

# Fernbrook Farm CSA

Volume 5 Issue 2

June 2011

## And The Harvest Begins!



### Fernbrook Farm CSA Hours

Saturday  
8:00 am to 1:30 pm

- Or -

Tuesday  
10:00 am— 7:00 pm

And here it comes again...Wow! How did this happen. It seems as though I was sitting here at my dining room table at this very laptop filling out my seed order and plotting where these theoretical plants would go at the farm. It was cold then - snowing. The garlic was still hiding under frozen straw and even the winter rye looked dead. Nothing was growing. No Apprentices were at the farm. No pigs were in the pasture. All was quiet...

I like the winter. But I get antsy. I tend to go through a minor mental and physical hibernation. Sort of a retreat from the pace and hard work of the previous 9 months. But by the time Valentine's Day rolls around, I'm itching to get the rhythm back—see some green, get my hands dirty and fire up a tractor. And now - it's here. **OPENING WEEK!** Hundreds of families are about to descend upon us and we must provide food! Wait—where did that snow go?

Well, 2 weeks ago the prospect of harvesting all that food worried me. But we had a nice warm dry week followed by all of this rain and it looks to me like a nice little spring. The crops have responded well and we've been planting planting planting and planting! So I **THINK** we are ready for you...

And speaking of you, we have a few more families in the mix this year. We've added about 25 more shares from 2010. We've also added some more acreage, we've extended our farmshop hours and we added

a 4th Apprentice to keep up with all of this extra work!

Duncan Simonson is back for a second year and has graduated to the big boy tractors.



*Apprentices, Start Yer Engines...*

He's taken well to the mowing, discing, and spading that gets our fields ready to plant and seed. He started in winter to help get the greenhouse going and work on some building and grounds projects. Duncan is joined by Caroline DiGiovanni, Lo Pagan and Victoria Francis.



*Kind of a wet spring...*

Caroline joins us most recently from the Pinelands Preservation Alliance where she was the local watershed ambassador through the AmeriCorps program. She has been getting very familiar

with the 274 International tractor spreading seeds and killing weeds and teaching us all about wild mushrooms.

Lo Pagan did some volunteer work for us last year and liked it so much she applied for an Apprenticeship. In addition to finishing coursework in political science at Rider, she has been working hard and getting very

## Welcome to Opening Day! (continued from page 1)

adept at using our John Deere 1050 tractor and doing the occasional cartwheel through our lush red clover fields.



Mom (Lydia) & Daughter (Tori) Planting Spuds

Lo shares 1050 tractor duties with Victoria Francis. Tori also did some work at the CSA in 2010 and her mother Lydia has been a “workshare” with us since year 1 as well as the main caretaker of Fernbrook’s animals. So Tori knows the farm pretty well and has jumped in with both feet. And like Lo, she’s done very well logging many hours in the tractor seat this spring (not to

mention she is the reigning Burlington County Farm Fair Queen...)

Early in the season, we rehabbed one of the greenhouses here, amended the soil with compost, skinned it with 2 layers of plastic and now use it for our early tomatoes and we’ll do late greens in it as well. With the help of some of our valued workshare participants, we got both layers up and secure just beating



Skinning Our New Fieldhouse

the arrival of a windy, rainy front.

So the spring has been good. Not without some challenges, setbacks and surprises (of course) but so far, so good. And we are collectively excited to see old friends and meet all of the new CSA members. We’ve been seeing some of you recently and I know there is some palpable excitement out there for lettuce, peas, zucchini and of course the S-BERRies...(whose actual name I shall not mention due to weird but deep-seated farmer superstition). So let’s eat; we’re ready for you!

On behalf of Larry and Susie Kuser, the owners and proprietors of Fernbrook Farm, it’s our great pleasure to welcome you to a season of fresh, healthy, tasty and chemical-free food. We always value your feedback and we really value your participation in this sustainable venture! So without further adieu.....Let’s get this Parsley started! (sorry)

Your Farmer,

*Jeff Tober*



## What to expect in June at the Farm

“Wouldn’t be much of a farm without some food” a wise farmer friend once told me. True enough. So every month, the newsletter will give you a snapshot of the veggies you can expect to see in the coming weeks. Please keep in mind it is our best guess – some crops will come in early and some late, but we’ll try to give you an accurate forecast. We’ll give you a brief description of the food, how to prepare it and we’ll include recipes as well. And don’t be afraid to experiment a little!

**Please note that we recommend washing all of the produce before you eat it.**

***We soak most of the veggies to remove the field heat and give them a basic wash, but we don’t ‘clean’ the food. Please treat these veggies as you would if they were purchased from the store.***



### June’s Bounty



**Arugula** – A favorite European salad green which has become very popular in the States too. Has a zesty little bite which has given it a dedicated fan base. Mix it with lettuce in salads. Great on sandwiches too. We try to grow it often so we have a fresh supply throughout the growing season. Best in the Spring. Available starting week 1.

**Beets** – We’ll start the season bunching the beets with the greens. In fact we grow a variety known for its delicious greens—“Early Wonder Tall Top”. Try chopping up the whole kit-and-caboodle and adding to a stir-fry. Sautee baby beets with carrots in butter or try baking beets like potatoes when they get larger. Steaming is great too. Or grate the beets raw into a salad. Ready around week 3.

