



CSA News

July 26-August 1, 2021

CSA Week 12

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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.
- Leafy greens and cabbage: Store in your fridge in perforated plastic bags.
- Leeks and green onions: Wrap in a slightly damp paper towel inside a plastic bag; it doesn't need to be sealed airtight.
- Microgreens, pea shoots and sunflower shoots: Keep in the fridge in their plastic clamshell container. Wash when you're ready to use them.
- Potatoes: These are new potatoes, dug fresh and meant to be refrigerated.
- 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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Water for Your Vegetables: When, Where & How

The pastures are greener and lusher so far this summer, compared to many; yet the most recent rain could be our last rain for a very long time. Generally, there are a few dry spells each growing season. Some extend into mild drought territory. Others are epic, like '83 and '85, and were it not for the remnants of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, '05 would not have seen a drop out here on the banks of the Elkhorn Creek. All that's to say we have invested in several irrigation systems to hedge our bets on the weather to provide good food for you.

Driving around the Inner Bluegrass, there are many roads named for the owner of the mill they provided access to. Out here we have Lemons Mill and Johnson Mill roads. The mills are long gone, but the heavy concrete dams themselves, designed to hold back the North Fork of the Elkhorn Creek to manage its flow through the power generation system, remain. Falling water is a powerful force of nature, giving our forebearers the ability to mill trees into lumber, turn grain into flour and convert rags into paper (hence the slang term for a newspaper *daily rag*). The deep pools of water behind these dams also provides a steady source of water to irrigate crops and sustain livestock, during low rainfall periods.

Elmwood Stock Farm, when the property lines were being drawn back in the day, has access to a nice, deep pool of water behind an old mill dam. After decades of parking a tractor down on the bank to power a water pump, John installed an electric pump several years ago, freeing up a tractor and providing consistent pumping capacity, day and night. With the creek being on the south side of US Highway 460, and the bulk of the farm on the north, we run our lines through two culverts under the road to bring the water to where the vegetables are grown. A labyrinth of 4-inch aluminum pipes and bendable vinyl hoses branch out to the various fields, getting smaller as they go, all the way down to the capillary-like drip tape that emit a drip of water every 12 inches along the plant row.

Water requirements differ among crops, so each morning and afternoon, Juan is responsible for opening and closing valves to water everything on schedule. The fields are laid out in zones according to water needs, since crops like tomatoes and squash need consistent watering to perform well, or at all. For unmulched

crops—like broccoli, chard and kale—that have drip tape irrigation lines running throughout, it is painstaking work to move the drip tape out of the way and put it back each time we need to cultivate for weeds.

Other crops, like potatoes and corn, can often yield a crop without the need for irrigation, except in those extended dry spells, so for them we employ a travelling sprayer, which is essentially an industrial-sized lawn sprinkler. The actual spray nozzle rides atop a buggy that is pulled to the far end of the rows. The “mothership” is hooked up to one of the 4-inch pipes carrying irrigation water, and a large hose stretches between the two. As water moves through the base unit, it clicks a little lever that slowly winds the hose around a big reel, pulling the spray buggy back home, watering a 120-foot-wide swath of crops as it returns. This is mostly done overnight to minimize water evaporation and has to be timed against the watering of other crops for proper water pressure.

The greenhouses and high tunnels are on municipal water since they require access to water year-round. We also rely on this “city” water to manage the intensive greens beds. The micro sprinklers that sit atop 18-inch ground spikes run off a flexible hose along the length of the beds. These sprinklers are on timers to run periodically through the day to keep the seeds in the top surface of the soil moist for germination and early root growth in the hot summer sun. We run this sprinkler system for short stretches throughout the day to keep the crops themselves cool.

We are thankful for the hearty souls that corralled a section of the Elkhorn Creek with a dam a short ways downstream from us so we have a nice, deep pool of water to draw from. Rain that falls on the watershed upstream lands on prime bluegrass farmland for the most part, actually being filtered on those farms, before draining our way.

We have run the big traveling sprayer a couple of times this year, and the drip tape is running on schedule. When the irrigation pump went down—on a Friday, of course, taking a few days to get parts—and the backup pump was pulled from the barn to take its place, we were reminded that irrigation is critical, even for just a few days in the heat. As much as we rely on our irrigation system, there is nothing like a good rain. Actually, a good rain every so many days is a blessing that man cannot duplicate. —*Mac Stone*

Recipes

Stir-Fried Beef with Leeks

Adapted from Noodle Garage

1 lb. sirloin or ribeye steak	6 T. soy sauce, divided
4 T. white wine, divided	dash of sesame oil
2 T. corn starch	4 cloves of garlic, sliced
6 T. water	10 thin slices of ginger
1 tsp. pepper	2 leeks, sliced at an angle
2 tsp. sugar	6 T. vegetable or peanut oil

Slice steak thinly against the grain. Put in a bowl, and add 2 tablespoons of the white wine, corn starch, water, black pepper, sugar and 2 tablespoons of the soy sauce, and sesame oil. Mix thoroughly, and set aside for 30 minutes to marinate at room temperature.

Heat a wok with oil on medium-high until it's hot—it will just start to barely smoke. Drop in the beef, and stir vigorously. After 1 minute, when the beef turns from pink to brown, add garlic and ginger, and continue to stir vigorously for 30 seconds. Then add remaining 4 tablespoons of the soy sauce and 2 tablespoons of the white wine, and stir fry for 2 minutes. Add leeks, and stir fry for about another 1 to 2 minutes, until leeks turn bright green.

Remove from heat, and serve immediately.

Mashed Potato Cakes with Applesauce

Adapted from Community Table

2 c. mashed potatoes	1/2 c. applesauce
1/4 c. parmesan cheese	7 T. all-purpose flour, divided
1 egg, whisked	butter or oil

Place mashed potatoes, cheese, egg, applesauce and 3 tablespoons flour in a bowl, and stir to combine. Form 12 potato patties.

Lightly coat potato patties in remaining flour.

Heat a thin layer of oil or butter in a large sauté pan over medium heat. Cook the potato cakes, 3 minutes on each side.

Serve as is or with more applesauce.

Visit Elmwood Stock Farm on a tour: August 14, 9 am! It's free for CSA members and visitors younger than 12. Registration is required at elmwoodorders@gmail.com or 859-621-0755.