



Sogn Valley Farm

CSA Newsletter

Nov. 22-23, 2016

www.sognvalleyfarm.com

Happy Thanksgiving! This year, more than ever, Karin and I have much to be thankful for. Many *people* to be thankful for, really.

Take, for example, my friend Brandon, whom I met while in graduate school in Iowa. A year and a half ago, he, along with several other friends and family members, helped us deconstruct the greenhouse we had purchased and subsequently moved to the farm here in Cannon Falls. After unloading the greenhouse components at the farm, he offered to come back that winter to help me with the electrical wiring. Which he did. The weekend we had lined up in advance turned out to be the coldest of the winter, with -20 nighttime lows and subzero daytime highs. We were out in greenhouse—on a socked-in snowy day devoid of sunshine that would otherwise have warmed up the greenhouse—fumbling with conduit and wire nuts as our bare fingers quivered in the cold. But we got the furnace wired in and fired up, then we were in business.

Brandon came back a few months later, in May, to help build our walk-in cooler and install the garage door in our packing shed. Like the electrical wiring project in the greenhouse, neither of us had much experience with either of these tasks. But with some critical thinking, creativity, and *sisu* (Finnish word for persistence, determination), we got the jobs done.

And just today, I again bid him farewell as he headed back down to Iowa after another workcation. He spent Friday through Monday here helping me put siding on the employee cabins, installing insulation and sheetrock, and finally, harvesting spinach. All he asked for in return was a box of turnips and the opportunity to come back up and help with another project in January.

Brandon's generosity is truly amazing. But so many others have also stepped in and

What's in the box?

Spinach: Spinach is used in this week's Spinach-Squash Salad recipe, which has been a staple Thanksgiving dinner dish in our family for years. The spinach in your box just went through a few 20° nights, which was hard on it, despite spinach's incredible cold hardiness. It would be best to use this sooner than later, as I suspect it may not have as good of longevity as it usually does.

Butternut squash: Roasted cubes of butternut squash add sweetness and creaminess to the spinach salad. You have received either one larger squash or two smaller ones.

Rosemary: While our rosemary plants are by most measures done for the season, I couldn't resist including a tiny bunch for use in this week's recipe. It adds amazing aroma to each bite.

Sweet potatoes

Yellow onions

Red onions

Carrots

Garlic

Red potatoes

Note: I had grand plans to include a pumpkin for your Thanksgiving pie, but I learned upon washing them that the mice had a different idea...

On Deck

We've reached the end! Keep an eye out for an email within the next month or so with information on 2017 CSA shares.

helped out when we needed it most, often asking for nothing in return. My parents have provided much support, from early financial help to harvesting chiles over the summer, to helping wash spinach and bag carrots for this week's CSA shares. My father-in-law, Pete, has been instrumental by providing business advice, helping with on-farm projects, and lending us his vehicle for most of the season to use for deliveries and farmers' markets. Aunts, uncles, and cousins joined us for weekend pepper harvests, helping us meet our wholesale orders during the busiest time of year. Jimmy, Annie, and Paul have been dedicated volunteers who made the time after full work days to come out to the farm and help out for a few hours, just to gain some experience growing vegetables. There are so many others who have helped us launch this business, establish the farm, and have a successful first growing season. We literally couldn't have pulled this off on our own. So THANK YOU to all these folks.

My late grandparents, Veikko and Phyllis Jokela, also made this possible in more ways than one. Most obviously, they purchased this farm and cared for it for over fifty years before Karin and I moved in and started Sogn Valley Farm. Access

to land is one of the greatest obstacles for beginning farmers, so we were lucky to have access to this beautiful farm. We also received an early inheritance from my grandma, which helped us finance early capital investments in the business.

And I would be remiss if I failed to thank you, our CSA members. You chose to invest in us during our first growing season, when we had little track record and plenty of risk. Your support, both financial and moral, was certainly pivotal in fueling our early season activities. We hope you have been happy with the vegetables and the overall experience as a member of the Sogn Valley Farm CSA.

In gratitude,

Dana (& Karin)



Spinach Salad with Roasted Butternut Squash and Toasted Almonds

This recipe has been a staple in our household for years, but I recently learned that it originated in a cookbook entitled, "An Occasion to Gather," published by the Junior League of Milwaukee.

Ingredients

- 2 lbs butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into ½-inch cubes.
- 5 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- ¾ C sliced almonds
- ¼ C maple syrup
- 1 Tbsp fresh rosemary, finely chopped
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 7 C spinach, roughly chopped

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 450°. In a mixing bowl, toss butternut squash cubes with salt and 1 ½ Tbsp of olive oil. Transfer to a roasting pan and bake for 30 minutes. Cool.
2. Brown the almonds in the remaining 3 ½ Tbsp of olive oil in a skillet over medium-low heat for 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Pour the almonds and oil through a fine sieve, reserving the almonds and oil.
3. Whisk the maple syrup, rosemary, and lemon juice in the cooled oil. Add the squash, spinach, and ½ of the almonds to the oil mixture and mix gently. Top each plate with some of the remaining almonds and some freshly ground pepper.