

BURR OAK GARDENS, LLC

To forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves- Mohondas Gandhi

This Week on the Farm

I am going to start this newsletter with a big thank you to all of our Radish Group members. This is your last delivery for the 2017 season. We hope you have enjoyed all of the produce and we thank you for all of your support! To our Allium and Bean Group members, you have one more delivery, so don't forget to pick up your totes next week!

As I write this it is the seventeenth of October and we still have not had a frost. Not even a light frost. They were calling for temperatures near freezing Sunday night into Monday morning, so Tyler and I went out and harvested all of the winter squash and as many peppers as we could before dark. This was after spending the weekend with Tyler's extended family barging cattle across the Fox River from the land they own up near Montello. (If you are curious, just ask Tyler about it, he loves to explain how they float cattle twice a year). When we inspected the fields Monday morning there was no sign of frost. This means that we are still harvesting tomatoes in the latter half of October.

We had enough winter squash to put both the delicata and the acorn squash in your totes this week. We should have the same amount next week and have a nice amount left over for the storage shares.

I think this will be the last week for tomatoes with the weather forecast and the disease pressure in the fields.



Pac choy waiting to be washed in our packing shed.

This is the first week for the mustard mix. The plants are so large that for a lot of members the bunch consists of four plants! Our family's go to way to use the mustard mix is in eggs. We also put it in lasagna (in place of spinach). The plants look super healthy and are not showing any signs of the spottiness that they usually exhibit at this time of year.

The pac choy also is looking good. I was afraid that they had stayed in the greenhouse too long and would not size up well in the field. I told Tyler that I wasn't sure it was worth the time to transplant the plugs because they looked pretty sad, but I am glad that he persuaded me to plant them anyway. We have at least one weeks worth of pac choy in the field.

We are down to the last push of the season. It has been really nice weather to be out doing field work. Don got most of the fields mowed last week. We finished harvesting the sunflowers yesterday, so that field and the field where the winter squash were planted can now be mowed as well. Most years we

have already mowed the pepper and tomato fields, but with the weather being so warm those plants have continued to hang on. There is a significant number of peppers in the field that I am hoping we have time to glean them all in the next week. But with it just being Tyler and I out in the fields, we have to prioritize what is going in the boxes and some crops are left to wait. I am so thankful for our workshare members because they allow us to do what we do.

Speaking of helping out, Tyler and I would like to give a big shout out to Matt Neff for continuing to deliver our “seconds” to the food bank even after leaving our employ. As of last week we were just shy of donating a 1000 pounds for the year. With the totes we sent on Tuesday we will be well over 1000 pounds by the end of the season.

This is the time of the year where we like to take stock of all that we have done over the course of the season. I would like to say that things have generally slowed down by this time of year as the cold weather and winter approaches and that is why we take the time to look back, but looking through my photos of the last several seasons that is definitely not the case. Last year we were anxiously awaiting our daughters birth (although we didn’t know she was a she). The year before we were hurrying to put in gravel where our retail greenhouse now stands before it started to snow. I guess fall is just a busy time here on the farm.

Overall Tyler and I have been pleased with how the season went. We are very thankful that we purchased the fingerweeder. Although it was not as fabulous to start out with as we hoped, with a little trial and error I think it will allow us to do more with less help. Once again we were shown that we have very little control compared with Mother Nature. The warmer weather this fall and the different weather patterns this summer gives us a lot to think about going forward. How will the changing weather patterns and a warmer climate change how we farm? Are we going to need to change our season by pushing it forward, or back? Will we be able to grow some new crops and have to change the timing of others due to heat or cold?

Several things are very clear after every season. Nothing stays the same. We have no control over the weather. It is great growing a lot of different types of crops because no matter what, there is going to be a crop failure. We are surrounded by a lot of great people who love to help out and get their hands dirty. And, by the end of October, we are physically exhausted and are looking forward to snow!

Please leave your blue totes at the delivery sites!

Your Box This Week

Garlic- Store in a cool, dark place.

Potatoes- Same as garlic.

Hot Peppers- Store in a paper bag in the fridge.

Carmen Sweet Pepper- Same as hot peppers.

Slicer Tomatoes- Store on the counter.

Mustard Mix- Wash the lettuce and spin or pat dry with paper towel. Spread evenly on a paper towel and loosely roll the paper towel. Place rolled towel in a plastic bag and place in the fridge.

Daikon Radish- Store in the fridge.

Carrots- Remove the tops and store in a plastic bag in the fridge.

Acorn Squash- Store in a cool, dry place.

Delicata Squash- Store in a cool, dry place.

