

HappyDay CSA Newsletter

In Your CSA Box: Sweet and Hot Peppers - HappyDay Farms
Beets, Carrots, Cabbage - Irene's Garden Produce. Potatoes -
Covelo Organics. Baby Beets - Strong Roots. Persimmon -
Hope Springs Farm

Ah, glorious moisture! The rain has come! The oncoming inclement weather had me out buttoning up the farm today. I picked the dry beans for shelling later in the winter, and also harvested green beans that we had let go to seed. The dry beans are a bale bean that we will eat and save some for seed for next year. The green beans are a large, tender, Romano flat bean called the Great Noreaster, which we get from Johnny's seed company. They are the only green bean we grow, though we grow limited amounts of several dry beans for home use.

Erosion control is always on our minds when the first real rain is coming. In places where the chickens concentrated their activities during the season, there were some bare spots that needed seed and straw. Rotational chicken pasturing creates opportunity for building soil and pasture forage, encouraging the perennial bunchgrasses while discouraging the annual grasses that have taken over much of the landscape. In a season of low-impact initial rainstorms, little straw or seed is necessary because there is time to allow the pasture to recover on its own. If the first big storm comes after a prolonged period of dry time, the regrowth will not have had time to recover in some spots.

Our driveway is steep and requires a series of 10 waterbars to keep the rain from collecting and channeling; we try to follow the adage of "spread it, slow it, sink it". Spread the water out so that it doesn't concentrate flow; slow it down so that it has opportunities to sink in and recharge the groundwater. The waterbars are shallow ditches that slope downhill and channel the water from the center of the road off the edge. We alternate sides of the road every 50 feet or so, creating a zig-zag pattern that is effective at draining the water into ditches on both sides.

Rain is always intermittent during fall in our Mediterranean climate, but the intensity and variability seem to have increased in recent years. I've never seen a fall as dry as this; one rain event at the end of September and nothing else that month or in June, July, August, October and most of November. Then, the first weather to come through includes a prediction for five inches of rain in one day. The patterns seem more like monsoon season, which is not a good thing for water absorption and regeneration of subsurface flows. The faster and harder the rain hits, the more of it runs off the land without soaking in. (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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The slope of our farm means that we need to be extra careful of erosion both in pasture and garden terraces. Cover crop and straw for mulch are imperative to keeping ground cover and avoiding any potential for leaching of nutrients. These practices also help to slow the water, as do the terraced garden beds. Monitoring for potential erosion or water movement issues is part of our winter work plan, and provides a good reason for getting outside in the rain to see how things are faring.

Battening for rain includes pulling down the sides on our rabbitry. The roof is permanent, but the sides are made of woven greenhouse plastic that can be rolled up during the warm, dry season. With winter approaching, it is time to close the rabbits in for the cold season.

We have yet to see frost other than a few scattered pockets here and there. There have been frigid mornings in the valley for more than two months now, but the inversion layer makes it so that our farm at 3000ft of elevation is often above the frost layer. This is true except for when the wind blows from the North East, or when a storm comes down out of the Gulf of Alaska. Then we get hit with a snow load that is like nothing the valley will ever see.

Variability of microclimate creates differences in infrastructure requirements in terms of heating and snow-load capacity, as well as what crops will grow well and can withstand the different types of cold. These and many more are the factors that make up the capacity of a given farm. Being a farmer is as much about knowing a place and what to expect from it as it is about knowing how to grow things. Knowledge of each deepens with time, dual strands of the helix of agricultural DNA that is imprinted upon the agrarian sojourner. Until next time, much love and appreciation!

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.

Casey's Easy Recipe Action

Roasted Winter Vegetables

- 6-8 cups winter veggies: potatoes, garlic, onions, turnips, carrots, etc
 - 2 tablespoons oil
 - 1 tablespoon dried or 3 tablespoons fresh herbs such as rosemary, thyme, parsley, oregano
 - Toss ingredients together, keeping onions separate cuz they cook faster; add them 10 minutes in.
- Roast in preheated oven at 425 til tender, 30-45 min. Nestle in a chunk of meat or other protein source and cook for longer (until meat is fully cooked) for a full family meal.

Wintersquash Harvest Stew

- 2 tbs butter
 - 1 1/2 lbs boneless pork cut into bitesized cubes
 - 1 medium onion chopped
 - 2 cloves garlic minced
 - Melt butter in large saucepan. Add pork, onion and garlic and saute until meat is no longer pink; drain off fat.
 - Next Add 3 cups chicken broth
 - 3/4 tsp salt
 - 1/4 tsp dried rosemary
 - 1 bay leaf
 - Add, cover and simmer 20 min
 - 1 medium winter squash chopped
 - 2 apples chopped
 - Add and simmer uncovered until squash and apples are tender, about 20 min. Discard bay leaf.
 - Great with biscuits n honey
- *From Simply in Season
by Lind&Hockman-Wert

Roasted Winter Squash

You can roast winter squash whole or cut in half. If you roast them whole, put some water in the baking dish to keep them moist. Once they are soft (about 45-60min) you can cut them open and scrape out the seeds. If you cut them open first, scrape the seeds and then coat with butter or coconut oil.