

Buckhill Farm CSA

Newsletter

~~ Farming for a Healthy Community ~~

July 22 - August 2, 2015

Crop Update



The field tomatoes are in full swing! The heirloom tomatoes are soon to follow, but will be limited this year. Some of the earlier plantings suffered from all of the June rain, but the later tomato plantings are doing well. Due to disease in the tomato fields, we will begin to treat them with certified organic copper and beneficial sprays to help boost the plants' immune systems.

Cucumbers and summer squash are also doing well. While we have had heavy disease pressure, our succession plantings have been well-timed and the overlapping plantings have eliminated any gaps in harvest totals.

Bell peppers are slowly developing. We don't like to pick from them too early, as we feel a majority of our members would rather have red, yellow, and orange peppers as opposed to only green. Another week or two and we should have an abundance of bell peppers.

Eggplants are doing very well. You may have noticed that we now have two varieties at distribution. We have the traditional Italian variety and we are also growing an Asian variety. The Asian type is more elongated, tends to be less bitter, and a little more on the sweet side.

While suffering from some disease pressure, the melons are looking good and we should have the first harvest next week.

It is hard to believe that we have already transplanted our succession of fall broccoli, cabbage, and kale last week. Next up for planting this week will be radishes, turnips and our final planting of summer squash.

Crop Health

There is an understanding that when you grow organically you are going to be doing more hand and mechanical weeding, because you don't use herbicides. Same goes for pest control. We spend more time covering our crops than conventional farmers spend spraying pesticides. In the end, the weed and pest control might take more time and cost more money, but we usually get good results.

When it comes to growing organic foods, our ability to combat disease in the field is much more difficult. The certified organic fungicides that we have at our disposal simply aren't that effective when it comes to controlling plant diseases. Our first defense is always cultural. We use good crop rotation and make sure our plants have the proper nutrients they need to grow healthy and strong. We also try and mulch crops like tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, and melons with straw to minimize the amount of soil that splashes up on the plants. Another technique we use is to give certain plants more space between them, which helps increase air flow and allows the plant to dry off faster after a rain or morning dew.

Despite all of our efforts, we still see tremendous disease pressure on crops such as eggplant, peppers, tomatoes, melons, cucumbers, and squash, and we will need to spray some crops on a weekly basis. While we don't like to spray, the products we use are always certified organic and are ten times safer than what conventional farmers use. As always, please be sure to wash all of your produce before consuming.

Switches and Vacations

For members who pick up at the farm, please remember that it is your responsibility to pick up your share on your designated day. We try to be as accommodating as possible and offer some flexibility, but coordinating, responding to, and rescheduling a pickup can be very time consuming. Unless it is a family emergency, we are unable to accommodate special requests outside of our normal pick up protocols. Please review the pick up and missed vacation policies on page 4 of our [CSA Member Handbook](#). We appreciate your understanding.

Onion Harvest



Last year, we lost all our onions as they were curing in the barn. To avoid a recurrence, we seeded our onions much earlier this year. The goal was to transplant and then harvest them before disease set in. Last week, the crew harvested over 11,000 onions. They are now sitting on drying racks in one of our barns. They look better than last year's crop did going into the barn, but there is no way to tell if disease has already set in. Here's hoping for the best!

Upcoming Events

Please join us for....

[Kids Day at Buckhill Farm! - Saturday, August 15th](#)

Recipe Corner

Baba Ganoush

From Food.com by Mimi Bobeck



Ingredients

- 1 large Eggplant
- ¼ cup Tahini, plus more as needed
- 3 Garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ cup fresh Lemon Juice, plus more as needed
- 1 pinch ground Cumin
- Salt to taste
- 1 Tbsp. Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh Parsley
- ¼ cup brine-cured black Olives, such as Kalamata

Directions

Prepare a medium-hot fire in a charcoal grill.

1. Preheat an oven to 375°F.
2. Prick the eggplant with a fork in several places and place on the grill rack 4 to 5 inches from the fire.
3. Grill, turning frequently, until the skin blackens and blisters and the flesh just begins to feel soft, 10 to 15 minutes.
4. Transfer the eggplant to a baking sheet and bake until very soft, 15 to 20 minutes.
5. Remove from the oven, let cool slightly, and peel off and discard the skin.
6. Place the eggplant flesh in a bowl.
7. Using a fork, mash the eggplant to a paste.
8. Add ¼ cup tahini, garlic, ¼ cup lemon juice, cumin and mix well.
9. Season with salt, then taste and add more tahini and/or lemon juice, if needed.
10. Transfer the mixture to a serving bowl and spread with the back of a spoon to form a shallow well.
11. Drizzle the olive oil over the top and sprinkle with the parsley.
12. Place the olives around the sides.
13. Serve at room temperature.