Chinese Daikon & Carrot Soup**1 pound pork, cut into large chunks****6-8 dried shrimp (The dried scallops and shrimp can be found in an Asian market -- but if you can't find these ingredients, feel free to leave them out. The dried scallops/shrimp add incredible savory and ocean-salty flavor (you'll use less salt to season the soup).****2-3 dried scallops****One 2-inch piece of ginger, cut into chunks****2 whole cloves garlic****1 large Daikon radish, peeled and cut into chunks****3 large carrots, peeled and cut into chunks****2-3 tomatoes, cut into quarters****Salt to taste**

Bring a large soup pot filled with water to a rolling boil. Add pork and bones and let boil rapidly for 10 minutes. Remove pork and set aside. Drain and discard the water, clean the pot if needed. Fill the pot with new water to make the broth (approximately 4 quarts) and add in the pork, bones, shrimp, scallops, ginger, garlic. Bring to a simmer and then turn the heat to medium-low, or hot enough to just produce a gentle simmer for 30-40 minutes.

Occasionally, skim the soup of any fats or particles and discard. Add radish, carrots and tomatoes to the soup and simmer for another 15-20 minutes. Season with salt (or fish sauce) to taste. (From www.steamykitchen.com)

Mustard Greens & Roasted Squash Salad**1 medium delicata squash (12-14 ounces), halved, seeded, cut into 3/4" cubes****2 tablespoons plus 1/3 cup olive oil****Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper****1 cup skinned hazelnuts****1/2 cup hazelnut oil****1/2 cup Sherry vinegar****2 teaspoons sugar****1 6-7-ounce bunch mustard greens, center ribs and stems removed from tough greens, cut into 2" pieces (about 5 cups)**

Place racks in top and bottom thirds of oven; preheat to 400°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil. Toss squash with 2 tablespoons olive oil in a medium bowl; season to taste with salt and pepper. Spread out squash on prepared sheet and roast, turning occasionally, until tender and golden in spots, 18-20 minutes.

Meanwhile, spread out hazelnuts on a small rimmed baking sheet and toast in oven until beginning to turn golden brown, 8-10 minutes. Let cool on sheet.

Chop hazelnuts; place in a small bowl. Whisk in remaining 1/3 cup olive oil, hazelnut oil, vinegar, and sugar. Season vinaigrette to taste with salt and pepper. Place roasted squash and mustard greens in a large bowl; toss to combine. Drizzle vinaigrette over and season with salt and pepper; toss to coat. (From www.epicurious.com)

Cute Egg-bake**6 to 8 eggs****Dash of milk****1/2 bell pepper diced****1/4 of a large onion, diced****A few mustard greens chopped fine****Your favorite cheese****Salt & Pepper****Cooking Spray**

Preheat oven to 350. Spray muffin pan with cooking spray. Add onion, pepper, greens to each cup. Add cheese to each cup.

In a separate bowl mix eggs, milk, salt and pepper. Pour mixture into each cup of the muffin pan until it is level. Place muffin pan in the oven and bake until the eggs are done. Serve hot with toast. (From K. Rowe)

Peppers & Potato Stew**3 tablespoons olive oil****1 small red onion, chopped fine****5 cloves garlic, cut into 3 pieces****8 bell peppers (2 red, 2 yellow, 2 green, 2 orange), seeded and sliced****1/2 (28-ounce) can tomatoes, blended smooth****1 pound russet potatoes, scrubbed well and cut into 1/2 inch cubes****1 cup vegetable broth****1 generous handful fresh flat-leaf parsley****Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

In a large Dutch oven sauté the onion in about 3 tablespoons olive oil on medium-high heat, and when it is completely softened, and before it starts browning, add the garlic. Sauté for an additional couple of minutes, then add the peppers, lower the heat to medium-low and stir well. Partially cover with a lid and let them soften up, about 10 minutes.

When the peppers have settled into the pan, add the tomatoes and the potatoes. Season the mixture with salt and pepper to taste, stir well over medium-low heat, cook for about 1 hour.

Use the vegetable stock to help the sauce come together, by adding a ladleful to the peperonata here and there while cooking. Depending on the tomatoes you are using and the degree of ripeness of the peppers, you might not need to use all the broth indicated in the ingredient list. Look for a nice balance between sauce and vegetables, at the end you are working on a vegetable stew...consistency of the final dish should be thicker than a pasta sauce. (From www.cookingchanneltv.com)

Hot & Sour Greens**1 pound greens (bok choy, kale, Swiss chard, collards)****2 teaspoons expeller-pressed canola oil****2 large cloves garlic, minced****1/4 teaspoon hot red-pepper flakes****1/4 teaspoon dry mustard powder****2 tablespoons rice vinegar****1 teaspoon soy sauce****1 teaspoon light brown sugar**

Wash and drain greens, remove any tough stems, and slice leaves into 1/2-inch shreds.

Heat the canola oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic and red-pepper flakes and stir-fry for one minute.

Add the greens along with the mustard and stir to coat with the spices.

Combine the rice vinegar, soy sauce and sugar and add to the greens in the skillet. Cook covered over medium heat until vegetables are tender, about five minutes. (From www.drweil.com)