



Stones Throw Farm

CSA Newsletter

Season 9 - Week 5

July 11th and July 14th

www.stonestrowfarm.biz

This Week's Share:

- Head Lettuce
- Bunch Beets
- Sugar Snap Peas
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Spring Onions
- Garlic bulb
- Summer Savory
- Zephyr Summer Squash
- You-Pick; flowers, snap peas, greens

Weekly News:

Welcome to Week Five...

We have a great mid-July share for you. After a delicious five-week run of Sugar Snap Peas this week will mark the end of the pea season. I'm always happy when we provide peas of good quality and quantity for the first five weeks of the season. Peas create a HUGE harvest labor demand during an incredibly busy time of year on the farm, and for this reason there are a lot of farms and CSA's that simply don't grow them, or grow fairly small quantities. Personally I think peas are a delicious early season treat and one I can't imagine being without. Spring onions continue to churn along and they've been delicious, its likely we have another week of this current variety before moving onto another type. Spring Onions, bunching onions, storage onions, green onions/shallots, etc. however you slice it and whatever the season brings these are another crop of core importance that we invest considerably in trying to provide from the first to the last week of the season. The reason we do so is you. (and yes our kitchen too!) Onions have consistently been one of the highest ranked "favorite/most important vegetables" in our annual end of season CSA survey. With their diversity of types, uses, and health attributes I suppose its no surprise! Broccoli is back for another week and Cauliflower has arrived and looks fantastic! Summer squash continues to churn along and the season's first garlic bulbs are being lifted! It's a good time to be eating...

We've restocked many of our "add on" items and added a couple more favorites. Please check out the silver cooler for a great assortment of drinks and easy fixings for great summer meals. Just a couple to mention for now.... Bruce Cost Ginger Ale is back!!! This is in my opinion simply THE best ginger ale made. We're also happy to now be carrying Ithaca Hummus and Cheeky Monkey Tomato and Garlic Oil. Both are great local products that compliment seasonal vegetables and help make for easy and delicious summer eating

Thanks!

Have a great week!

Brian, Megan, Reed and Willa Luton

The Farmers Drivel:

One of the things that keeps diversified vegetable farming interesting (and occasionally frustrating) is the fact that things are constantly changing. It seems that just as we begin to really figure out how to address a particular challenge (pest, disease, etc.) that something new arrives or something old evolves. This is the nature of the “game” I suppose and I feel that climate change and an increasingly fast moving globalized world have put these types of changes into high gear. One of the “new” pests that we are beginning to face on the farm is a very small one but stands to be a very big problem. It is called the Swede Midge. This tiny “fly” is an invasive pest originally from southeastern Asia and Europe. It was first discovered in North America in Ontario, Canada in 2000. And first discovered in New York in Niagara County in 2004. We first noted a small amount of Swede Midge damage about three seasons ago and have seen a steady increase in Swede Midge damage ever since. The Swede Midge is a pest that affects a broad range of crops in the brassica/crucifer families. It has multiple generations per season and initially emerges and begins laying eggs in mid-May through early June. The eggs are laid on the growing point of brassica crops and this disrupts the plants growth. Because of the nature in which they initiate “head formation” the primary crops that are most susceptible to damage are broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower. We have lost a significant quantity of our early broccoli, along with some cabbage, cauliflower, and other brassicas to Swede Midge this season. Swede Midge damage in broccoli is particularly frustrating because you can have a beautiful plant lacking one critical component – the broccoli head. Last season we lost our entire early fall broccoli crop and managed to harvest some from the late plantings. The challenges inherent with any new pest are amplified by our choice of sticking to organic growing practices. We don’t have the ability to apply an affective systemic and/or broad-spectrum pesticide that would broadly target the Swede Midge. This means that there is typically a lag time in learning about “new” pests and determining approaches that will help control their populations. A great deal of organic pest control comes down to; understanding the pests life cycle and determining means to plant around peak populations, discovering organic products that have some efficacy and determining optimum windows for application and control and, exploring trap cropping and biological control options while promoting optimum plant health, crop rotation and field sanitation. These sorts of things usually come with a bit of lag time as “new and novel” pests require growers and industry folks to come up to speed rather quickly. Rotation away from susceptible crops is a great way to create an early buffer. Its kind of like temporarily running away from your problems so you can think about things a little more first. The inherent problem in doing so on a diversified farm such as ours and with a pest such as Swede Midge is simply the fact that SO many crops that we grow fall into the brassica/crucifer line up that it would be incredibly hard to rotate away from those crops in any truly dramatic fashion. We are fortunate in some regards that our fields are somewhat spread out and we can spatially rotate fairly broadly. This creates some other challenges in our bigger crop rotation and field utilization scheme but hopefully can help slow the spread of a pest such as this. One of the inherent challenges of trying to figure out new approaches and practices is the fact that in some instances you might only get a shot or two per year at something. If we’re trying to figure out how to best protect our early broccoli – which at this point seems incredibly susceptible – we really only have one period per year to trail and error our way through possible “solutions”. We combine what we learn with what we can glean from other growers struggling with similar circumstances, with other industry professionals, and academics and we all collectively take our experiences try to come up with some workable “solution”. There’s a part of me that hopes we do this so ultimately we can dial in a perfect system, get everything firing on all cylinders and not face these types of challenges but I’ve come to realize that’s a pipe dream that ignores the fact that change is the only constant and there will be some new challenge coming down the pike tomorrow....

In the Kitchen:

Cauliflower is a cruciferous vegetable that is closely related to broccoli, cabbage, kale, and brussels sprouts. This is a cool-weather crop, so it grows best in the spring and fall. Although the leaves of the cauliflower plant are also edible, cauliflower heads are actually florets, which are clusters of flower buds.

Although this vegetable is less popular than many other cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, it is extremely nutrient-rich and contains vitamin C, vitamin K, and several B vitamins.

To store cauliflower wrap it loosely in plastic and keep it in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. Cauliflower can be eaten raw or roasted in olive oil, or you can check out this recipe:

Cauliflower Soup

½ Tbsp. olive oil
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 onion, (or a couple spring onions) diced
1 head cauliflower, diced
32 ounces vegetable broth
1 tsp. salt
grated Parmesan for serving, if desired
sliced green onions for serving, if desired

In a Dutch oven pot (or heavy pot), heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion and garlic. cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Add cut up cauliflower and vegetable broth. Bring to a boil then cover and simmer for 15-20 minutes until cauliflower is softened. Carefully pour entire contents of pot into blender (I use my Vitamix). Add salt. Carefully blend until smooth. Serve in bowls with grated Parmesan cheese on top (if desired) and sliced green onions. Enjoy!