



# Sogn Valley Farm

CSA Newsletter Oct. 4-5, 2016

[www.sognvalleyfarm.com](http://www.sognvalleyfarm.com)

Greetings,

We have arrived at the final box of our inaugural summer CSA season! And before getting into a reflection on this season, I wanted to thank all of you who came out to the farm last Sunday for our end-of-season Farm Tour and Potluck. It was nice to meet some of you whom I hadn't previously met. We should soon have some nice photos of the event, so keep an eye on our Facebook page for some of those.

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Whew, how time has flown for us! It has been, without a doubt, the busiest summer ever for Karin and me. It was to be expected, of course...

Karin spent the season working for long stints in prairies in NW Minnesota surveying plants and insects, returning for a few days every other week. When at home, she helped with farm tasks, went to the farmers' market with me, and surveyed native plants on the farm to collect seed from later on.

Then there was the whole "first year farming" thing. I admittedly was ambitious in my goals for this season. At the center of everything was this CSA. At 75 members, we're on the small side for CSA farms, in general, but fairly large for a first-year farm.

Secondly, we sold vegetables through farmers' markets. Our initial plan was to sell at the Downtown St. Paul market on Saturdays, and at a smaller Minneapolis neighborhood farmers' market on Wednesday afternoons, but when the Wednesday market proved to be disappointing, we dropped that in favor of the Sunday market in downtown St. Paul. While it was the right business choice, working the farmers' market every Saturday and Sunday has been pretty taxing when tacked onto the already packed week of farming. The market opens at 6am on Saturdays and

## What's in the box?

**Baby spinach:** At long last, we have spinach for you! (I had wanted to include spinach in a couple of spring boxes, but the plantings just didn't fare well.) This spinach is tender and flavorful—great for eating raw, but also fine if you prefer cooking. Note: You may notice a few leaves have a little white blotch on them—this is caused by windy weather while covered with row cover, which is a rain- and light-permeable blanket we put over some crops to warm the crop during the day and protect from frost at night. We have picked out the majority of the symptomatic leaves, but a few have undoubtedly made it into the bags. I've been eating them, and they taste great, so there should be no compromise of eating quality.

**Gold potatoes:** Last night, I roasted some of these at 400°F with rosemary, olive oil, garlic, salt, and pepper, and it was delicious. They are also a great, mild-flavored vegetable to roast in combination with your other root crops this week—beets, turnips, and carrots.

**Carrots:** Use in a roasted vegetable medley, in soup, or fresh as carrot sticks or grated in a spinach salad.

**Cauliflower:** We cobbled together heads of three different types of cauliflower to fill the shares this week. You'll either receive a white, purple, or Romanesco cauliflower. Some half share members are receiving admittedly small heads of cauliflower, but this is simply all we had out in the field this week.

**'Winter Sweet' squash:** This grey kabocha is one of my favorite varieties of winter squash. It has beautiful, sweet orange flesh that is delicious after baking for at least an hour. It is also a very long-storing squash, so there's no rush to eat it. Store at room temperature.

**Yellow onions:** You know what to do with these, I think ;)

**Rosemary:** Rosemary goes so well with all sorts of fall vegetables. Try it in this week's recipe. While we did wash these after harvest, I would recommend rinsing the individual sprigs before use, as there may still be some soil on them.

**Purple top turnips:** Turnips are a root vegetable that is both slightly sweet and slightly bitter, and like many other veggies, we think roasting them is a good place to start. Try out this week's recipe!

**Green top red beets:** Roast with other veggies, grate into your salad, or make some borscht using some of last week's cabbage. Be sure to use the greens, too, as they are a crop all their own. They'll cook down somewhat like chard or spinach.

**Garlic:** There's nothing in this box that garlic won't make better (in my opinion), so enjoy!

## On Deck

*Some of the items you'll likely see in the first fall CSA box.*

Broccoli — Winter Squash — Sweet potatoes — Onions — Salad mix —  
Cabbage — Watermelon radish

8am on Sundays, and we now know that it takes about 3.5 hours to load the truck at the farm, drive to St. Paul, and set up our stall...I'll let you do the math. In many way, though, the farmers' market has turned out to be a great complement to our CSA, giving us a sales outlet for all produce not finding its way into CSA boxes in a given week.

Lastly, we grew some crops specifically for wholesale to local artisanal food makers, with a particular emphasis on hot peppers. With our M-F work week already filled up with CSA and farmers' market related activities, we found that much of the chile harvest had to occur on weekend afternoons after returning from the farmers' market. And this is where an extra expression of gratitude is in order, as we were joined on several occasions by friends and family members who volunteered their time to help us pick peppers.

As we end the first summer CSA season, I'm breathing a sigh of relief. I won't lie about that. I'm tired, and I'm ready for some chilly autumn mornings; walks in the pasture with Karin and our dog, Jagger; coffee by the fire on Saturday mornings; and time to keep up my other hobbies like playing piano and baking. But I am simultaneously invigorated to take all the newly gleaned data from this season and use it to prepare for an even more successful second season in 2017. We are now equipped with so much information that we didn't have coming into this season, such as yield and performance of crop varieties in our soil and microclimate, optimal planting dates for this particular region, and which insect pests and diseases we have on our farm. And through results of our end-of-season survey, which will go out within the next week or so—please take a minute to fill it out once you receive it!—we'll have a better idea of what we should tweak to better serve our CSA members in the future.

With that, I'll just say thank you to all of you for taking the leap and joining us on this adventure that was our first year of farming. Your early commitment to our farm gave us both confidence and financial support during the early days of this season, long before we would sell a radish at the farmers' market or a pepper to a salsa maker. We hope many of you choose to sign up for a 2017 share.

And for those of you who are continuing with the fall share, we've got lots of good stuff in store, both in the field and in the cooler. While we have been experiencing an unusually warm fall thus far, it can't be long until we get some nice frosts to further bump up the sugar content of our broccoli, carrots, beets, radishes, and other crops still in the ground.

Best,  
Dana

## Roasted Turnips and Pears with Rosemary Honey Drizzle

### Ingredients

1 lb purple top turnips, unpeeled and cut into 1/2- to 3/4-inch cubes  
2 firm ripe Bosc pears (about 7 ounces each), unpeeled, cored, and cut into 1/2-inch cubes  
1/4 cup vegetable oil  
1 1/2 teaspoons coarse salt  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter  
2 tablespoons honey  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary

### Directions

Preheat oven to 475 degrees. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper; set aside.

In a large bowl, toss together turnips and pears with oil and salt until well combined. Place in an even layer on prepared baking sheet. Transfer to oven and roast, turning with a spatula once or twice during cooking, until browned and turnips are easily pierced with a paring knife, 25 to 30 minutes, rotating baking sheets halfway through baking.

Meanwhile, melt butter in a small saucepan over medium heat. Add honey and rosemary; let simmer for a few seconds and remove from heat.

Transfer turnips and pears to a large bowl and drizzle with butter mixture; toss to combine. Serve.

Recipe source: <http://www.marthastewart.com/347062/roasted-turnips-and-pears-with-rosemary>