

The Newton Farmer

an e-newsletter from
Newton Community Farm



August 2010

Dear Farm Friends,

I'm dreaming of tomatoes—tomatoes sliced on a plate, sprinkled with minced basil and garlic, then drizzled with balsamic vinegar and olive oil. The red orbs sit quietly on the counter, absorbing the flavors for a while. When we can wait no longer, we pounce and eat.

I hope you are enjoying the days and scents of August.

Your editor,

Susan Tornheim

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Notes from Greg Maslowe, Farm Manager



In some circles, weather might be something that you talk about with that person who's a little awkward or who you don't know very well, or just to fill a void in the conversation. In other circles, however, say farmers, it's pretty much the topic of the day. Every day. I guess we farmers talk about weather all the time because we're a tough lot to please. Last year was too cold and wet—not enough sun. This year has been too hot and dry. Why can't things ever be just right?

After a few nail-biting weeks during which late blight was confirmed in two fields in Hadley, Massachusetts, and rumors flew about a possible outbreak at a farm within Route 495, things are looking much better.

Our tomato plants are starting to produce heavily, and farmers all around the area are a much happier lot than they were last year. Unless, that is, you ask about lettuce. While the hot weather has been a blessing for the tomato crop, most farms have experienced problems getting lettuce to germinate in the heat. And if they can get it to germinate, many have had problems getting it to grow in the field. Such is the nature of nature: it just doesn't seem to have our best interests at heart.

So we talk about weather because it keeps us on our toes. It makes us happy, sad, frustrated, wet, sunburned, cold, and sweaty. We talk about it because it's all around us all the time. We can't do anything about it—we're just like everyone else—but it matters. So we talk about the weather.

As I said, this year no one's complaining about the weather in terms of tomatoes. Plants are thriving, and the harvests are heavy. Apparently, a little too heavy. While customers at the farm are raving about the tomatoes and rejoicing at their return this year, the field crew—those intrepid high school students who choose to spend their summer vacation working at the farm—are already sick of tomatoes. After only a couple of weeks of serious harvests. I actually had workers who were happy to get back to weeding because it meant not having to deal with tomatoes! Lest you think that these are the words of a sun-addled teenager who is clearly not thinking straight, let's recount our day yesterday (when this amazing sentiment was expressed).

After finishing the CSA and farm-stand harvest, we moved on to picking tomatoes. (We pick tomatoes three times a week, every week, from late July through killing frosts in late October.) We pick into buckets, and at this time of year most of the ripe fruit is still low to the ground, so a few people go up and down 40 or so beds on their hands and knees picking fruit. The buckets, each weighing about 30 pounds when full, then get carried (two at a time to make each trip as efficient as possible—that's 60 pounds of tomatoes each trip) to the barn where another group is sorting them. Once sorted, the tomatoes then get moved to the back of the barn to either continue ripening or get put out for sale later that day. Yesterday we did this all afternoon, harvesting, carrying, sorting, and stacking more than 400 pounds of tomatoes! And we'll do it again Saturday. Then Tuesday. Then Thursday. Then.... Personally, I think it's a little early to be sick of it, but for a high school student (or anyone else) in their first season working at the farm, 400 pounds of tomatoes is enough to make you sick of them. So we take pity, and when the tomato harvest is done for the day we graciously let them get back to weeding.

Save the Dates for Our Upcoming Events

Sep 26: Fifth Annual Harvest Festival

Sep 28: Lecture on Canning and Preserving

Oct 19: Lumiere Dinner

** Fifth Annual Harvest Festival **

Sunday, September 26, 2010

1:00-4:00 p.m.

At Newton Community Farm

Free to attend. We will have food for sale.

Join us in celebration of our fifth growing season on the farm. Live music, children's activities, cooking demonstrations, farm tours, food, gardening demonstrations...and more! Everyone is welcome!

** Lecture: Canning and Preserving Garden Fresh Vegetables **

(or how a city mouse learned to be a country mouse)

Tuesday, September 28, 2010

7:30 p.m.

Druker Auditorium at Newton Free Library, 330 Homer St., Newton Centre

Free

Lisa Janice Cohen will discuss the practice of preserving; provide resources for further learning; and tell the story of how one self-described "city mouse," who could barely boil water, has become committed to preserving.

** Lumiere Dinner **

Tuesday, October 19, 2010

7 p.m.

At Lumiere Restaurant, 1293 Washington St., West Newton

Celebrated chef Michael Leviton hosts a special dinner benefiting Newton Community Farm.

[For more information, click here for our Events Web page.](#)

Harvest Festival Help Wanted

We are looking for volunteers to help with the Harvest Festival. It's a great way to enjoy the farm and make a contribution to building community around it. We could use people to help with planning and organizing, as well as helping at the festival. If you are interested, contact Kelly Lake at education@newtoncommunityfarm.org.

Upcoming Classes



August is always an exciting month on the farm; after a nice sunny July the fields are looking lush, and our harvests are plentiful. Our educational offerings are equally abundant this month. For our young friends, we are continuing to offer our weekly Farm Sprouts story hour every Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. On August 19 our Salsa Kids class gives children entering grades 3 to 5 a chance to help prepare (and taste!) several salsas made from produce they harvested themselves—even the pickiest eaters have been known to polish off a bowl of our homemade salsa.

For middle school students, our Farmer-in-Training program is going strong. We just wrapped up a great week: our six farmers-in-training spent time in the fields helping Greg with harvests and farm chores; they enjoyed learning

to prepare some tasty recipes that made good use of some of the produce we are growing; and we spent time exploring the ways in which our decisions impact the world around us. We still have a few slots open for the week of August 23, and we'd love to end our second year of this program with a big group, so please spread the word!

