

Fernbrook Farm CSA

Volume 12 Issue 2

June 2018

Going For A Dozen



Hello and greetings from Fernbrook Farm CSA. We are very excited to welcome you to our 12th growing season here on the sandy loam soils of Chesterfield, NJ. If this is your first year with us, thank you for joining and we hope you enjoy the CSA experience and the bounty of produce you will receive this year. And if you are back for your second, fifth 9th or even 12th season, we thank you all the more and are excited to see you again for week 1. Well let's see. It is currently about a week before



2018 Farm Crew—Lindsey, Erik, Sam, Jeff, Jess, and Matt

opening day and this farmer is finding it hard NOT to obsess about the weather. We've had about 5.5 inches in the past week and it hasn't subsided yet. Of course, at some point we know it will. But what nags us is the delays that are coming. When we saw that the forecast was looking wet, we worked our collective tails off getting seeds in the ground and prepping fields to plant. And we did a pretty good job. Problem is that by now we have all of that ground planted and it is too wet to plow up more. You really don't want to work wet soils and we simply have to wait until it is sufficiently dry enough to do so. And as the late, great Tom Petty aptly noted, "The Waiting Is The Hardest Part." Of course we have plenty of other jobs to do in the interim but we have a minor traffic jam of plants waiting their turn to get in the ground - okra, sweet potatoes, 4th lettuce planting, eggplant, peppers....As soon as we are able we will delve in and go on a planting bender. Can't hardly wait.

Ah, but who is the "we"? Let me introduce our terrific 2018 farmers: Jess Brandeisky is back for another year as our Assistant Manager. Jess spent the winter ordering seeds, organizing the winter share, pruning blackber-

ries, record keeping and taking some time off in balmy Cape Cod. She also teamed up with fellow farmer Jess Neiderer from Chikadee Creek Farm to give a talk at the NOFANJ Winter Conference on growing and distributing winter foods. She knocked it out of the park! In March we were joined by two alums from 2017—Lindsey Wilson and Erik Dalton both back for their second year at the farm. We had been experiencing another frustratingly warm February but as soon as they arrived so did the Noreasters! What did we have - four?

Spring really took its time arriving but Erik and Lindsey got us well on schedule in the greenhouse and we made our annual run out to some places in Lancaster where we load up on growing supplies (and some thrift store items to boot). It was great having Erik and Lindsey here early. About half of our Apprentices come back for a second (or third) year. It really helps to cement the many learnings from the first season and it is beneficial for the farm to have



Seeding Peas

veterans on the crew. And as the calendar turned to April, our farm crew grew! We were joined by newcomers Samantha 'Sam' Metz and Matt 'Matt' Casey. Sam is from Towaco, NJ and did some farming at the University of New Hampshire where she studied sustainable food systems. Sam is doing great operating the 274 tractor and she has an unusual penchant for finding four leaf clovers...(as in I think she may already hold

Fernbrook Farm CSA Hours

Saturday
8:00 am to 1:30 pm

- Or -

Tuesday
10:00 am— 7:00 pm

- Or -

Thursday
2:00PM - 7:00PM



the NJ state record). Matt took a more circuitous route to Fernbrook. A native of Whitehouse Station, NJ and a PSU grad. He is an engineer by trade and spent the past 8 years as an engineer for a chemical company in Houston. Well he felt the blue skies and rich soils calling to him so he made his way back to the Garden State to try his hand at farming. So far so good for Mr. Casey. He is doing a lot on the John Deere 1050 tractor and just put or two row transplanter back together (now if only the rain would subside...) He and Lindsey also took part in a farm business planning class before the season started. So there we have it—your 2018 Farm Crew! They have been doing A LOT of heavy lifting and having a pretty good time doing it. These crops have lots of NEEDS...peas need trellising; tomatoes need staking; spuds need hilling; carrots need thinning; onions need weeding; greens need to be seeded; fennel needs to be planted; kale needs to be covered; radishes need to be harvested; beets need to be fertilized; tomatillos need to be transplanted etc. etc.



