



Charlestown FARM

www.charlestownfarm.org

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Charlestown Farm

November 2007 issue

November — to every season there is a reason...

There is a time to grow and a time to reap. We have all reaped this good year's amazing bountiful abundance. November is a great time to reflect on all the things you can be thankful for. I could fill this newsletter with all the things I am thankful for, but mostly I appreciate all of the great members who support us through good years and not so good years. A hearty thank you goes out to all of you for your continued support, encouraging emails, sample snacks and community sharing. It is a special privilege to grow healthy, organic food that feeds you and your families.

And thanks must go to our fantastic team this year, Rachel, Libby, Ruth, Andrea, and Aby. We enjoyed a fruitful season with a lot of laughter to boot. Last but not least, thanks must go to Ma Nature, who made most all of it possible. As we wind down from the main season you might just be wondering...

What DO farmers do all winter?

We get this question a lot towards the end of the season and most people imagine we kick up our heels in front of the woodstove and snuggle in with our seed catalogs and hot chocolate and pour over the possibilities of next year. We actually do do that, but it is certainly not the whole of our winter responsibilities. Since we now grow year-round there are things that need our attention every day. Some of them include watering the greenhouse (*not too much in the winter*), feeding and removing the ice from the chickens water bucket, (*My pet-project for the winter is to design a solar heater for the chicken's water tub so I don't have to do this every day when it's freezing cold. I would be quite delighted with myself if I could get this idea off the ground.*), collecting the eggs, starting a fire in the corn stove in the greenhouse and making sure it doesn't go out in the middle of the night, following our winter planting schedule, harvesting winter carrots from the field, monitoring all the veggies in storage, and rodent patrol (*the kitties help us out with this — it's their job*). And all those projects that have been piling up on the back-burner list now move forward as actual things that may have a chance at getting done. There's at least thirty on that list right now and I'm sure given a little thought I could add another thirty.

So, just so you know, we're still hard at work over the winter, but we do love that the pace slows down quite a bit (*thank goodness*). Getting to work by 9:00 seems pretty luxurious. Sauntering around in a warm, cozy greenhouse on a sunny afternoon when it's 30° outside will put a smile on anyone's face. And the sweetness of veggies grown in the winter, my goodness, they are amazing.

Renew Your Membership Today!!!

On Renewing...

We have had an amazingly bountiful season this year and I am grateful for all things that conspired to make it so. Not every year is like this one—as our veteran members know! But no matter how much or little Mother Nature pitches in, we strive to improve quality and quantity. This year, she pitched in a lot and that has made for full bushels and baskets and bellies. Charlestown Farm is blessed with a very long waiting list. There are now 75 people on that list and still more ask to join it. I explain to people that it will most likely be 2009 before their name possibly comes up... WOW!

After much thought we have decided to increase the 2008 share price to \$700.00/single family share. You have from October through May of next year to pay your share in full. If you are a returning member from 2 years, the increase over this period of time translates to an extra \$12.50/month that you need to set aside to enjoy a membership. This price rise takes into consideration many things:

- A sustainable wage for the farmers & interns
- Rising fuel costs
- The real cost of growing quality organic food...
Organic farming relies more on labor and less on chemicals. The price of organic food reflects the full costs of producing it. The price of chemically grown food does not. Among the costs not factored into the price tag: fertilizer-contaminated groundwater, insecticide-contaminated fish, herbicide-contaminated rain, dead honeybees, poisoned wildlife, deformed frogs, eroded soil, toxic algal blooms, ozone depletion and antibiotic resistance.
- Improvements in goods and services, such as more fruit in your shares: blueberries have been planted and will be available for U-pick some time in the future, table grapes are developing on the hillside, we continue to add more raspberries and strawberries have already been increased.
- Continued investment in equipment that will help our crops grow better.
- Additional labor, so that we can keep things moving at the demanding pace needed to accomplish so many things in a set period of time.
- Improvements to our soils
- Running a 12-month farm season with a winter market (*you must join the 2008 season to take advantage of the winter market*)

With continued improvements in techniques, experience, varieties and fickle Ma Nature's good will, we'll share many more bountiful years ahead. Following on pages 3 & 4 are the renewal form and survey questions. We look forward to having you in the 2008 season!

