



Week of October 6, 2008 ~ Issue no. 20

this week's

HARVEST

This list may change, but this is our best guess at printing time.

Fennel
Carrots
Arugula
Turnips
Chard
Peppers
Lettuce
Tomatoes

Pick-your-own:

Tomatoes
Flowers
Sage
Parsley
Rosemary
Thyme

Add-On Choices

Eggs from Rushton Farm
Co-op
Goat Cheese from
Shellbark Hollow
Honey from Rushton Farm



IN THE BAG *tidbits from Fred*

It's pumpkin time! Back in the first heat wave in June a wide array of pumpkins and winter squash were planted in one of our best fields. Although they started off great it was not long before crows and insect pressures threatened the young plants. We lost a number of plants but those that survived have blessed us with a crop of beautiful orange orbs. Among the varieties grown are the Musquee de Provence and Rouge Vif d'Etampes better known by their more familiar names Fairytale and Cinderella. There are a number of good sized Howdens, the typical face pumpkin, in the field as well as a few Baby Bears, probably the best pie pumpkin around. Pumpkins are one of my favorite crops to grow because they change significantly through the course of a season. They are the last crop to go in the ground and the last crop to come out signifying the end of the harvest season. The Rushton Farm pumpkins will be part of the CSA share the week of October 20th and the staff asks that if you want a specific variety you let us know at pick up this week. There will be a request sheet next to the sign in sheet in the farm shed.

A reminder that October 9th is the deadline for RSVP's for the October 18th Harvest Celebration. It is a family event with pumpkin carving and hayrides as well as an owl prowl and a campfire to roast marshmallows by. The cost is \$10 per individual and \$25 per family. Checks should be made out to Willistown Conservation Trust and sent to 'Harvest Celebration' at the Trust's offices, 925 Providence Road, Newtown Square, PA 19073.

-Fred



THE DIRT *report from our field managers*

This morning: sunrise near seven. Over in the Rock Field, deer prints in the lettuce beds. Towering heirloom tomato plants, verdant green halls in August, now all withered away to black and tan. A crow flits away as we approach. An October sky of roiling grey clouds rolls away with a spatter of rain to a golden autumn sun. We go poking through the pumpkin patch, exhorting all the fruits to color up in time. We take stock of the buttoning broccoli and mini-heading cabbages, monitoring the continuing pressure of the hardiest of the insect pests, those still munching away even at the edge of frost. The basil turning brown bows down to autumn.

In the flower beds, we find nigella and bachelor buttons sprouting up where we've since sown salad greens, reminders of the flowers we planted in the spring and cleared away in August. In the South Field, we admire the handiwork of the 12-year olds who came out last week to help us clean the fields. Three hundred feet of summer tomatoes have disappeared into our burgeoning compost pile. Down in the never-ending melon patch, the weeds grow thigh-high, and we wonder if October watermelons can really be all that good.

Back in the farm shed, we chart out the last few weeks of the CSA, trying to ration out our storage crops while predicting what will still come to fruition in this, the quieting time of year. Winter squash and pumpkins, Brussels sprouts and carrots, onions and potatoes: there are still some goodies left, and there is still some work to do. Over in the Spring Field, the cover crop pushes up a vibrant green. We talk about how we need to get the other fields up to speed.

The geese honk through the early morning skies. The milkweed pods burst with silky, feathered seeds. Praying mantises in the meadow weave cases for their eggs. The leaves fly away like birds.

-Aaron

HAPPENINGS *upcoming events at the farm*

Mark your calendars! Details forthcoming here or on the web site.

October 18, 2008 - Harvest Celebration 5:00 - 8:00 pm

RSVP and advance payment required - send \$10/person or \$25/family to the Trust. See web for more details.



RECIPES *what to do with those veggies*

Damn Hot Peppers

This recipe is really good, but ten times better on the second day. Great side dish, or on sandwiches or as a dip with crusty bread. I don't follow the measurements exactly – I just use what I have on hand and as many hot peppers as I dare.

-JDS

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

7 bell or other assorted Rushton Farm sweet peppers, halved, seeded, and cut into 1-inch square pieces

1 pound jalapenos or other hot peppers, seeded and sliced 1/8-inch-thick

Gray or kosher salt

3 1/2 pounds (56 ounces) crushed tomatoes or 7 cups fresh tomato concasse
(peeled, seeded and diced tomatoes)

Small bunch basil leaves

1/4 cup red wine vinegar

Heat the oil in a very large pot. Add the peppers, and allow to sweat for 2 to 3 minutes. Add jalapenos, and salt to taste. Cook over medium-high heat for about 20 minutes, or until the peppers have softened and are partially tender. There will still be some liquid left in the pot. Add the tomatoes and the basil leaves. Lower the heat and continue to cook for about 30 minutes, until the peppers are tender. Add additional salt, if needed. Remove from the heat. If canning, add the vinegar, place in canning jars, and process according to the manufacturer's instructions. Or, store in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

- adapted from Michael Chiarello

Roasted Fennel with Parmesan

2 large fennel bulbs

1/4 cup good olive oil

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Parmesan shavings

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Remove the stems of the fennel and slice the bulb in half lengthwise. With the cut side down, slice the bulb vertically into 1/2-inch-thick slices, cutting right through the core. Spread the fennel slices on a baking sheet, coat with olive oil, salt, and pepper and toss with your hands. Roast the fennel slices for about 1 hour, turning them once after 30 minutes, until the edges are crisp and brown. Remove from the oven and cover with Parmesan shavings. Taste for salt and pepper and serve.

- Ina Garten