



Sogn Valley Farm

CSA Newsletter Nov. 8-9, 2016

www.sognvalleyfarm.com

Greetings,

Seasonal employees are totally essential to the operation of this farm. As I interviewed applicants this spring, it was quickly apparent that out-of-state applicants (who made up the majority) sought on-farm housing. We put together a plan to construct an outdoor kitchen (a roof and three walls on a wooden platform) and put up two canvas wall tents as a little base camp for employees during the season.

We had an unused barn on the farm, which is open-walled (i.e. just a roof) and had been formerly used for hay storage. We decided to build the kitchen and put up the tents under this to provide a bit more protection from the elements.

We got first tent put up the day Laura, our first employee, arrived. After a windy night, I went out there to find that the tent had been completely destroyed by the wind. Thankfully, Laura had spent that night in the house with us...

Plan B. I met up with friend, who has carpentry experience, and we hashed out plans to build two simple cabins, or as they are perhaps more aptly described, shacks. With a couple solid days of work in mid-April, we got the shacks framed and sheathed with plywood. Another week and I was able to get them wired so they had lights and outlets. And that's how they stayed all season. Exposed studs inside, plywood on the outside, and windows just tacked into the rough openings.

Last Sunday, I started on phase two of the project: installing siding on the outside and insulation and drywall on the inside. This will protect the structure from the elements, create a more tightly sealed space inside that can be heated during the "shoulder sea-

What's in the box?

Buttercup squash: These warty squashes are smooth and sweet when baked. When working with folks from Mexico at another farm, they called this variety of squash, "ombligo," which means "belly button" in Spanish. Notice the circular ring on the bottom side of the squash?

Red potatoes: These potatoes are in a plastic bag because they were still wet from washing, but they can be stored at room temperature in a paper or open plastic bag. They are cured, so needn't be refrigerated.

Beets: Red beets are a core ingredient in this week's recipe, "Russian Cabbage Borscht."

Green cabbage: Use your cabbage to make some borscht, or a slaw, stir fry, or small batch of sauerkraut.

Spinach: This spinach is what I would consider *semi-mature*, suitable for eating fresh, but also bulky enough to hold up in a range of cooked dishes. It has been washed, so should be pretty much ready to eat (although occasionally some crevices in the leaves retain a bit of grit).

Dill: Pair this with potatoes in a potato salad and use it in the borscht. One of the last whiffs of summer!

Broccoli

Red onions

Yellow onions

Garlic

On Deck

Some of the items you'll likely see in the next week or two..

Potatoes — Onions — Celeriac — Daikon radish — Carrots — Green tomatoes?



Left: Putting up siding with help from my father-in-law, Pete Grimlund.. Right: Outdoor kitchen.

sons" (April and October), and simply make it a nicer place to live. There's a lot of work left to do on the shacks, but it feels great to have at least gotten started.

These are the types of projects that one doesn't necessarily envision being part of life as a vegetable farmer. But they're also the ones that, by adding variety, make farming so enjoyable. They also remind me to be a lifelong student, always open to learning. Have I ever built a cabin? Nope. Had I ever done electrical wiring prior to wiring the greenhouse, and subsequently, the cabins? Nah. Did that stop me from grabbing a book or watching a YouTube video and then giving it a shot? Sure didn't. Did I carry out the projects perfectly? Certainly not. Should I stop posing these questions to myself? Probably.

I hope you've all been enjoying the produce. Two more weeks to go after this, in case you were wondering. The last box will be delivered the week of Thanksgiving.

Best,
Dana

Russian Cabbage Borscht

Borscht is a good season-long soup—it's delicious to eat cold during the summer, but a warming fall/winter soup, as well. It uses potatoes, beets, onions, and dill from this week's box, plus a carrot from last week's, if you have one left. This recipe comes from one of my favorite cookbooks, the Moosewood Cookbook.

Ingredients

1 1/2 C thinly sliced potato
1 C thinly sliced beets
4 C water
1-2 Tbsp butter
1 1/2 C chopped onion
1 scant tsp caraway seeds
1 1/2 tsp salt (or more, to taste)
1 stalk celery
1 medium-sized carrot, sliced
3-4 C shredded cabbage
Freshly ground black pepper
1-2 tsp dill (plus extra, for garnish)
1-2 Tbsp cider vinegar
1-2 Tbsp brown sugar or honey
1 C tomato puree

Directions

Place potatoes, beets, and water in a medium-sized saucepan. Cover, and cook over medium heat until tender (20-30 minutes).

Meanwhile, melt the butter in a kettle or dutch oven. Add onion, caraway seeds, and salt. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the onions are translucent (8-10 minutes)

Add celery, carrots, and cabbage, plus 2 cups of the cooking water from the potatoes and beets. Cover and cook over medium heat until the vegetables are tender (another 8-10 minutes)

Add the remaining ingredients (including all the potato and beet water), cover, and simmer for at least 15 more minutes. Taste to correct seasonings, and serve, topped with sour cream or yogurt and a light dusting of dill.

Recipe source: Moosewood Cookbook, by Mollie Katzen.