

## That's a Wrap

From John

Wow, it hardly seems possible that we are already closing the door on our second season. We really gambled on ourselves by tripling our membership from 20 and going for 60 this year. We are really happy with the results. We know that we dropped a few balls along the way which is pretty much inevitable in our line of work but we think the season turned out as well if not better than we could have possibly imagined. One of the most wonderful things about farming is you get to start fresh each and every year. As we start planning for next year we will review everything we did this year and try our best to figure out how to improve it. This means adjusting the calculations in the planning tool we have been developing. It's a tool that basically calculates our seed order. We start with what we want our total yield for a crop to be and work backwards from there. In the algorithm we try to discount a percentage for plants that are unmarketable or don't make it because of attrition for any number of reasons from weed pressure, poor germination, pest pressure and other factors like the seeding and planting rate (plant density). Basically we punch in how many bunches, pounds, heads or whatever that we want and it tells us how many seeds to buy and how much space we need to plant them. From this we can start building our production plan. Our harvest records are critical in making the adjustments to the algorithm. Without good records it is nearly impossible to plan precisely for the future. I think that we do a pretty good job of it for the most part. Of course some things are way off and sometimes we pick varieties that turn out to be lemons, and not the good kind. For instance we will be changing our broccoli varieties for next year. Our system is basically exactly the same as that for Gardens of Eagan yet our broccoli never compares. The best proof was when there was a mix up and they

### ON DECK

A deep breath, a few shorter days and the sad reality of grocery store vegetables. Unless of course you ordered a winter storage box in which case you can keep your share going for a little longer!

got some of our flats mixed in with theirs. You could see where our variety was mixed in with theirs and the contrast was stark. So next year it will be goodbye Arcadia and Blue Wind and hello Gypsy and Imperial. The planning process is such a real joy, being able to take a step back and spend the winter farming in your mind is really refreshing and allows you to be more creative than when you are in the thick of the real farming season. You have the chance to look back and take an honest look at your mistakes and troubleshoot them. Every spring you march into the greenhouse for the first seeding with a clean slate and a fresh opportunity to do it even better this go around. In farming there are as many right ways to do something as there are wrong, we just try to do things right most of the time.

Obviously this winter won't be quite as relaxing as we might like. Finding a new farm under the gun isn't exactly a normal off-season activity. While it will be difficult and surely stressful we are excited about the prospect of a new beginning. We believe that from difficulty comes great reward and we have no doubt that things will be better next year and beyond. We always said that the next time we move it would be the last time. Whether that proves to be true or not I suppose it doesn't really matter. What matters is that we will continue to grow as people and become better farmers. A lot of the credit has to go to you, our Fazenda Boa Terra CSA members. You make everything worth it. Without you the challenges facing us would seem so much more dire. Your constant encouragement along with the faith you have put in us as your farmers keeps us going. The last thing in the world we could imagine doing is letting you

down. Our experience as CSA farmers has been so gratifying in so many ways. It might sound a little dorky but each week that you pick up your vegetables you are moving us just that much closer to achieving our dreams. Your continued support means the world to us, and as this season comes to a close we are already eagerly anticipating another year of being your farmers. Thank you so much and we'll see you in the spring!



The Sun Shines On!

## News and Notes

- We like to pad our bank account a little before heading into the winter so we will extend the same offer we had last year. We will offer 10 CSA shares for 2013 to the first 10 members that contact us for \$500. We don't sign these shares up online and are only payable by cash or check. If you want in you must email is at [farmers@fbt.ag](mailto:farmers@fbt.ag) to save your spot. These are the only enrollments that we will take before January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- If you ordered a winter storage box, don't forget to pick it up at your regular pickup site at the normal time next week.
- We will be sending out a survey in the next couple of weeks. Please take the time to fill it out, it is your chance to give us some feedback which is invaluable for helping us to help the CSA get better and better each year. Your opinions are very important to us.

## Featured Item

That weird looking un-earthly, bulbous white and green looking thing is a long awaited favorite for us. Known as celeriac, celery root and sometimes knob celery we have winter crop royalty. Being a bit of a finicky vegetable, we lost our crop last year making it all the more rewarding to have a great crop this year. Celery is hard to grow here but this cultivar allows us to enjoy the flavor of celery into the winter. It seems to be growing in popularity in the US thanks to CSA farms but is still relatively unknown here. Not so however in Europe however, where it has been an important crop since the early 1600's. Also evidenced by the enthusiasm of our European customers when they saw it at the market stand last weekend. Keep it in a bag in your vegetable drawer or a cool dark place for several weeks or even months. I like to use it in place of celery in all of my favorite soups and stews and other recipes. They're an amazing starch free alternative to mashed potatoes or great mixed in with potatoes.

## Recipe of the Week

### Beet, Leek and Celeriac Soup

This was the recipe I found in Farmer John's Cookbook about 7 or 8 years ago. This soup made me fall in love with beets, leeks and celeriac.

#### Ingredients

2-3 beets  
1 tbsp olive oil  
2-3 leeks, chopped  
1/2 bulb celeriac, peeled, chopped  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
4 cups vegetable or chicken stock  
1 1/2 tsp lemon juice, or 1 lemon's worth  
salt and pepper  
sour cream

#### Directions

1. Boil the beets, half-covered in water, for about 20-40 minutes, until tender.
2. Drain and cool beets, chop, and puree in food processor.
3. Heat oil, saute leeks, celeriac, and garlic, about 20 minutes or until tender.
4. Combine leek mixture and beets in a soup pot. Add stock, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Simmer, partially covered, until it's as thick as you want, 15-30 minutes. Garnish each bowl with some sour cream.