to the south of the greenhouse, or the unruly "garden" to the north of the greenhouse, the Jerusalem Artichokes are essentially remnants of a garden in my life and not a farm. These are the random plants that you picked up somewhere because they were interesting and you carry them along simply because they're fun and find a niche on your property and a meaningful place in your heart. In spite of the fact that they do eat quite well we've never really taken to harvesting and eating the tubers, but have dug them on occasion simply to thin out the bed so it continues to grow. The rodents have also done a great job harvesting the tubers most winters. This spring we dug the entire patch and removed nearly 25 lbs of small tubers. These tubers were subsequently planted at 12 - 18" spacing in a single row across the Western property line of our new five-acre field across the road. The idea was that they would naturalize and create a windbreak, shelterbelt and visual break between that field and the cornfield behind it. It will also help to protect the four rows of trees planted parallel alongside it that are ultimately our long term windbreak / shelterbelt. While ruminating on the Jerusalem Artichokes briefly, it dawned on me that those original tubers have been with us a long time and hark back to a trip to the Ithaca Farmers Market many years ago when the farm was just a germ of an idea.

As my work around the farm continued that day I walked past another plant that has been on the farm from the beginning and interestingly one that has lived with us and made the move from at-least three different other previous homes. It may well persist at those other locations. As far as I know it is a close kin to the Jerusalem Artichoke with tall foliage and beautiful yellow flowers, it doesn't however seem to produce a tuber. As much as I can't identify it I can still tell you what it is. It is a living memorial and a mark in time because this plant came into my life on the morning of September 11th, 2001. I had the morning off from work

This Week's Share:

- Fresh Herb
- Garlic Bulb
- Yukon Gold Potatoes
- Red Onions
- Heirloom and Slicing Tomatoes
- Head Lettuce
- Cherry / Saladette Tomatoes
- Sweet Peppers
- Eggplant
- Hot Peppers
- Celery
- Green Tomatoes
- Tomatillos
- U-Pick Flowers
- U-Pick Sungold Tomatoes

Green Tomato Soup With Bacon and Brioche Croutons (adapted from *The New York Times*)

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon whole coriander seeds
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 pounds green tomatoes, chopped
- 2 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 1/4 teaspoons kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 4 ounces sliced bacon
- 2 slices brioche, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1/3 cup crème fraîche (optional)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh herbs
- 1 tablespoon honey, or to taste

Melt butter in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until translucent, about 5 minutes. Meanwhile, lightly crush the coriander, either with a mortar and pestle or side of a knife. Add it to pot along with garlic and sauté for 3 minutes longer. Stir in tomatoes, stock, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil; immediately reduce heat to medium-low and simmer soup until tomatoes have fallen apart, about 30 minutes. Meanwhile, fry bacon in a skillet until crisp. Use a slotted spoon to transfer bacon to a paper-towel-lined plate. Return skillet to medium heat. Add brioche to bacon fat in pan and toss to coat well. Toast, tossing occasionally, until croutons are golden, about 5 minutes. Set aside.

Using an immersion blender (or puréeing in batches in a regular blender), purée soup until smooth. Return soup to medium heat and stir in crème fraîche if desired, herbs and honey. Cook until heated through, 1 to 2 minutes. Taste and add more salt or honey or both if desired. Ladle soup into individual serving bowls; crumble bacon over top and garnish with croutons.

