



CSA News

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CSA Week 11

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Log in to your CSA account online to find a customized list, photos and descriptions for your share.

Farm Share Storage & Use Tips:

- Berries: These are delicate! Eat or refrigerate right away.
- Carrots, beets, hakurei turnips: Remove greens from root veggies. Store each separately in plastic bags in the fridge.
- Edible flowers, squash blossoms and salad toppings: Store in fridge in their clamshell container or air-filled bag. Use as soon as possible.
- Green onions: Wrap green onions in a slightly damp paper towel. Place inside a plastic bag or storage container; it doesn't need to be sealed airtight.
- Leafy greens and cabbage: Store in your fridge in perforated plastic bags.
- Microgreens, pea shoots and sunflower shoots: Keep in the fridge in their plastic clamshell container. Wash when you're ready to use them.
- Tomatoes: Store tomatoes at room temperature, not in the fridge. Ripen in a paper bag. You may receive tomatoes at varying degrees of ripeness so you can enjoy them throughout the week.
- Zucchini and summer squash: Store unwashed in a perforated plastic bag in your fridge's vegetable bin.

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Certified Organic: Why Bother?

The organic symbol you see on Elmwood Stock Farm packaging and marketing materials, discussed to the nth degree in these postings, comes with a cost. Staff time, file drawers of documents—20 years' worth archived—submittal fees, inspector fees—much less all the stuff we buy and do—to earn the right to crow about it. That little logo is a badge of honor to us, keeping us on our toes as we navigate climate change and small-scale farming's technological advances.

Some might suggest we ought not bother with getting our organic certification anymore, since we know the rules and tell you everything about how we do what we do anyway. Yes, you can come on a tour and see for yourself—they're free for CSA members—yet nevertheless, our organic certification is still worth the bother.

The USDA National Organic Program has a staff of 40 or more professional regulators. The NOP isn't the organization that does the certifying, though. They maintain accreditation of 30 or 40 certification bodies around the country, like the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, which does our annual certification. The NOP has an enforcement division, governing board staff support, some IT people and the like, with their work revolving around carrying out the mission of the National Organic Standards Board.

The US Secretary of Agriculture-appointed governing board, the NOSB, navigates proposals for changes to what is allowed in organic production, as science and technology evolve. The members are statutorily picked from differing segments of the food system, including farmers, processors, retailers, scientists and environmentalists. I had the opportunity to serve on the NOSB, and I can tell you firsthand that those people take their tasks seriously. NOSB-member constituents are in the audience of every meeting—now virtually, even—hanging on every vote.

The purists and the processors will always disagree around the margins of what should be allowed to carry the organic symbol, but there is no bad stuff allowed. The list of substances and practices allowed in organics is infinitesimally short compared to the list of things the rest of the food world has access to.

When you're looking at the organic symbol on a food package, realize it doesn't only dictate what happens in the confines of fieldwork. The organic standards go so far as to say what types of

cleansers and sanitizers can be used on equipment in the packing shed and at our abattoir. Organic rules not only stipulate the types of products allowed but at what concentration they can be used. Even meat and poultry carcasses are often sprayed with a sanitizing solution—typically chlorine because it is cheap—to reduce bacterial counts. You can't wash that out of your food (yuk), and why would we taint our meat at the very last after all we went through to get it there in top shape?

The USDA organic regulations are complex, but after a few years—21 years, in our case—of inspectors snooping around your farm and case managers pouring over every detail of your Organic System Plan, the logic comes together. For example, chlorine is great for use on stainless steel and plastic food-contact surfaces, but not for meat and produce. Salt, fed as a livestock supplement, is essential for cellular function and water balancing in animals, but it must come from a mined source, versus a refined source, and cannot be used as a weed killer, while it is fairly effective at that.

Before a producer can even be considered for organic status, there must be three years' lag time between the last time a prohibited substance was applied on the farm to allow for bioremediation of the toxins. We feel like the soil at Elmwood Stock Farm was better after five years than three, better yet after 10, and 20 seems healthier still, given our aggressive soil-building campaign.

Many of our grower friends at the farmers markets utilize cultural farming practices in line with the organic certification standards because the long view of soil building makes good business sense, but that does not make them USDA certified organic. For us, that little round USDA organic emblem cuts to the chase about the integrity behind the food we produce. Life can be a slippery slope, there is no mud on the high road, and it is well worth the bother. —
Mac Stone

JOIN THE PRIVATE CSA MEMBER FACEBOOK GROUP!

Be the first to learn about CSA news, swap recipes, ask your cooking questions, take part in giveaways and more!

The CSA Member Facebook Group is a new Elmwood Stock Farm CSA Farm Share perk this year, and we're having a great time with it! Take part at

www.facebook.com/groups/elmwoodstockfarmcsa.

Recipes

Summer Squash Tian

Adapted from The Splendid Table

3 T. olive oil	salt & pepper
1 medium onion, chopped	2 tsp. chopped fresh oregano
2 to 3 large garlic cloves, minced	1/2 c. Arborio rice, cooked
2 lb. summer squash/zucchini, cut in 1/2-inch dice	2 eggs
	3/4 c. grated Gruyere cheese
	1/4 c. breadcrumbs

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Oil a 2-quart baking dish.

Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a large, heavy, nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring often, until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add garlic, stir for about 30 seconds, until it begins to smell fragrant, and add squash. Cook, stirring often, until squash is translucent but not mushy, 5 to 10 minutes. Season generously with salt and pepper. Stir in oregano and rice, and remove from heat.

Beat eggs in a large bowl. Beat in cheese and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Stir in zucchini mixture, and combine well. Scrape into baking dish. Sprinkle breadcrumbs over top. Drizzle remaining olive oil.

Bake 40 to 45 minutes, or until the top is browned and the gratin is sizzling. Allow to sit for at least 10 minutes before serving.

Roasted Cherry Tomatoes

Adapted from Love and Lemons

This simple recipe is an important one because the resulting roasted tomatoes are so versatile! Use them on sandwiches, in pasta or on top of cottage cheese, or add them to wilted greens, put them on pizza ...

2 c. cherry or salad tomatoes, halved	salt & pepper
olive oil	fresh herbs

Preheat the oven to 250 degrees F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.

Place cherry tomatoes cut-side up on the baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with salt, pepper, and fresh herbs.

Roast tomatoes until they're well shriveled around the edges, 2 to 3 hours, depending on the size and water content of your tomatoes.