



# Sogn Valley Farm

CSA Newsletter      Sept. 5-6, 2017

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

Greetings,

We've started our series of 'lasts' for the season. We recently did our last greenhouse seeding (salad mix and spinach for later transplanting into the high tunnel) and last direct seeding in the field (second planting of spinach).

We're also thankfully winding down on weed management — each time we mechanically cultivate or hand weed a planting will likely be the last time for the season. Many weed species don't germinate as readily in cooler weather with shorter days, and those that do may not live to produce seed (thereby not adding to the "weed seedbank" in the soil).

Our main focus is on harvest. For a few weeks more, we'll continue the frequent harvest routine of warm-season crops, like tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, zucchini, melons, and beans, which are usually harvested 2+ times per week.

But soon we'll also be doing more mass harvests, as we did with garlic in July and onions in August. Up soon is potato harvest, followed by winter squash, then sweet potatoes, and finally root crops. Each of these will be harvested en masse and put in storage, to be pulled out, washed, and put in CSA boxes at later dates.

The one storage crop we're a bit nervous about is carrots. I previously mentioned the germination issues we had in our storage carrot seeding in early July, which required a clean tilling of the field and re-seeding 3+ weeks later. Well, we saw good germination the second time around, but they're just far behind where they would typically be this time of year. Knowing that it would be delayed, we favored early maturing varieties rather than our standard storage carrot variety, 'Bolero.' But abnormally cool weather we've had since seeding those carrots has not helped hurry along their growth. I'm quite sure we'll harvest some this fall, but they'll

## What's in the box?

**Slicer tomatoes:** These are your standard red slicing tomatoes, albeit better flavored than much of what you buy in the store out-of-season. Use in this week's ratatouille recipe.

**Basil:** This may be the last of the basil this season, as we're starting to see the first signs of downy mildew, a disease that now shows up on Midwestern vegetable farms pretty reliably each late summer. Smaller bunches this week, for garnishing ratatouille rather than making pesto.

**Globe eggplant:** This eggplant is tasty in eggplant parmesan, grilled, or in ratatouille, this week's recipe. Eggplant will store the longest at that elusive ~50-55°F with high humidity. It'll get cold damaged in the fridge and begin to dimple after a couple days, but it'll still be ok to eat.

**Colored bell peppers:** It's the heyday for ripe bell peppers, a time to cherish. This week's ratatouille recipe puts them front and center, where they should be.

**Cantaloupe (full shares) OR watermelon:** Like a couple weeks ago, when full share members received watermelon, half share members are receiving one of two varieties: 'Crimson Sweet,' a large, seeded, lighter-colored watermelon or 'Sorbet,' a medium-sized, seedless, darker-colored watermelon. Full shares have another cantaloupe this week.

**Yellow onion:** Use in this week's ratatouille recipe.

**Arugula:** After a summer hiatus, our first fall planting of arugula really jumped over the last week. This somewhat spicy green makes a delicious salad with goat cheese and cherry tomatoes. Wilting in a pan will tame the peppery flavor, but beware it'll reduce substantially the volume.

**'Diva' slicing cucumbers:** We're doing a variety trial of cucumbers this fall, four of which are pretty similar to what you've been receiving. So we wanted to give you some of the fifth variety, 'Diva,' a crisp, thin-skinned, seedless, lighter-colored cucumber.

**Cherry tomatoes:** You're receiving Sun Gold, red cherry, black cherry, or a mixture of those. Halve and top your arugula salad or just snack on 'em.

**Zucchini:** These are starting to wane in the field, so you may only get zucchini once more this season, but we've given you some this week for ratatouille!

**Scallions (full shares only):** These good-sized scallions would go well with cucumber and tomato in a cold salad. Have jalapeños left over from last week? Taco time.

## On Deck

*Each week, we'll give some hints about what new items may show up CSA shares in the next 1-2 weeks. Please note, this is not a guarantee, but our attempt to give you an idea of what's coming up.*

**Leeks — Potatoes — Anaheim chiles — Green beans — Cabbage — Salad mix**

likely be smaller than usual.

I've learned a lesson here and plan to take some extra steps with irrigation and other strategies to increase the likelihood of good carrot seed germination next season. At such a busy time of year, it's hard to imagine creating time to roll out drip irrigation tape directly over each row of carrots and run it *every day* until germination (usually about a week), especially when lots of other crops are screaming for water. But that's just what'll have to happen if we want a lot of orange in CSA boxes in the fall.

I learn a lot of lessons in farming, each season giving way to what I think should be a more successful next season given my newfound wisdom. But something tells me this will always be the case; there'll always be a few failures to teach us lessons. I'll forever be a student in farming. And in life, as a whole, I suppose.

Have a good week,

–Dana

## Ratatouille

*A comforting, vegetable-rich, late-summer dish.*

### Ingredients

1 globe eggplant, diced into 1/2" pieces  
Salt  
3 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil  
Freshly ground black pepper  
1 large or two medium yellow onions  
2 large or 3 smaller bell peppers  
1 bay leaf  
1 Tbsp tomato paste  
1/2 C dry white wine  
1-2 zucchinis, sliced into 1/2" coins  
3 cloves garlic  
2 C chopped tomatoes  
1 tsp dried oregano  
Pinch of crushed red pepper flakes  
Fresh basil  
Parmesan

### Directions

1. Place eggplant in a colander and toss with a big pinch of salt. Let sit for about 20 minutes, then pat the eggplant dry to remove excess moisture.
2. In a Dutch oven (or a large pot), heat 2 tablespoon oil. Add eggplant and season with salt and pepper. Cook until golden all over, about 6 minutes, then remove the eggplant.
3. Add remaining tablespoon of oil to pot. Add onion, bell peppers and bay leaf and cook, stirring occasionally, until onion and peppers are beginning to turn tender, about 5 minutes.
4. Add tomato paste and stir until it's fragrant, about 1 minute, then deglaze the pan with the white wine and reduce until most of the liquid has evaporated. Stir in zucchini and cook until tender, about 4 minutes more. Stir in garlic, cherry tomatoes and oregano.
5. Season mixture with red pepper flakes, salt, and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until the tomatoes start to break down.
6. Add the eggplant back to the pot and stir to combine. Top with parmesan and garnish with basil. Serve warm or at room temperature with fresh bread.

*Modified from <http://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/recipes/a54463/easy-traditional-ratatouille-recipe/>*