and headed south to Morgan Hills State Forest to catch the sunrise and enjoy a beautiful autumn morning exploring the fields and forests therein. At the time I was a farmer without a farm and so my instincts were to forage and explore. As you may recall it was a beautiful morning, clear blue and mild. I had spent the morning poking around and at some point came upon the remnants of an old stone foundation and not far off an old stone fence line. I recall marveling at the beauty of the place and that morning and remember ruminating a great deal on the evolving state of agrarianism, society, commerce and culture that we are a part of. In seeing and imagining a small farm on an isolated CNY hilltop likely in the mid- 1800's I remember thinking what a small world people lived in at that time. I imagined farmers spending a majority of their days and lives within a few miles of their home and I recall thinking that I liked that idea because it implied a certain simplicity of life and a commitment to and compassion for a place. I also turned to recognize the folly of my thinking that the world of that time was simple for certainly it was anything but. And I also recall recognizing the folly of thinking that in the 1800's that the world was any smaller or larger than today. Certainly information, people and goods traveled at a completely different rate and in an entirely different fashion but the reality is that the world was still a big and complicated place. The apple trees planted out back may well have provided sustenance but they also likely produced a crop of fruit that was sent to market and perhaps a lucrative and far off market like NYC or even London, this in spite of the fact that local people may have been hungry. The sheep on the back forty may well have supplied the wool to produce a uniform for a young man that was fighting a war against his own countrymen. So needless to say society and life was anything but simple.

For my purposes however these thoughts were merely me daydreaming my way through a beautiful and blissful autumn morning. On my way back to the car I discovered along a forest edge a beautiful patch of tall yellow flowers. I thought immediately that they might be Jerusalem Artichokes, perhaps planted many years ago by a resident of that hilltop farm community. The ground was moist but hard and I had to find a flat rock to help me dig into the earth beneath the plants. I didn't find any tubers but kept a few chunks of the root clusters and carried them back to the car with me. Upon returning to the car I placed them in the trunk and began getting excited to get home and find them a place in the garden. I had been listening to a tape on the way down that morning and getting in the car it continued to play. I rolled down off Morgan Hill on the heels of that beautiful morning, listening to joyful music and all was good in the world. A few miles down the road I had to flip the tape and in doing so the radio came on and upon hearing Tom Brokaw's broken voice I was instantly drawn to listen. Within a few seconds my heart had dropped, my eyes burned with tears, and my lips trembled. I pulled over and happened to be at Bill and Joanne Casey's dairy farm. At the time they had a big red raspberry field at the corner of Route 80 and Berry Road and I remember thinking that I just needed to get out of the car, turn off the radio and just sit. I feel as though I should say at this point that I didn't know anyone in NYC, I didn't lose anyone close to me on that day and my heart goes out to so many that did. I walked numbly out into the field and sat down in the tall grass between the raspberry plants. I recall thinking absolutely nothing. My mind was racing and yet simultaneously so incredibly devoid of thought. It was simply incomprehensible to try to fathom what was occurring and consider how I felt about it. I ultimately found myself cycling between sadness and rage and looking for some sort of answers. There obviously weren't or aren't any easy ones. What did happen however was I began to drift off watching honey bees that were flitting about in the raspberries. I found myself thinking it was ironic that for all our amazing feats as human beings, for all the beauty that we create, all the compassion that we have, all of our intelligences, and social skills we lack the simple functionality of a honeybee colony. We lack the ability to truly co-exist as a species and to collaborate selflessly in ways that promote the better good of the colony. I recall thinking I would let that notion guide me for both that day and all the days to come. I would strive to be considerate of the community that I cultivate and within which I'm a member, I would strive to contribute in meaningful and important ways that inherently are rooted in collaboration, co-existence, and wellbeing. This wasn't a total revelation for me but certainly a massive reaffirmation of purpose and intent. It has guided and continues to guide me. It didn't chart the course towards an agrarian lifestyle and ultimately the development of our CSA but in principle it surely upholds it. It provides a foundation for a great deal of my decision-making and that ultimately has created and continues to create Stones Throw Farm as we know it. I've now come to realize that these traits are inherent in the human condition and can be expressed in so many positive ways. I've had to accept that there always has been and always will be evil and ill will in the world. Imperfect as it is, and as we are, we as social species live to collaborate and cooperate with one another. We need to have faith in that condition and support it, and uphold it, in all that we do and to the very best extent that we can. If ever I forget this fact I'm reminded of it each autumn around this time when I see honey bees flitting about the raspberry canes and glance towards the cluster of poplar trees up towards the road. There at their base grows a mass of beautiful yellow flowers atop a plant whose identity has remained a mystery and although I still don't know what it is, I sure know what it means.