



CSA News

September 27-October 3, 2021

CSA Week 21

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This is the final week of Summer CSA Farm Share!

Sign up for Fall CSA at ElmwoodFarm.HappyCSA.com/Signup.

Farm Share Storage & Use Tips:

- Beets, carrots and hakurei turnips: Store in a plastic bag in the fridge. Wash just before use.
- Celery: Recut the ends and stand up in a jar of water in the fridge. It should keep for up to two weeks.
- Fresh herbs: Store in a jar of water like a bouquet in the fridge.
- Hot peppers, zucchini and summer squash: Store unwashed in a perforated plastic bag in your fridge's vegetable bin.
- Leafy greens: Keep in perforated bag in your fridge's vegetable bin. Chop and wash ahead of time or just before use.
- Leeks and green onions: Wrap in a slightly damp paper towel inside a plastic bag; it doesn't need to be sealed airtight.
- Onions: Candy onions are sweet yellow. Also find red, yellow and white. Store on the countertop or pantry.
- Pea Shoots & Sunflower Shoots: Keep in the fridge in their plastic container. Do not wash until ready to use.
- Potatoes: These potatoes are meant to be refrigerated. Wash just before use.
- Tomatoes: Store tomatoes at room temperature. Ripen in a paper bag. Wash just before use.

Extending Your Local Eating Season

We harvested tomatoes into November a few years ago, and last year, our first frost hit in early October. We just never know what weather Mother Nature is going to toss our way, so as the farmers you've entrusted to grow good food for your family, all we can do is prepare. Particularly now that we have a Fall CSA Farm Share ([Have you signed up?](#)) and a Winter CSA Farm Share, we take this responsibility more seriously. Here in this last week of the Summer CSA Farm Share Season, growing into the colder months is on our minds.

We have described in these newsletters how the cooler/shorter days of fall slow the growth rate of greens, with a causative effect of intensifying the flavors within. Basically, the leaves convert solar energy into complex carbohydrates, but the cells do not multiply, therefore the leaves do not elongate as rapidly with the shorter daylight of fall, so all that goodness stays in a smaller package. Even though it has stayed warm through September, plant growth is primarily dictated by day length, so in the greens to come, you will taste this phenomenon with every bite.

It seems there is no such thing as “normal” weather patterns anymore. It used to be that we figured on last frost about Derby Day and first frost in early October. It used to be that we could count on garden-variety thunderstorms to roll through every so often in the summer, with time to tend the fields and crops in between. Now it's hard to say when we'll see our first frost, and lately, it seems like long durations of wet or dry spells hang around for extended periods. Our vegetable-planting decisions are based on our collective memory and experience of when is the best time to plant for the fall, but now, we must also plan on moisture and temperature extremes that no one can predict.

In early fall, light frosts roll in and tend to be spotty, with a pattern that often affects harvest in some fields but not others. Overcast skies can block the nighttime radiational cooling that causes frost to form, and the morning fog protects the plants in the lower part of the field, which is where frost normally happens first. If the wind persists all night—particularly important just before daylight—frost formation is also minimized. With all of these conditions combined, summertime flavor will continue until we get walloped with a full frost.

For the Animals

The shorter, cooler days of fall improve the quality of the pasture plants, similar to the effect on produce plants. The sugar content—or nutrient density of the leaves—increases as described above, meaning

the livestock consume less to meet their nutritional requirements for growth, so the standing forage lasts longer into the winter.

Growing into Fall & Winter

Growing-season-extension technologies have helped us strategically plan for the harvest of greens all winter for the past few years. In the high tunnels (greenhouse-type structures heated only by the sun) right now, we are seeding lettuces, greens, arugula and such. The sunny days keep the soil warm and foster good plant growth until the Persephone days that start in mid-November, when the combination of short days and typically cold temperatures shut down all growth for the winter. (The Persephone Days were named such by farmer-author Eliot Coleman. The name relates to the Greek goddess Persephone, daughter of Demeter, the goddess of agriculture. Apparently Hades abducted Persephone into the underworld to be his wife, and Demeter threatened to shut down growth on the earth. Zeus—Persephone's father, god of the sky—brokered a deal where Hades only spends a short time with Persephone each winter, so Demeter shuts us down just for a little while.)

Our haygrove high tunnel is a single layer of polypropylene plastic with open ends and arches high enough to drive equipment through to till the ground and plant crops. Here, we plant kale, collards and the like—foods that can be harvested all winter, we hope.

And then there are woven-cotton row covers that we place directly over plant rows to hold soil warmth like a blanket. This system is more vulnerable to wind, harder to harvest from and sure to collapse under heavy snows, but it protects the plants enough to keep the kale coming a little longer. In the winter, we have to wait for the plants to thaw before harvest, and sometimes the covers are frozen to the ground, but usually we can work around the forecast to get some harvested for Winter CSA Farm Shares, the online store and the year-round Lexington Farmers Market.

We are actively preparing and continually improving our various cold-weather plant-protection systems so we can all eat local, organic greens all year. Thank you for entrusting us with your food needs all summer long. I hope you'll stick around for the Fall CSA Farm Share to experience the magic of on-farm season extension. —*Mac Stone*

PREORDER YOUR THANKSGIVING TURKEY

Organic, pasture-raised heritage and broad breasted turkeys make holiday meals special. Visit ElmwoodStockFarm.com/Turkeys to learn about how these animals are raised in our regenerative-agriculture system and to place your order.

Recipes

Veggie-Packed Tomato Soup

Adapted from Real Greek Recipes

6 T. olive oil	4 large carrots, chopped
1 large onion, chopped	1 stalk celery, chopped
5 large tomatoes, chopped	2 T. tomato paste
2 garlic cloves, minced	2 sprigs fresh thyme
1 bell pepper, stem & seeds removed, chopped	2 quarts chicken or vegetable broth
1 small zucchini or summer squash, chopped	

Heat olive oil in a cooking pot over medium heat. Add onion and cook until golden and completely soft. Add tomatoes and cook until soft and all their juices drain. Stir occasionally. Add remaining vegetables to the pot. Cook for about 5 minutes. Stir in tomato paste and thyme. Cook for 2 minutes. Add broth and simmer, partially covered, for about 1 hour. Vegetables should be tender.

Blend soup with a blender, food processor or immersion blender.

Savory Zucchini Quick Bread

Adapted from Laughing Spatula

1½ c. zucchini or summer squash, grated	1 c. milk
2 c. all purpose flour	1 T. vinegar
2 tsp. baking powder	1 egg
1/2 tsp. baking soda	3 T. butter, melted
1/2 tsp. salt	1½ c. grated sharp cheddar
	2 green onions, chopped

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Butter a 9 x 5 bread pan.

Wrap grated zucchini or summer squash in a paper towel, and squeeze over the sink to release about 1 tablespoon of liquid.

In a large bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.

In a small bowl, combine milk and vinegar. Mix in egg and butter.

Add milk mixture to dry mixture, being careful not to over mix. Add zucchini, cheese and green onions, and mix until just combined.

Pour batter into pan and bake for 1 hour. Check for doneness with a toothpick. Cool for 10 minutes in the pan. Remove to continue cooling on a wire rack.