The Winter Market

This will be the second season for the winter market at Charlestown Farm. When I was a member of a Brooklyn, NY CSA, I always met the last delivery with a mix of emotions.

Celebrating the final harvest was exciting but knowing I would have to face grocery store greens and not my familiar fresh, organic, local wonder was a real downer. Well, here the wonder doesn't have to end! We will be growing cold-tolerant crops in the hoop house and are planning on having one market per a month from December through March. Markets will be held on designated Saturdays from 9:00am–12:00pm. "Heads Up" emails will be sent the prior week. You must join the 2008 season to take advantage of the winter market. A new email list will be generated and serve to notify members of the market dates (*which are hard to predict due to Winter's variable harvest*).

We are developing our timing with many crops and hope to target a market right before the holiday season. The hoop house is 30'x100' of growing space, so we have a limited amount of space that we need to use wisely to grow successions of vegetables to have throughout the cold months. This means we won't have extremely large volumes of produce (*read: Get to the market early!*). You can look forward to arugula, spinach, lettuce mix, greens mix, chard, kale medley, radishes, carrots, beets, turnips and herbs. We now have a root cellar and are brainstorming on ways to fill it up and broaden the range and amount of delicious offerings through the winter months.

We look forward to the slower pace that winter farming brings. There is nothing more cozy than walking around in a warm greenhouse in a T-shirt admiring all your sweet tender greens while there's snow on the ground outside. It's gardening in January. You get a little "puttering around" time !

—Sue Kilpatrick



Charlestown Farm 2008 Shareholder Renewal Registration

Share Size & Total Price

- Single Share for 1 household, \$700
- Single Share for 2 households, \$850
- Double Share for 1 household, \$1200

PREFERRED PICK UP DAY: Tuesdays Thursdays

Deposit Options (Due before December 31th)

- Payment in Full
- \$150 Non-Refundable Single Household Membership Fee
- \$300 Non-Refundable Two Household Membership Fee
(Required for 2 household memberships, \$150 per family)

Payment Plans (For Balance Due after Deposit)

- Regular Plan — 2 payments
 - \$275.00— due March 1st
 - \$275.00— due June 1st
- Extended Plan Single Share — 4 payments
 - \$137.50— due March 1st
 - \$137.50— due April 1st
 - \$137.50— due May 1st
 - \$137.50— due June 1st
- Extended Plan Double Share — 4 payments
 - \$262.50— due March 1st
 - \$262.50— due April 1st
 - \$262.50— due May 1st
 - \$262.50— due June 1st

First Household Information:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
IMPORTANT!! —Email Address _____

Second Household Information:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
IMPORTANT!! —Email Address _____

What is the purpose of the membership fee?

The membership fee guarantees your participation in the Farm for 2008 and it helps us buy our seed in January when all the planning for the season is being completed. It also covers things like insurance and general office administration and organization.

We offer expanded educational opportunities for members including family cooking workshops, seed starting workshops, and farm tours. Our endeavor is always to provide you with fresh, organically grown, nutritious food in a healthy environment that continues to improve and enlarge its services to you.

Sharing a Share:

A Single Share for 2 households

We offer the opportunity to split a single family share. Two families split the single share items each week OR they can alternate weeks coming to the farm. The extra \$150 allows for 2 families to come to the farm and pick in the U-pick gardens, attend events, and get a free farm bag upon joining. It also covers additional administrative time and upkeep to the farm. **Some items on the share list, including limited U-pick items are easily split and others are not. We leave the splitting up to you and your share family.**

Make checks payable to Charlestown Cooperative Farm.

