

Odds and Ends

From John
The CSA season is already over half way through, believe it or not. This season has seemed to go by incredibly fast. August is an interesting month on the farm for many reasons. August is a transitional month. A time when things start to slow down just a bit and take on a new, calmer rhythm, but also a time when the months of ceaseless toil seem to catch up to you. The days are significantly shorter than just a few weeks back and a sense of the coming fall fills the air. The greenhouse work wraps up for the year and there is less and less planting to be done. The seeding in the fields picks up a little as we go for a reprise of some spring treats like beets, radishes, turnips and spinach. As the nights start to cool a bit more and we are planting less, the weeding continues for sure but at a bit less than the frantic pace which prevails through the spring and summer. While these things seem to slow down a bit, the harvest goes into over-drive. Most of the onions are in the greenhouse curing while we have left the red onion in the field to grow just a bit more. We are watching carefully, the winter squash which will soon be harvested and put in the greenhouse to cure to be given out later this fall. We have been harvesting the potatoes all along but will soon need to get them *all* out of the ground and into the cooler. We may have to load you up heavier than usual on potatoes as we are expecting about 2000 pounds more to come in with just 9 weeks left in the season. The fall crops are looking great and if you ordered a fall storage root box you should be in for a treat this winter. It is also a time of the year when we start putting the soil to rest for the winter. As land comes out of production, we plow it up again and work it a few times to try and clean up the weeds a bit. We will apply compost if needed and seed in a cover crop. This year most of our ground will get white clover. We plan on taking all

ON DECK

Next week should feel very similar. We should continue to see more and more varieties of peppers and tomatoes come along while at the same time seeing cooler weather crops make it into the mix like beets and cured onions and garlic.

our land from this year out of production next year to let it take a year off to rest. White clover will help rejuvenate our soil and be a good crop to have in place when we re-design our fields in 2014. Some fields will come out of production too late for clover to get rooted. In those fields we will plant a mix of winter- rye and vetch which have no qualms with the cold, we will also use some oats if needed. The shifting focus is one of the things that makes this time of the year so nice. Up until now we think in terms of tomorrow, three days from now and next week which is really pretty exhausting. Now is when we really can take a step back and start taking the long view which is really the fun stuff for me personally. We start to focus on next year. We have discussions about which varieties we are and aren't happy with, what new ones we want to try and which fields we want to rotate into as we add new acreage. We are going to be working on our new ground to get it ready for next year. We are also looking at our systems and equipment needs for next year as we need start to capitalize our farm in earnest as Gardens of Eagan makes its move to a new home (taking he tractors with it). I personally love thinking about equipment, looking for it and pricing it out. Though it is a different story when we think about paying for it, we're not exactly sure how we are going to pull that one off just yet. (I just looked at the word count for the newsletter which came to exactly 666 at the end of the last sentence; let's hope that's not indicative of a deal with the devil to get a tractor.) As we think about expanding the farm and investing more and more in the equipment we need and turning to lenders it takes us to a less comfortable

place. We are very comfortable as farmers, but have a lot less experience as business owners and managers. This is often the conundrum of many entrepreneurs. Recognizing the diversion between what we love to do and making a living from it. We made a foot note a few weeks ago about it and are excited to be getting some help. We are in the process of getting enrolled in a [farm business management program](#) through MnSCU. We haven't actually started the class yet but our personal instructor has already been out to the farm twice to help us with our Quickbooks which already look much better than they did just a few weeks ago. It is a two year 20 credit program that as the name indicates is specific to farm businesses. It's not just about Quickbooks of course. It will help us not just generate, but to truly understand performance reports so that we can really analyze the health of our farm not just from the perspective of the soil but as a business where the dollars and cents are concerned. The MDA (Minnesota Department of Agriculture) is really pushing this program for new and old farmers alike. As an incentive the MDA gives a scholarship covering 75% of the tuition. We are really excited about the opportunity to become better farmers by becoming better business owners. We are also very thankful that the MDA and Meg Moynihan (our voice for organics at MDA) in particular are really doing their best to support farmers in Minnesota.

News and Notes

- We will be gathering for a Potluck at the farm on Sunday September 9th at 1-4PM. We will keep reminding you for the next several weeks. We will need to rent tables and chairs so please RSVP by September 1st so we have an accurate guest count.
- We still have some storage root boxes available for sale. What's a root box? It's a box of 40 -50 pounds of mixed storage veggies from potatoes, onions and garlic to beets, rutabaga, carrots and winter squash for just \$50 a box. They will be available the week after the end of the CSA season.
- Chicken will be for sale in about 7 weeks. This means we will only have a couple of weeks at the end to distribute them. We will hold the price at \$4.00/pound. Please fill out and return an [order form](#) to reserve your birds

Featured Item

Cipollini onions are one of our new additions this year (along with shallots). We are allium hounds (onions, leeks, scallions and garlic) and have really enjoyed them as an addition to the mix. They are generally smaller than your normal onions, thus the literal Italian name of 'little onion'. They are a little more difficult to peel than a normal onion but the extra work is worth it. They are especially good for roasting and caramelizing by concentrating their sugars and leaving behind very little of that 'onion' flavor. So if you aren't particularly fond of onions you just might like these! Keeping them fresh is the same as any other cured onion. Room temperature and out of the sun, they should keep for about a month or so in your cupboard or on your counter-top.



Big Boro Beets

Recipe of the Week

Roasted Cipollini Onions

Ingredients:

Cipollini Onions, *outer layer removed*
Olive Oil, *enough to liberally coat onions*
fresh Thyme
Sea Salt
fresh cracked Black Pepper

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400° Roast (this also works really well on your grill but will need longer to roast)

1. Toss onions and thyme with olive oil and place on a baking sheet or other oven safe dish. Sprinkle with sea salt and cracked black pepper to taste.
2. Roast in oven for about 35 minutes, turning every 10 minutes to brown sides evenly. Remove when tender and golden.