For those of you who are over the age of 10 and are feeling neglected, we have some great offerings for adults in August as well. We are very excited to host an Art in the Garden workshop. Whether you are an accomplished artist or a budding painter, we would love to have you take part in our first art workshop. And for those who would like to learn about backyard composting (or have questions about your compost pile), please come by for our Outdoor Composting at Home workshop hosted by our friends from Green Decade on Saturday, August 28. Register early for our classes to reserve a spot.

Looking ahead, our Lactofermentation Workshop on September 16 will teach you how to use this ancient preservation method to preserve vegetables by pickling them. We hope to see you on the farm this month!

Kelly Lake

Every Tuesday in July and August: Farm Sprouts (for preschoolers)

August 19: Salsa Kids (for students entering grades 3-5)

August 25: Art in the Garden

August 28: Outdoor Composting at Home (hosted by Green Decade)

September 16: Lactofermentation Workshop

[For more information, click here.](#)

Introducing Megan Talley

You've no doubt seen her—beaming, fit, and friendly—always there from 7 to 5 on Tuesdays through Saturdays. She is Megan Talley, Newton Community Farm's full-season (April 5 to October 31) intern, learning all things about how to be an efficient farmer.

A dance major from the University of Oklahoma with lots of gymnastic, pilates, and yoga experience, she enjoys physical work and being in nature. She tried professional dancing in New York City but didn't feel the necessary commitment. Instead, she felt the pull of the land and the need to connect with her food source. Megan worked at Union Square Farmers' Market and eventually moved on to one of the farms supplying produce to the city. Being with people and watching the farmland transform during a season brings her great satisfaction, and she believes that community farming is one of the best ways to make a difference in this world. She feels that she needs more learning time—like at least another year at Newton Community Farm!—before one day taking over a farm with her friends.

Margaret Mallory



Kimberly Cox Loves Her Vegetables

If you enjoyed July's Dinner at the Farm, you've savored food prepared by Kimberly Cox of Feast Creative Catering. Vegetables are her favorite food, which makes catering for the farm a great fit. "I love showcasing fresh foods for what they are, instead of changing them into something else," she explains.

Kimberly started her food career at age 14 when she worked as a bus girl at a restaurant. She eventually earned a degree in culinary arts from Johnson & Wales University and started Feast Creative Catering two and a half years ago. The chef's on-site catering company prepares all dishes from scratch at her customers' homes or other venues. "We come in with a small army and create magic," says Kimberly. She enjoys the creativity of creating different food and décor for her customers. "A lot of joy comes with catering. I get to participate in celebrations," she adds.

The farm is a special place for Kimberly. "I'm in awe of what Greg creates," she says. "It's nice to be so in touch with your food." She appreciates the hard work that the entire community puts into growing the crops. This is why she has very generously volunteered her culinary skills at the farm for the past two years, including catering the 2009 Farm Donor Appreciation night and running the food area at the Harvest Festival. Kimberly prepared Dinner at the Farm with an all-volunteer crew of Newton residents—Judy Alton, Carol McKrill, Mahala Davenport, Becca Smillie, Jonathan McKrill, Kim Parra, and Molly Silverman—who feel "excited and grateful that the farm exists."

Below is the purslane recipe that Kimberly prepared for Dinner at the Farm. To learn more about Feast Creative Catering's services for groups of 25 to 300 people, call [617-721-9459](tel:617-721-9459).

Susan Weiner

Recipe from Kimberly Cox

Kimberly Cox created this recipe and says, “I’ve always enjoyed the fast pace and the infinite possibilities working in the catering profession. Every party is a new opportunity to showcase our creative abilities. All I need is one interesting ingredient and I’m off and running. Last year when I had a farm share I found it exciting because I never knew exactly what I was going to be picking up. The experience inspired me to create new and exciting recipes. It also gave me a better appreciation of the food grown at the farm. The quality is outstanding. Recently I’ve been working with purslane.”



Purslane, Salmon, Potato, and Eggs

1 lb. potatoes, boiled and pan fried
8 oz. purslane, washed and trimmed
1 lb. salmon fillets, broiled and cut into portions
6 boiled eggs, cooled and halved
Juice of 2 lemons
½ cup olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Chill potatoes, purslane, salmon, and eggs. To serve, place them on a large platter. Drizzle with lemon juice and olive oil and sprinkle with salt and fresh ground pepper.

Kimberly Cox
Feast Creative Catering
[617-721-9459](tel:617-721-9459)
feastcatering@comcast.net

Recipes

Tomatoes and corn, as well as corn and tomatoes, are the stars of August. One fast and easy recipe is a low-fat version of pesto that uses some tomato, only two teaspoons of olive oil, and three tablespoons of basil. It can be found at <http://newtonfarm.pbworks.com/Pesto>.

And both tomatoes and corn go into Tomato Corn Salsa, which you can see if you click the link below. Enjoy!

Susan Tornheim

[Click here to see the Tomato Corn Salsa recipe.](#)



Farm Wish List

Enduring energy
New back
New knees (at least one)
Sleep

If you can help us with any of these items, please contact Greg Maslowe at [617-916-9655](tel:617-916-9655) or at greg@newtoncommunityfarm.org. We are a 501(c)3 organization. Your donations may be tax-deductible. Thank you for your support!

Please contact us if you have any questions about this newsletter or ideas for future issues, or if you want to be added to our mailing list. Just e-mail Susan Tornheim at sftornheim@yahoo.com. For more information about the farm, e-mail Greg Maslowe at greg@newtoncommunityfarm.org or check out our Web site at newtoncommunityfarm.org (or click on the image at the top of the page).