



# Stones Throw Farm

## CSA Newsletter

Season 5 - Week 16

October 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>

[www.stonethrowfarm.biz](http://www.stonethrowfarm.biz)

### Weekly News:

Wow! So I just wrote October on this week's newsletter. It's remarkable how days, weeks and months slip past when your head is down and you're simply plugging forward. It's a beautiful breezy fall day outside and the CSA share is reflecting the season. We've got the first Winter Squash of the year, the return of Swiss Chard, and a seasonal assortment of roots and leeks. Additionally we've brought in the final harvest of green beans.

We have a number of items in U-Pick at the moment. A great variety and abundance of herbs are available out there so help yourself. Sungolds are still producing a few tasty gems, and tomatillos are available. The raspberries on the back hill look great so get out and pick some. While you're at it grab a few of the season's late flowers and say hello to the Monarchs in the Tithonia; they'll be on their way soon. Always interesting to glance at a featherweight migratory butterfly sipping nectar on its way south while in the air overhead Canada Geese are honking and beginning to filter into the area on their march south as well.

So goes the seasons....

Thanks,

Brian, Megan and Reed

### The Farmer's Drivel:

This final bean planting of the season can be hit or miss. This year it was definitely a hit. Looking back across the oddities of 2011 and the assortment of challenges to crop and farm that we've experienced green beans this season have come across as a pretty remarkable success. This is on the heels of a terrible green bean season in 2010. And so I'm reminded that the growing season brings so many variables to the table that our diversity though a challenge in and of itself is also a great contributor towards resiliency. It makes for good eating and it acts as a form of insurance. Ironically it's also that extreme diversity that makes traditional crop insurance all but impossible and uneconomical for a small and diversified farm such as ours. I find myself pondering these sorts of things this week because the recent Farm Bureau mailings to my door have all had to deal with crop insurance plans, claim procedures, etc. Simultaneously the most recent "Natural Farmer" to come to our door has focused on an evaluation of the Farm Bill. If I based my farm decision making on this weeks bathroom reading we'd be shifting almost entirely to commodity crops. Just kidding....But it is interesting to consider the ways in which traditional agribusiness practices affect the face of our food system.

Shifting gears almost entirely from mental wanderings to an exploration of what my hands have been doing while my minds been wandering I find myself arriving at leeks. How does a leek make it to your CSA basket? First it is seeded into a 98 cell flat in the greenhouse on March 17<sup>th</sup>. Each cell receives between 4 - 8 seeds so depending upon germination rates and success cells are thinned down to 1 - 4 plants per cell. These leeks are grown in the greenhouse for about a month before being hardened off outside and ultimately being transplanted to the field. This year we planted the Leeks out on May 1<sup>st</sup>. We put 15 flats of 98 into four rows of 150' for a transplant population of 1,470.(give or take) Depending on the variability of the total number of plants per cell our overall plant population in the field is somewhere around 4,500 - 5,000. Leeks were planted into a portion of our lower field that grew green beans late last season that had been interplanted with winter rye during their last cultivation. Prior to tilling that piece we broadcast a blend of Green Sand, Rock Phosphate and Gypsum. The leeks are foliar fed fish and seaweed a number of times during the early season. Leeks are slow to get established and non-weed competitive. We often times hand hoe and/or wheel hoe leeks two to three times early in the season and leading up to and through the June weed flush. At that point we can usually get away with two to three tractor cultivations and a bit of hand weeding before turning our attention away from the leeks until harvest time. This season we also pulled drip tape on the leeks during June and July and irrigated regularly during the "dry season". Leeks are a long season crop that bring with them a good deal

### This Week's Share:

- Fresh Herb
- Garlic Bulb
- Winter Squash
- Yukon Gold Potatoes
- Yellow Onions
- Head Lettuce
- Green Beans
- Beets
- Swiss Chard
- Leeks
- Carrots
- U-Pick Raspberries
- U-Pick Herbs
- U-Pick Tomatillos
- U-Pick Flowers
- U-Pick Sungold Tomatoes

### Very Creamy Potato-Cheese Soup (Adapted from [New Recipes From the Moosewood Restaurant](#))

3 tbsp. butter  
2 c. onion, chopped  
1 garlic clove, minced  
3-4 medium potatoes, chopped  
2-3 medium carrots, chopped  
3 c. stock or water  
1 ½ c. milk  
4 oz. cream cheese  
1 c. grated cheddar cheese  
Chopped fresh herbs

In a large soup pot, sauté the onions and garlic in the butter until the onions are translucent. Add the potatoes and carrots and sauté for 5 to 10 minutes longer. Add the stock or water and simmer until all the vegetables are tender.

Puree the vegetables with the cream cheese and milk with a hand mixer or in a blender or food processor. Return the soup to the soup pot. Season with salt and pepper. Stir in the cheddar cheese and reheat gently.

Serve each cup or bowl garnished with chopped fresh herbs.

of labor and a big spike of that comes during harvest time. Each leek in every bunch on the CSA table has been in my hand a minimum of five times since being pulled in the field.

- 1) Pull clumps of leeks and separate into individual plants leaving as much soil in the field as possible.
- 2) Cut the roots and tops off of the leeks in the wash area
- 3) Strip the outermost leaves of each leek down to reveal the healthy white layer below
- 4) Use hose to individually wash each leek paying particular attention to soil trapped at the top leaf juncture and the root stubs.
- 5) Assemble bunches and apply rubber bands. (Bunches are then crated and put in the cooler before later being put on the CSA table.)

In spite of all this, leeks still have the dubious distinction of being considered a somewhat dirty vegetable. This is a result of the way in which they form leaves as they grow, it's possible for leeks to have trapped soil from splashing rains, etc. during their earlier growth stages and this soil can't physically be washed from the plant prior to preparation in the kitchen. This leads us all to the second to last step of the leek saga which is kitchen cleaning. The most sensible way I know of to prepare leeks for cooking is by trimming the top and then cutting the leek lengthwise without cutting into the base. Doing so effectively separates the various layers of leek leaves that can then be rinsed in the sink or gently agitated in a bowl of clean water. Leaving the base intact holds the whole leek together. After a good rinse you can then remove the base and cut the leek as you see fit. This isn't always a necessity and oftentimes cutting the tip and base before chopping leeks into rounds is effective enough for most situations. The final step in this whole thing of course is utilizing the leek itself and in that avenue the possibilities are really endless and quite delicious...So enjoy, I know I will!