Mail your registration to:
Charlestown Cooperative Farm
2565 Charlestown Road
Phoenixville, PA 19460

Please feel free to contact us with any questions: 610.917.0252 or sue@charlestownfarmcenter.org

2 0 0 7 F A R M S U R V E Y

Please take the time to fill out the survey below. We are very interested in hearing all comments so that we can improve the Farm and tailor it to our members. We will use this information as we plan for next year. Feel free to write on the back.

What do you like most about the Farm?

Share ideas with us about what future events you may like to be involved in.

What do you like least about the Farm?

What other “farm store” items would you be interested in? milk, cheese?

Do we grow any vegetables that you would like us to grow more of and if so, we would need to grow less of something else? What would you add and what would you subtract?

How would you suggest we improve the Farm?

Tomatoes: Would you like us to grow more paste tomatoes for sauce that we could pick for you in exchange for eliminating early tomatoes?

Do you have any other questions or concerns?

If we grew additional paste tomatoes would you be willing to pay for a box of picked tomatoes for canning?

THANK YOU!

Feel free to email Sue Kilpatrick at sue@charlestownfarmcenter.org with any additional thoughts, ideas, or concerns.

October Events at the Farm

October was a busy month at the farm! We were fortunate to have two cooking workshops. **Christina Pirello, of Christina Cooks on PBS, gave an entertaining and informative demonstration on October 4th.** She had planned to make warm soups, but the temperature was in the 80s, so she showed us how to make delicious salads and a stirfry with root vegetables. Christina loves cooking at the farm and plans to give demos again next year.

On October 9th, member Kalpana Patankar demonstrated how to make wonderful Indian dishes with farm vegetables. Thank you so much Kalpana!

We held our annual harvest potluck and square dance on October 6th. The weather was perfect, the food was delicious, and the dancing was fun as ever. This is one of the highlights of the season, a true celebration of the bounty of the farm.

Coming Next Year: An Insiders' Guide to the Farm

In an effort to help everyone get the most out of the farm, we decided to create a farm guide to be distributed next season. The guide will include information about ways to harvest herbs, how to store and preserve vegetables, and simple recipes, as well as practical information about the farm. We are asking for your help in this project. If you have either a question you would like answered, or a favorite recipe or tip that you would like to share, please email it to Liz Andersen at liz@charlestownfarmcenter.org.



F A R M E V E N T S

Field to Fork, Family Cooking Workshop

November 11, 2007

3:00pm to 4:00pm

This season the farm will host family cooking workshops once each month. Weather permitting each session will start with a brief "harvest walk" followed by hands-on cooking activities. Cooks of any age are invited! In November we will make delicious pumpkin pies. Please sign up for the workshop in the barn or email arne@charlestown-farmcenter.org so we have enough supplies.

From Garden to Table, Native American Harvest

November 13, 2007

7:30 to 9:00pm

At Julie's Main Street Kitchen, Phoenixville, PA

We are very excited to offer a cooking workshop by local chef and farm member Julie Zlogar. Julie will show participants how to make seasonal Native American dishes perfect for a Thanksgiving feast. Space is limited, so sign up in the barn, or email arne@charlestownfarmcenter.org to reserve a spot.



MORE ON RENEWALS

The renewal form states that you have until December 31st to get your deposit AND paperwork into us. You can certainly take until this time, but **we encourage you to have your deposit AND paperwork into us by December 1st so that you can get on the new 2008 list serve and receive any notices about winter markets in December.** Sorry if this was confusing.

Please fill out your survey! We use this information to form the next year and it is the only time we gather information directly from you.

