

## Thank You

By John

It feels a lot like a rewind to the first newsletter that I wrote to start the season. Feeling a bit at a loss for words though the situation is decidedly different. Twenty weeks ago I found my thoughts stumbling over my own anticipation with a healthy dose of anxiety. Many of the questions and doubts I posed then have been answered. I now find myself more at a loss to describe the gratitude I feel; the relief that our first season was as successful as Lidia and I think it was when we look back on it. We faced many hurdles and made many mistakes. But I think part of being good CSA farmers is that you hardly notice our screw-ups in your shares. But to be a truly good farmer you need to learn from those mistakes. Our biggest disappointments this year were the lack of spinach, sugar snap peas and the limited amount of green beans. We are already making adjustments to our production and planning systems to have a better supply next year. We also want to have a more consistent supply and diversity of herbs. This has us looking at a few ways to tweak production but we think diversity will really help. We are trying to figure out a few more herbs that we can add to the mix (we don't think we will need to look at the member surveys to know there was too much cilantro). All and all though, I would have to say that it was a really great year. According to many seasoned farmers, we had one of the worst growing years weather-wise in many years in our region. May through July in particular. We had records for both rain and low average temperatures, neither of which is ideal for vegetables. Despite the odds we put together quality shares right from the beginning. The successes we had were not dumb luck but the result of experience, good planning and most of all hard work. I know that I have mentioned it before but before the end of the year I think it is really important to give credit once again to the true farm hero of Fazenda Boa Terra, or

rather should I say heroine. Lidia's hard work above all has made each and every CSA delivery possible not to mention the farmers markets. Almost every tomato, bite of lettuce, onion, herb, bean, carrot and everything else you enjoyed over the past five months made it from our fields to your plate because of the dedication and ceaseless work of Lidia. I am continually amazed by and proud of everything that she has accomplished this year, most of the time on her own. In many ways I am glad to see the season end for her sake. In addition to her hours at Gardens of Eagan, making our CSA run she has been picking up shifts in the kitchen at the Mt. Olivet retreat Center. It has been an exhausting year for both of us physically and emotionally, but it makes me happy to know that Lidia will finally get some rest, perhaps even have the chance to sleep in a little. I would also like to mention another unsung hero of the canine variety. In the past I must admit have denigrated people who put too much stock or emotional investment into their pets. 'They are not humans' I often chided my mom. That being said, our loyal farm dog shadow played a bigger role in getting us through the season than I think he is able to comprehend with his little dog brain. He is very loyal; perhaps even a bit codependent, which I see as good attributes for a farm dog. He was almost always at Lidia's or my side or following closely behind. His quirky personality and goofy demeanor, always trying to do the right thing to please us gave us nearly endless laughter even when we were too tired to see much humor in anything else. An ever-dutiful companion, he made our load a little lighter each day. Our biggest thanks however, must go to our members. Many of you answered our call for help when we thought we might lose out carrots, beets and other crops to the weeds. You helped us to 'crack' garlic, harvest potatoes, clean up the fields and wash produce. You did construction, kept the website running and helped run the market stand. You offered support, care and prayers when I lost my brother not all that long ago. Without you there would be no work to be

done at all. You have invested financially and personally in our dreams and in our lives. With that in mind we look forward to next year. We look forward to building and improving on our success from this year. Making right our mistakes of this year and making this CSA an even better thing to be a part of. Together we will better serve our community, our families and ourselves. Getting started is the hardest part, and looking back I have so say we got off to a great one. Have a great winter and we look forward to seeing you all again in 2012.



Our Rotten Critter



King of the mountain; Garlic Mulch Mountain

## News and Notes

- My apologies on being slow to get the member survey out to you. I will provide a link to it ASAP. Please take a few minutes to fill it out when you get it.
- If you would still like to order a Winter Storage Box let us know. We have a little bit of time left if you want to place a last minute order
- It's never too early to think about next season, if you need another enrollment form let us know or keep an eye on the website as it will be posted soon.
- Thank you all so much for everything. We will see you next season.

### Featured Item

We are going to gamble a little bit with this week's item. I say this because as of yet we've been unable to get it out of the ground. As we speak I have water truck dropping 2000 gallons of water on it to loosen the soil so we can hopefully get them dug. What I am hoping for of course is parsnips. If I don't say so myself they are some of the most beautiful parsnips I have ever seen. They went in the ground all the way back in the first week of March. We have been watching them ever since. However, the conditions at seeding were very wet and at harvest is drought. This has effectively encased them in concrete. Getting them out of the ground has been one of the biggest stumpers of the season. If you ordered a root box you will get some for sure, but we are gunning for them in the last regular share of the season. A Thanksgiving staple, parsnips are phenomenal anytime of the year though. They will stay fresh in a plastic bag in your crisper drawer for 2-3 weeks. Traditional recipes are simple oven roasting with butter or oil, salt, pepper, garlic and herbs.

## Recipe of the Week

I have to try this crazy but tantalizing recipe:  
**Julia's Parsnip Cookies (from Mariquita Farm)**

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1 cup boiled and mashed parsnips
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 egg
- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat pastry flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- Pinch of salt
- 1 cup chocolate chips

Mix together butter, sugars, parsnip puree, vanilla, and egg. Mix together dry ingredients and add to butter mixture. Mix in chocolate chips with a strong spoon. Drop by teaspoon on lightly greased cookie sheet. With a fork flatten the cookies before baking by dipping a fork in flour then making two marks on each cookie to flatten it, just like home made peanut butter cookies. Bake at 375 degrees for 18-22 minutes, or until lightly browned.