

## Seasons

From John

We have been going more or less flat out gangbusters over the past couple of weeks. It can be quite a transition when you hit harvest season. For a variety of reasons we try to turn our minds around and imagine looking at the farm from the view of our CSA members and other customers. The principal reason being, that we try to understand how you perceive our product and what we do here. We have a diverse mix of people that eat from our soil each week and we try and understand why they choose to do so. At our market stand for instance, we know that many customers come simply because they know that we are Certified Organic and that is important to them. For others it is the quality of our produce as they see it. For others still, we imagine it being the service; they come to our stand because they enjoy the interaction whether it be the banter or the tips on cooking and gardening we can offer. For our CSA members we think many of those same things apply though much of the interaction comes through the newsletter or working in the fields with us. Many members like our personal story and want to help two young farmers get started. These are the things that many of you have told us as well as what we have imagined while trying to understand why our customers value us and our farm. One thing that we sense is that many people seem to think that the season starts at harvest, when the coop gets the first shipment or the first farmers market and of course the first CSA share. Not to say we think people assume we just magically create crops to go in the first share. But it's the first harvest that brings the season into everyone's consciousness. We find it a bit funny because while the harvest season is getting started in early June, we are preparing for the end already. For us the production season starts in late February in the greenhouse with the first field work getting going in late March or early April. Perhaps we get just a bit too much sun but we find it kind of amusing to imagine our members eating their first salads of the year relishing the beginning of the season, while here at the farm we are already planting fall storage cabbage,

### ON DECK FOR NEXT WEEK

Hope fully we will see beets make their first appearance of the year. We should get our first cabbage (the pointy ones) and fresh onions as well. A variety of greens will be here too.

winter squash in the field and starting fall broccoli in the greenhouse. The celeriac, potatoes and onions have long since been planted and we are thinking about prepping ground for storage carrots and beets. This brings me back to the original thought on the transition into the harvest season. It can be challenging because we have been operating only in production mode for over three months and we will remain so for the next five. However, you now have to schedule production to fit in with harvest and pack. While we find ourselves falling behind in the battle of the weeds (with our direct seeded crops) and are not without concern, other things are looking very good. The potatoes look phenomenal and the spring cabbage and broccoli are looking quite nice. Our other crops in plasticulture (grown in plastic mulch) are looking really good. The zucchini, summer squash, cukes and melons are taking off. The onions are looking great though they also took a little cutworm damage, as did the fennel. The celeriac is looking really beautiful this year which is encouraging as it burned up on us last year. We finally got all of the winter squash in the ground which with 800 plants and eight varieties is one on the year's biggest plantings next to the onions and potatoes. The potatoes which of course will be much easier now as those of you who follow our Facebook or Twitter pages will know. We have longed for a planter, while the digger still eludes us we are now half way there. Planting potatoes will be our first mechanized job next year for which we are very grateful. Hand planting a 10<sup>th</sup> of an acre of potatoes is a grueling job and not particularly precise (think cultivation and hilling) though we did actually do quite well this year with it. But what would take an entire weekend next year will be done in just a couple hours less a couple of sore backs. I am particularly proud of the condition this thing is in seeing as it is old enough to have witnessed the first jitterbug ever danced, it's so old that the fertilizer boxes on it are branded Iron Age yet are made of wood. If last week's newsletter

was a bit disjointed you can blame it on the planter. We worked all day Sunday and by Monday I just had to have it so I wrote the newsletter at the tail end of a 20 hour day after hauling the planter back from Wisconsin.

I would be remiss not to mention the weather and the cutworms. My hope is that the weather has drowned them, though the wiser part of me knows this to be magical thinking. It does appear that the worst is behind us as far as the cutworm goes. We haven't seen too much new damage and the replacement plants we put in seem to be taking. Hopefully this part of their life cycle is complete and they will move on as moths. We took some pretty hard hits but we think we will come away with just a few nasty bruises. We seem to have lucked out on the weather as well. We got about four inches on Thursday and four more on Sunday. We reacted quickly and were able to save our greens from the hail Thursday. Some of the heartier crops got beat up a little but shouldn't be any worse off for the wear. We had some running water move through the fields sloshing a lot of mud about making the crops quite difficult to clean. We do apologize the veggies will be a little dirtier than we would like. We have to count ourselves fortunate though. Just a few miles south, many farms are just wiped out and that was before last night's rain on top. I have in the past been up to my neck in freezing cold flood waters trying to save the cows while watching 30 acres of hay and vegetables wash away. It's something I hope I never have to do again. It makes worries over cutworms and a little mud seem much less than trivial and our hearts go out to them those farmers.

## News and Notes

- Please visit <http://www.laughingloonfarm.com/> or <https://www.facebook.com/SeedsFarm> if you would like to get more info on helping some young farmers like us get back on their feet after the floods threaten everything they have built.



Our Sweet old Potato Planter

### Featured Item

*We are bringing back the carrots. This was a featured item last year as well, and for good reason. Nothing says the harvest it in like the crunch of a fresh, sweet carrot after a few weeks of greens. We all know how to use carrots. My favorite recipe is straight out of the ground with a jar of water to help get the dirt out of my teeth. If you prefer a cleaner approach; get rid of the tops they are just for show (though edible) and put them in a plastic bag in your crisper. Store them away from soft fruit like strawberries and apples as the ethylene gas from them will quickly turn your carrots soft and bitter.*



Transplanted Winter Squash

## Recipe of the Week

### Broccoli Raab with Quinoa and Glazed Carrots

#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup quinoa
- 1/2 bunch raab, roughly chopped
- 2 tbsps. olive oil
- 1 1/2 tbsps. balsamic vinegar
- 3 scallions
- 2 or 3 small carrots
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- lemon juice from 1/2 lemon

#### Cooking Directions:

Cook quinoa (or choice of pasta or rice) according to package directions

In a skillet, sauté the scallion, carrot and garlic until the scallions are slightly browned. Add the raab and sauté until it starts to wilt. Remove from heat. Stir in the quinoa. Add the balsamic vinegar and lemon juice. Mix all the ingredients together. Serve and enjoy