Putting the Farm to Bed

What a mild fall we have had! We are still waiting for the hard killing frost that usually occurs mid-October. It's enough to make us forget that the growing season is nearly over. We know how everyone loves the tomatoes and the flowers, and the warm falls make it seem that



they could go on indefinitely, but alas, the adage "to everything there is a season" is very true at the farm. One of the goals that we as farmers, and you as members share is to raise and eat food that is grown in an environmentally sustainable way. Our soil sustains the plants that we eat so we work very hard to nurture it. This is an essential part of sustainable agriculture. The winter snows and spring rains will wash our soil away if we leave it barren, so late in the fall we plant cold hardy seeds that will grow all winter long. The plants will hold soil, sequester carbon as they grow, and provide good organic matter for our crops come spring. The term we use for these plants is cover crops, and they are essential to a successful harvest. And so.... even though we would love to keep those tomatoes and flowers in the ground as long as possible, eventually we have to till them in to get the cover crops established before the ground freezes. We will reap the benefits next spring. In an era with email, cars, and cell phones, waiting seems like a thing of the past, but Nature has its own rhythm and cycle that requires patience. Come next July, when we taste that first sweet vine ripened tomato, we will be glad we waited.

—Liz Andersen



Comments from our members:

I just HAD to tell you that I have been waiting for the fall beets all year and they are OUTSTANDING! I never understood why beets were not more popular. They're by far my favorite Vegetable...and I don't know if people realize the beet tops are as good, if not better than, broccoli rabe. Simply saute them in a little oil and garlic, they are so sweet!

—Chris Cervino

Thank you Chris!!!!

Haiku Fun

October hush heat
Harsh, searing sun parches
fields
Silences creatures

Thunder-lightning storm
Rain pats, taps, claps and
showers
Nature's symphony

An autumnal breeze
Scatters yellow leaves from
trees
Chills the post-storm air

Eureka! A huge beet!
It erupted from the patch
For lots of photo opps

Plentiful peppers
Red, green, and purple
beauties
Pieces of summer

Groovy orange roots
Dance to underground
music
Do the carrot twist

Big celeriac
Wrapped tight in a maze
of roots
White gold hides within

Farewell farmer friends
Off to other adventures
Bravely facing change

The season's ending
Shifting wind, a frosty nip
Soon in winter's grip

—Andrea Grom



Hidden Beet Beauty...





Scalloped Celeriac and Potatoes (with apples)

Serves 6

Butter for greasing the backing dish

1 pound celeriac, peeled, halved, sliced about 1/8 inch thick

1 pound baking potatoes, peeled, sliced about 1/8 inch thick

2 to 3 large apples, cored, sliced about 1/8 inch thick

salt

freshly ground black pepper

1 cup grated Gruyere or domestic Swiss cheese, divided

1/2 tsp dried thyme

2 cups chicken, beef, or vegetable stock

2 T butter

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F. Grease a 2-quart baking dish with butter.
2. Place the celeriac, potatoes, and apples in alternating layers in the baking dish, seasoning every few layers with salt and pepper. At about the halfway point, add 1/3 cup cheese in an even layer; sprinkle with the thyme. Continue with the celeriac, potatoes, and apples, until you have used all of your slices (don't go all the way to the top edge; leave a little room to allow the liquid to boil).
3. Pour the stock over the celeriac, potatoes, and apples. Dot with butter. Cover with foil and back for 45 minutes. Remove the foil and bake for 15 minutes more. Sprinkle the remaining 2/3 cup cheese over the top layer, add several grindings of fresh pepper, and bake until the cheese turns golden, about 15 minutes.
4. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

—Adapted from *Farmer John's Cookbook, the Real Dirt on Vegetables*

Quiche—Featuring Asian Cooking Greens

Bok Choy, Asian greens mix, Tokyo Bekana; greens, greens, and more greens. What to do with them all? One of my favorite things to do is highlight them in a quiche. This particular recipe is taken from *Mollie Katzen's The Enchanted Broccoli Forest (1982)*. One of its best features is that it can be tailored to suit any palate. Happy cooking!

