

HappyDay CSA Newsletter

In the Share This Week: Beets, Carrots, Winter Squash and Broccoli from Irene's Garden Produce. Potatoes from Covelo Organics. Kale from Nurturing Seed and Emerald Spirit. Peppers from HappyDay

The parched land cries out for rain; my soul does too. We've been sowing cover crop and prepping for winter, but it won't germinate without irrigation because everything is too dry. We sucked the pond down so far that the floating docks mired in the mud and ground one of the pumps to a halt; a \$2500 mistake will make you beat yourself up pretty good, but that's the life of the farmer.

You live and learn, getting better at the craft with each trip around the sun. One thing you learn is that no matter how much you figure out, you're still gonna find new ways to make mistakes. The saying goes that this year is always the year, until sometime in August; then next year is the year.

In my decade as a food farmer, I've never experienced such a long, dry fall. We're still harvesting a bountiful crop of tomatoes and peppers, and the eggplants are in full flower with another flush of fruit. The cover crop that has managed to germinate (located close to the drip irrigation) is lush and thick. The pasture that I irrigated is a vibrant, thriving green, but my soul is parched and my injured shoulder is desperate for some rainy days.

We rely on the rainy downtime for compliance work, strategic planning, crop planning and budgeting for the year to come. The rain is important for our bodies and spirits, that we may rest and rejuvenate; I hope for a speedy arrival. Being a farmer means that there is always work to be done; this is both the blessing and curse of the calling. We call it job security, but it can also be a strain on the psyche because the work is never finished.

You can't go big picture with farmwork; you have to stay centered in the present and focused on the tasks at hand. If you pull the focus out too far, all you see is an endless grind of labor that will win out in the end; the body has a finite lifespan. Ten years ago I was invincible; now I'm not so sure.

If you zoom the lens out too far, the work can be overwhelming, but the correct focus provides access to the flow state of engaged practice. Farming is like life; stay in the present and do your best. Utilize the lessons of the past to guide current practice, like a structural framework, but don't dwell on them. Mistakes are part of life; learn from them and move on.

I could beat myself up about ruining the water pump, (over

Always wash your veggies before eating them! :)

Have any recipes you like making with CSA produce?

Email them to us

happydayfarms42@gmail.com



On the back of this newsletter you'll find a recipe. To see other recipes you can go to the blog page at happydayfarmscsa.com :)

The newsletter gets printed the night before CSA and there are sometimes changes that happen on packaging day. If you ever find that what is in your share differs from what is listed on the newsletter, this is the reason :)

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but what's the point? It's imperative to have permission to make mistakes, otherwise innovation will be stymied by fear and flow will be broken by concern. They say that worrying is like praying for things you don't want, so don't do it.

As I write, the glow expands upon the Eastern skyline. Day breaks upon my reality, with joy, love, and work. I am glad to have the opportunity to work the land; to increase soil fertility and bounty over time. It is a thrill to produce nourishment for my community and to see the land flourish with our efforts. The life of the farmer is a process of deepening connection with the land; a visceral reminder of the bond between us.

My identity is defined by my relationship with land and my work upon it. I treasure the opportunity and am grateful for my place in the world. As I move through life, my body carries the memory of the many injuries and strains that have been done to it. I wouldn't trade them for anything, but I am also forced to reflect on the fact that I won't be able to do it forever. One of the great travesties of American farming is that there is very little in the way of safety nets.

My injured shoulder is a constant reminder of the frailty of life. I reflect on the fact that I need to learn to be more careful in my work. I tend to use my body with rough, blunt force; O'Neills are stubborn, determined workers, often at the expense of body parts. It is time for me to learn how to be more cautious in my efforts, so that I can maintain my life of physical labor for as long as possible. It is also time for me to plan for the future; I expect that over time, we will transition away from rapid rotation, labor intensive crops to more perennial cultivation with fewer labor requirements.

It is an odd feeling to be in charge of payroll, work comp, and the other paperwork aspects of employment, but that is part of the tradeoff for not doing all of the labor myself. I enjoy mentoring young farmers, and I expect that over time our internship program will be able to take on some of the physical labor requirements as I age. Though I hope to have many years of physical prowess left, I find comfort in the process of considering options and alternatives. Focusing the lens is necessary; too much in the future is not helpful, but without an idea of where we are going it is easy to become mired and stuck. It is a joy to learn the lessons, though they may be painful.

Casey's Easy Recipe Action

Beet and Potato Hash

- Saute diced onions
- Stir in diced potatoes, beets, chopped thyme and garlic. Season with salt to taste.
- Cook, turning occasionally until potatoes and beets are tender and slightly crispy, 15-20min
- Remove skillet from heat, season generously with pepper and more salt if desired.

Winter Squash Pancakes

- Roast winter squash in the oven till soft. Scrape out seeds, scoop flesh into mixing bowl.
- Add into mixing bowl a hefty scoop of almond or peanut butter
- Add in eggs and stir until a pancake batter consistency is achieved, usually 2-3 eggs.
- Heat hot skillet with coconut oil
- Fry just like regular pancakes, make sure they get brown

Slow Cookin Like What

- Start with large frypan, put in enough lard or coconut oil to coat bottom of pan.
- Sear chunk of meat while sauteeing onions and garlic until they start to caramelize.
- Throw nicely browned chunk of meat into large pot with onions and garlic.
- Throw in chopped vegetables. All of them, any kind of them. I cook up the biggest cabbages and hardiest cooking greens like this, it's stellar.
- Chop herbs and sprinkle over top.
- Add enough water to keep from drying out. Slow cook in solar oven, crockpot or regular oven for many hours.