etc. At least nothing needs to be watered at the moment.. One of the nice new additions this year is we finally finished (well...93%) our new crew lunchroom. It has been a long time coming and it is a good space for the crew to eat, put on their rain pants and who knows—maybe even a cat nap here or there...Of course we have other people who help make this farm go. Our workshares come out once a week and pitch in in exchange for a share. This year Luisa, Charlotte, Susan, Dan, Lo, and possibly a few others make up our workshare participants. And we have part-timers who do a lot of field work for us including Danielle, Richie, Vanessa, Jake, Kristin and others! It takes a lot of hands to do this kind of farming and luckily we have a lot of good hands at our disposal.

So let's see...what else is new? The Farm Shop - Our own Jess Brandeisky will be doing a lot of the management and ordering for the farmshop this year. (Tracy Kuser got a full-time teaching position.) Jess has been working quite hard and has a lot of old favorites and new items lined up. Some of the things we will have include organic shiitake and oyster mushrooms, lo-

cally raised boneless chicken breasts, organic milk, local cheeses, honey, yogurt, ground turkey, sausage, organic coffee, local artwork and Chef Christine's homemade delicacies made right here on the farm. There will be a pre-order form in the weekly email so you can order what you want and pick it up at the shop. Also new in the shop this year is our friend Katie Sklarow who will be doing a lot of the farmshop staffing this year. Kate has been a shareholder for a few years and she is also a chef / caterer and sometimes farmer and gardener. She loves farms and food and is excited to be doing more at Fernbrook! We will miss Paula who also has landed full-time work off-farm. She is doing well and hopes to be by the farm as much as she can this year. WELL....methinks it is time to start up the harvest knives, fill the wash tubs, turn on the coolers and start the 2018 HARVEST! We are so grateful that you have joined us for a season of fresh, healthy, tasty and chemical-free eating. We hope the farm is a valuable part of your life this year. To season 12—up, up and AWAY!!!

Your Farmer,

Jeff Tober



What to expect in June at the Farm

“Wouldn't be much of a farm without some food” a wise farmer friend once told me. True enough. So every month, the newsletter will give you a snapshot of the veggies you can expect to see in the coming weeks. Please keep in mind it is our best guess – some crops will come in early and some late, but we'll try to give you an accurate forecast. We'll give you a brief description of the food, how to prepare it and we'll include recipes as well. And don't be afraid to experiment a little!

Please note that we recommend washing all of the produce before you eat it.

We soak most of the veggies to remove the field heat and give them a basic wash, but we don't 'clean' the food. Please treat these veggies as you would if they were purchased from the store.



June's Bounty



Beets – We'll start the season bunching the beets with the greens. In fact we grow a variety *known for its delicious* greens “Early Wonder Tall Top”. Try chopping up the whole kit-and-caboodle and adding to a stir-fry. Sautee baby beets with some garlic, lemon and olive oil. Steaming works or grate them and enjoy raw! Also trying some golden and cylindra beets! We'll have them most of the spring starting week 2 or 3.

Bok Choy - aka Pac Choi - We grow 3 or 4 varieties of this crisp, succulent and mildly spicy Asian green. It is a stir-fry hero. They are flavorful and very healthy. They go great with soy, sesame, lemon, tamari, garlic, green onions...just about any flavor you like to use to sautee. Mix with snow peas, carrots, green onions, kale and spinach. Crop is looking good. Available week 1.

Broccoli - For many years we stopped growing Spring broccoli - it can just go South very quickly in the May and June heat. But in 2017 we tried again with some new varieties and methods and we liked it enough to try again in 2018. We are growing broccoli and the smaller shoots known as 'broccolini' (Farmer Jess LOVES these...) Look for it later in June

Broccoli Raab - This has become a very popular green in spring and fall. It is a non-heading broccoli wherein the leaves, tops and flower shoots are eaten. Tender and tasty and a tad bitter. My farmer friend Paul who is Italian suggests the following—chop it up, sautee it with lots of garlic, olive oil, sweet sausage and sun-dried tomatoes and mix with cavatelli. Coming week 2 or 3