Nut Crust

1/2 cup finely minced nuts of your choice (pecans and walnuts work great, especially when lightly toasted)

a dash of salt

4 Tbs. cold butter, cut into small pieces

1 1/4 cups of flour (white, whole-wheat, or a mixture) approximately 3-5 Tbs. cold water

- 1) Place the nuts, butter, salt, and flour together in a bowl. Use a pastry cutter to work the mixture until it's uniform and resembles coarse corn meal.
- 2) Gradually drizzle in the cold water, and graduate from pastry cutter to fork. Mix by pushing the dough into itself in the center of the bowl. When the dough adheres to itself, you've added enough water.
- 3) Roll out your dough and form a crust in a 9 inch pie plate. Chill until time to fill.

After you've prepared the crust, there are three more easy steps you must take until the quiche is ready for baking. These are: the cheese, the filling, and the custard.

The Cheese

This is the first layer, placed in cubed or grated form directly on the crust. I prefer grating the cheese because it melts more evenly, especially in the case of harder cheeses. As the cheese melts, the fat creates a moisture-resistant barrier between the filling and the crust, which helps to keep the crust from getting soggy. You can use virtually any firm cheese, such as cheddar, Gouda, gruyere, parmesan, or pecorino. I recently used a delicious Piave that I purchased from Michael at **Cheese!** in Phoenixville. Recommended amount: 1/4 to 1/3 lb.

The Filling

This is the part when you can get really creative. Virtually any sautéed vegetable can be featured in the filling. My latest creation included a variety of Asian cooking greens and some spinach. Here's what I did:

- 1/2 cup leek, minced
- 1 Tbs. garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup bell pepper, green or red, diced
- 1/2 cup carrot, shredded
- 4-5 cups mixed cooking greens (I used the leaves and stems of Bok Choy, Tokyo Bekana, Asian greens mix, and spinach), finely chopped
- 2-3 Tbs. fresh basil, chopped
- 2 Tbs. fresh dill, chopped
- salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1-2 Tbs. butter (or olive oil)

Sautee leek in butter or olive oil on low heat until soft, about 10 minutes. Add garlic, bell pepper, and carrot and sautee another 3 minutes. Add greens and sautee until bright green and wilted, about 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, and mix in the herbs. Apply the filling over the cheese on the crust.

The Custard

The last step is to beat together 3 eggs and 1 cup of milk and pour it over the top of the filling. For a straight-sided quiche pan, you would want to use 4 eggs and 1 1/2 cups milk. Variations may include sour cream, evaporated milk, cream, or buttermilk instead of milk. Dust the top with paprika (I used smoked paprika, which is especially tasty) and sprinkle with extra grated cheese (optional). Bake: 35-40 minutes at 375 F, until the filling is set and golden.

—*Andrea Grom*



Five Spice Winter Squash Pie

- 1 pie crust, single, pre-baked
- 1 large butternut squash, 2 large delicate squash, 1 med. cheese pumpkin, 1 med. neck pumpkin, or one 15oz. can squash puree (1 3/4 cup)
- 1/3 cup honey
- 3 large eggs at room temperature
- 3/4 cup light cream or half and half at room temperature
- 2 teaspoons Chinese five-spice powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 Tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

- Cut the squash in half and remove the seeds (these can be cleaned and toasted), bake at 350°F cut side down in a dish with just enough water to cover the bottom, until soft. If there is too much water in the dish the squash will absorb it and become soggy, a non-firm pie may result.
- Once the squash is cool enough to handle, scoop out the flesh and puree.
- Mix 1 3/4 cup squash with the honey in the food processor until smooth, the pulse function comes in handy so as to not over mix.
- Add eggs, light cream, five-spice powder, salt, flour, and vanilla; process briefly
- Slowly pour the filling into the cooled pie shell
- Bake at 350°F for about 50 minutes, on the center rack, rotate 180° mid way through baking.

When done the perimeter of the pie will be somewhat risen and puffy, though not so much that it develops large cracks. The filling will be set and generally have a flat finish, although the center may be shiny. Inserting a toothpick into the center of the pie works well to test for doneness; the toothpick will come out clean when done.

Cool on a wire rack and serve slightly warm or at room temperature. Refrigerate covered.

—*adapted from Pie! by Ken Haedrich*

Eat more Pie!