



CSA News

December 6-12, 2021

Fall CSA Week 9

Volume 18, No. 42



**TWO WEEKS REMAINING IN THE FALL CSA SEASON!
REMEMBER TO USE ALL FARM CREDIT & ACCOUNT
BALANCE BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR.**

Farm Share Storage & Use Tips:

- Beets, radishes and hakurei turnips: Remove the root from the greens and store separate in the fridge.
- Brussels sprouts or broccoli: Store unwashed in the veggie bin.
- Cabbage: Keep dry, unwashed cabbage in the vegetable bin of the refrigerator. If the outer leaves lose their firmness, remove and discard those. Once cut, wrap or cover, and continue to refrigerate; it should keep for several weeks more.
- Fresh herbs: Recut and stand the stalks in a jar of water in the fridge, or keep in fridge in a container until ready to use.
- Ginger and turmeric: Keep baby ginger and turmeric in a closed container in the refrigerator. No need to peel. They freeze well.
- Garlic and bulb onions: Leave on your countertop or in your pantry.
- Leafy greens (arugula, kale, spinach, mizuna, tat soi, bok choy, lettuce mix, etc.): Store in your fridge in a bag for up to 2 weeks.
- Leeks or green onions: Loosely wrap in a bag or container, and store them in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator.
- Potatoes: Keep refrigerated and in the dark (paper bag) to prevent skins from greening.
- Sweet potatoes and fall squash: Keep on the counter or in a pantry.

Putting Cattle to Work

Cattle are vital to Elmwood Stock Farm. They not only convert solar energy into wholesome, organic meat, they are also a valuable tool in our regenerative vegetable-production toolbox. From nutrient cycling to weed eaters, the services they perform keep us from having to do these jobs artificially or mechanistically. The momma cows in our Wagyu-Angus herd grew up here—as did their mommas and their momma’s mommas—so they know every nook and cranny of this farm probably better than we do.

The hilliest lands on the farm are maintained as permanent pasture, never to see a plow, because of the potential for erosion. There is a large portion of Elmwood Stock Farm in pasture, and we are glad to have it.

While these hilly pasture areas don’t produce vegetables, they are far from idle. The roots of the forage plants hold the soil firmly in place. These plants also convert solar energy into complex carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and minerals through photosynthesis. The cattle thrive on it when managed well.

In addition to the hilly permanent pastures, all of the cropland on the farm spends five out of every eight years planted in forage. This encourages the soil microbial life to build vast networks, allows the cattle’s leavings to fertilize the soil, and readies the soil for the next round of vegetables to be grown there.

The soils of the Inner Bluegrass have a balance of nutrients particularly beneficial to livestock that consume the forages grown on them. That’s why the horse industry developed in the region.

Elmwood Stock Farm started out producing Angus breeding cattle and over the years has transitioned to our current organic, grass-fed, grass-finished Wagyu-Angus herd that supplies beef to you. John is continually building and improving this herd based on each animals’ ability to thrive in our grass-fed system and on their lineage’s performance in the system.

The Wagyu-Angus cross began in an effort to produce the best organic, grass-fed, grass-finished beef that we can. This crossing of the Wagyu and Angus breeds results in a tender, flavorful beef with ample marbling. Your organic, grass-fed and grass-finished Wagyu-Angus beef from Elmwood Stock Farm cooks more like grain-fed beef, because it has the fat content that you’ve come to expect in beef.

Of course, we're happy with this improved eating experience—and you've told us that you are, too—and there are other advantages on the farm to cross-breeding the cattle. "Hybrid vigor" allows good qualities from each breed to be expressed in the resulting offspring. We find cattle grow faster, have healthier calves and better handle heat stress.

Because it takes a long time to finish cattle on grass in a regenerative system like ours, it also takes a long time to see the results of changes made to our crossbreeding. For example, cattle that are fed grain generally go to market at 16 months of age. The cattle at Elmwood Stock Farm graze our organic pastures for 25 or more months before reaching market maturity and the full expression of their meat quality. Add that to the nine months it takes for gestation, and that's nearly three years that John waits to see the results of his cattle herd breeding decisions.

Over time, we evolved in our thinking on how best to feed these animals. They are divided into groups based on their stage of life, which translates into their nutrition requirements. John moves each group every few days using temporary electric-fence systems to divide big fields into smaller paddocks. The size of the paddock is dependent on how tall, thick and lush the grass is. By continually being offered fresh forages, the cattle consume the plants at the plants' peak nutrient value, help us control the weeds and move away from the internal parasites naturally existing in the ecosystem.

There is a shared understanding within the herds as to how this pasture-rotation process works. The cows are keenly aware when the field they are in is eaten down. When they hear the Kubota mule coming—our vehicle of choice for livestock chores—even before they can see it, they begin moving toward the fenceline where they're sure they'll be granted access to the next paddock. Moving a group of well-trained cattle is as simple as rolling up the fence wire on a spool and allowing the group to flow into the fresh field.

All of this paddock moving and grazing rotation directly benefits the vegetable crops and overall health of the land. We feed winter hay to the cattle in the fields that will be turned into vegetable crop land the next year, so the nutrients the cattle deposit feed the soil. They also destroy any weeds they do not eat.

The Wagyu-Angus cattle are doing work on the farm to help us grow vegetables and convert forage into food using a regenerative system we believe in, and this careful crossing has resulted in top-quality grass-fed, grass-finished organic beef products for us all. —*Mac Stone*

SIGN UP FOR WINTER CSA ...

Recipes

Cabbage, Sausage & White Bean Casserole

Adapted from The Washington Post

1/2 lb. sausage of your choice	3½ c. cannellini or navy beans, drained and rinsed
4 T. olive oil, divided	1/2 c. heavy cream
1 small head cabbage, sliced	1/2 c. plain breadcrumbs
1 medium yellow onion, sliced	1/2 c. packed Parmesan cheese
1 tsp. salt, plus more to taste	
1/2 tsp. pepper; more to taste	

Position a rack in the middle of the oven, and preheat to 425 degrees F.

In a large skillet over medium heat, combine sausage with 2 tablespoons of the oil. Cook, breaking apart sausage until no longer pink, 7 to 10 minutes. Transfer to a plate, reserving drippings.

Add cabbage and onion to drippings in skillet. Season with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 15 minutes. Add the beans, heavy cream and the reserved sausage to the skillet, and stir to combine. Taste, and adjust salt and pepper. Transfer to a casserole dish if not using an oven-safe skillet.

In a small bowl, combine breadcrumbs, Parmesan and the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil. Sprinkle evenly over cabbage mixture.

Bake for about 15 minutes, until bubbling and lightly golden on top.

Roasted Carrots with Sweet Potatoes & Pomegranate

Adapted from Sweet Savant

1 bunch carrots	salt & pepper
1 lb. sweet potatoes	2 T. chopped parsley
5 shallots	2 T. chopped chives
2 T. vegetable oil	1 pomegranate

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Halve carrots larger than 1/2 inch in diameter.

Cut each sweet potato into wedges.

Add all vegetables to a sheet pan lined with foil. Add the oil, salt and pepper. Toss to coat. Roast for 30 to 40 minutes, turning occasionally. Remove from oven and place vegetables on a serving platter or individual plates. Sprinkle with herbs and pomegranate seeds.