Collard Greens - Savory & Healthy! I always consider these a fall crop but we've been growing them in the spring with success. Yet another green from the cabbage family, its great at soaking up the flavors it is cooked with. In the south, they commonly use ham hocks and black-eyed peas with collards in a stew. GOOD! Can also be steamed and stir-fried. It is a tender, tasty and SUPER HEALTHY vegetable that needs to get the buzz kale has enjoyed! Available starting week 1 or 2

Cucumbers - Ah the cucumber—so simple and yet kind of complicated to grow...This is a crop that seems to be threatened by more diseases and pests each year. One of the biggest threats (to all melons, cukes and squash) is bacterial wilt which is spread by the cucumber beetle. We grow picklers and slicers and we are trying a white one this year....stay tuned. Available mid to late June.

Garlic Scapes - This is the curly seed head that the garlic plant sends up in June. We pinch them off to get a bigger bulb. But the scapes provide you with a great garlic taste in the spring. Chop them up; great sautéed, stir-fried, or even use them to make pesto - like a garlicky scallion. Many shareholders have thrown them in the freezer to extend the garlicky season. Available around week 3.

Herbs - Basil, Dill, Parsley and Cilantro will be available about the middle of June. We grow sweet, lemon, cinnamon and purple basil to give you interesting tastes and colors. We also have a beautifully renovated perennial bed near the farmshop. You'll find things like oregano, catnip, mint, lavender, sorrel and more (we'll let you know when specific herbs are open)! We usually tell you to "take what you need" by pinching off the outer leaves and letting the plant continue to grow. Check the U-Pick board for availability.

Kale - We grow some pretty nice spring kale if I do say so and we grow 4 or 5 different kinds. A versatile green enjoyed raw or cooked. Or try your hand at kale chips! Not that difficult to do in the oven. We'll look for it week 1 or 2.

Kohlrabi - Once again, a member of the cabbage family shows up. This time the edible part is a round, swollen stem that is crisp and tasty - kind of a broccoli / radish taste in my opinion. Can be eaten raw or cooked. Usually peeled first. We are growing purple and white varieties this spring. Available in mid June.

Leeks - a traditional crop in the fall but we have been growing a bunching leek in the spring with much success. A tasty, tangy member of the onion family. Use the like scallions / green onions in raw and cooked dishes. We continue to battle a relatively new pest called the Alium Leaf Miner (ALM) which is a tough sucker...But crop looks pretty good. Likely middle of June.

Lettuce - Spring grows the best lettuce of the year. We'll offer a mix of greenleaf, redleaf, romaine & butterhead. We plant a lot of lettuce to try to keep it coming fresh every week. You know what to do with this stuff! Interestingly enough, a member of the sunflower family (*Compositae*). Time for salads! Available starting week 1.

Peas - We grow snap peas and snow peas (edible pod) as well as the shelling peas which you have to shell but they are really worth it. The snow and snap peas are a great fresh snack and a superb stir-fry and salad ingredient. These are a U-Pick crop in the 'A' field near the shop. Available early to mid-June.

Radish - Excellent salad ingredient with some zest!!. I like them raw as a healthy, tasty snack. Available in a variety of colors like pink, red and purple. And we have the delicious "French Breakfast" Radish! . Available week 1

Scallions - We grow them in bunches and they give us lovely green tops. Top potatoes, use in salads or any place you'd use onion. Nice coleslaw ingredient. Available starting about week 3. Due to a new onion family pest (the alium leaf miner) we have had to delay our leek and scallion plantings so you may see them a little later this year than normal.

Spinach - Ah spring spinach. A wonderful green raw or cooked. My wife loves it. Depending on the year, it can be a finicky crop. Looking OK this spring Don't overcook or it will lose it's color and texture. You can freeze it. Blanch for 2 minutes, drain, cool, bag and freeze. Available starting week 1! (Available spring and fall—hard to grow in the summer heat)

Summer Squash - We grow both green and yellow zucchini, yellow squash, the UFO shaped Patty Pan and a really great Italian heirloom called costanta romanesco which is ribbed, and really tasty. Like the cukes, these face a growing list of challenges but so far so good. Available starting around week 3 or 4.

Sweet Red Fruits Whose Name I Cannot Mention - Fields B1 and B2. Ah the 'S-berries' (I refrain from saying their true name out of farmer superstition). This is one crop that can sway quickly from good to bad or vice versa depending on water, temperature etc. As of this writing they are VERY happy to be out of the rain and into the sun. We will let you know when they are open and how much you get!

Swiss Chard - One of the prettiest, tastiest and healthiest greens we grow. Some call it summer spinach and it's actually healthier! Makes a great partner to potatoes and is excellent steamed. Use leaves and stems (if they aren't too big). Available around week 3.

Turnips - ('Hakurei Turnips') I'm a real fan of these mild, even sweet turnips. They come in pink and white. Use raw or cooked and try the greens in stir-frys. Please try washing it and biting right in. Many a member have told me they prefer them to radishes. Available starting week 1 or 2.



Can Composting Save The World? ...Maybe It Can.



This is a little dangerous. Once I get going on the subject of composting, I can go on and on and ON! For me, the act of composting utilizes one of Nature’s most simple and significant tenants and applies it to our own waste. Although I hate to use the word waste. That is the problem. If we utilize compostable materials and then compost them, we are making no waste. Instead we are committing to the most energy efficient and important kind of recycling!!...I told you this was dangerous. We are trying to do our part to reclaim organic matter, make and utilize a lot of compost and enable others to be able to recycle their compostables. We have been receiving municipal

leaves for many years and are now working with some businesses to collect and compost coffee grounds and organic matter for composting. We also are using spent beer grain from Common Sense Brewery in Bordentown for compost and pig food! We have a compost bin just past the farmshop for you to use (please dump only compostable materials and cover them with a shovel full of woodchips or leaves provided). And we are very excited to unveil **PROJECT PIZZA BOX!** This is an idea we got from North Carolina State University which has been setting up dumpsters specifically for pizza boxes. Burlington County does not accept them due to food contamination issues (always seemed kind of odd). But they are comprised of paperboard and are compostable. Last year we mulched walkways with them and covered them with straw or woodchips. They suppressed weeds, added carbon to the soil and they were gone this spring when we plowed the field thanks to mucho worm and biological action on them. AND we reduced the municipal waste stream. So we have a bin near the shop for YOUR pizza boxes. Make sure they are free of actual pizza (which could go in the compost pile). So it may not save the world but it will certainly point us in the right direction! Thank you for doing your part!



Compost Spread At 30 tons Per Acre

Fernbrook Farm CSA Events!

Throughout the year, we will have various events at the farm in which you are welcome to participate. Events are free of charge unless otherwise noted. Below are a list of upcoming events.

Saturday, June 16th Edible & Medicinal Plant Walk 9:30AM—10:45AM

Join Shareholder Joanne McKinley as she leads her annual guided walk around the fields and woods to shed light on wild plants and their culinary and medicinal uses. Tons of great information on the amazing pasture and woodland plants around Fernbrook and their many uses! Walk limited to 15 people. Please RSVP to info@fernbrookfarmcsa.com



Friday, June 22nd Summer Solstice Potluck 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Bring a dish with farm-fresh food and celebrate the arrival of summer! Wagon Ride to follow. Please bring a dish to serve 6-8 people—main course, salad, side, or dessert. And please bring your own plate, cup and silverware! B.Y.O.B. We try to make these “No Trash Events”! Held at the farmshop. See you there!

Saturday, June 23rd Lacto-fermentation Workshop 10:00 AM

Join teacher, shareholder, author and lacto-fermentation Queen Natalie Winch as she will demonstrate the age old practice of preserving foods with salt brine (i.e.kim chee, sauerkraut and so much more!) The class is TRULY AMAZING and free of charge to CSA members! Meet at the farmshop at 10:00AM