**Braising or Stir Fry Greens** – June is a great time for greens and we’ll offer you a nice selection. Basically, chop them up and cook them quickly. Our various greens feature different tastes, colors, and textures as well as funny names. Look for Tat Soi, Komatsuna, Senposai, Bok Choy, Mustard, Kale and others. They will be labeled in the farm shop. Olive Oil, Garlic, Lemon, Ginger, Sesame and Tamari all go well with greens. Try experimenting with some greens raw in salads as well. Available starting week 1.

**Broccoli Raab** - This has become a very popular green in spring and fall. It is a non-heading broccoli wherein the leaves, tops and

## June's Bounty (cont.)

flower shoots are eaten. Tender and tasty and a tad bitter. My farmer friend Paul who is Italian suggests the following—chop it up, sautee it with lots of garlic, olive oil, sweet sausage and sun-dried tomatoes and mix with cavatelli. I've done it—Ummmmm good. Available starting week 2 or 3.

**Chinese Cabbage** – Asian cousin of domestic cabbage (also in the brassica group). Cultivated in Asia for the past 1,500 years. Use raw or cooked - excellent stir-fry ingredient. Remove outer leaves and slice 1 inch segments for stir-frys. Great source of Vitamins K and C!! Available around week 4.

**Collard Greens** - Savory & Healthy!. I always consider these a fall crop but we grew them the past 2 springs with success so here they are again. Yet another green from the cabbage family, it is remarkable at soaking up the flavors it is cooked with. In the south, they commonly use ham hocks and black-eyed peas with collards in a stew. GOOD! Can also be steamed and stir-fried. Available around week 2. (And Whole Foods index puts kale / collards and turnip greens at the very tip top for nutritional value...just don't tell your kids.)



**Cucumbers** - Ah the cucumber—such a simple food and yet kind of complicated to grow...This is a crop that seems to be threatened by more diseases and pests each year. One of the biggest threats (to all melons, cukes and squash) is bacterial wilt which is spread by the cucumber beetle. As of this printing, the first planting is looking promising but we'll see how they do. We grow picklers and slicers and we'll do our very best to bring in a great crop for you! Available mid to late June.

**Garlic Scapes** – This is the curly seed head that the garlic plant sends up in June. We pinch them off to get a bigger bulb. But the scapes provide you with a great garlic taste in the spring. Chop them up, great sautéed, stir-fried, or even use them to make pesto - like a garlicky scallion. Many shareholders have thrown them in the freezer to extend the garlicky season. Available around week 3.

**Herbs** – Basil, Dill, Parsley and Cilantro will be available somewhere toward the end of June. Some of these we transplant and some we direct seed a few times throughout the season to give you access to fresh herbs. We grow many kinds of basil (cinnamon, lemon, purple etc) to give you interesting tastes and colors. We usually tell you to “take what you need” by pinching off the outer leaves and letting the plant continue to grow. Check the U-Pick board for availability. Available by mid to late June. Field A2.

**Kale** - Grew this fall classic—”Toscana” in the spring in 2009 and it went over quite well. A sweet, lovely blue / green kale. Steam it up, use in a soup or stew or stir-fry. Versatile and Good. Go get your vitamins! Available starting week 1 or 2.

**Kohlrabi** - Once again, a member of the cabbage family shows up. This time the edible part is a round, swollen stem that is crisp and tasty - kind of a broccoli / radish taste in my opinion. Can be eaten raw or cooked. Usually peeled first. We are growing purple and white varieties this spring.

**Lettuce** – Spring grows the best lettuce of the year. We'll offer a mix of romaine, greenleaf, redleaf, & butterhead. We plant a lot of lettuce to try to keep it coming fresh every week. You know what to do with this stuff! Interestingly enough, a member of the sunflower family (*Compositae*). Time for salads! Available starting week 1. May have it in bulk as well.

**Peas** - We grow snap peas and snow peas (you eat the entire pod) as well as the shelling peas which you have to shell but it is really worth it. Pick a bag, bring them home and shell them with the family. And boy are they easy to freeze—just put them in a freezer bag or jar and in they go. The snow and snap peas are a great fresh snack and a superb stir-fry and salad ingredient. These are a U-Pick crop. Snow and Snap Peas in the South Field and Shellers in C2. Available mid June.

**Radish** – Excellent salad ingredient with some zest!!. I like them raw as a healthy, tasty snack. Available in a variety of colors. Available starting week 1 or 2.

**Turnips** – I'm a real fan of these mild spring things. Use raw or cooked and try the greens in stir-frys. Please try washing it and biting right in. SWEET SWEET SWEET! Many a member have told me they prefer them to radishes. Available starting week 1.

**Spinach** – Ah spring spinach. A wonderful green raw or cooked. My wife loves it. Depending on the year, it can be a finicky crop. Looking pretty good thus far in 2011 (knock wood). Don't overcook or it will lose it's color and texture. You can freeze it. Blanche for 2 minutes, drain, cool, bag and freeze. Available starting week 1.

**Summer Squash** - We grow the classic green zucchini, yellow squash and a really great Italian heirloom called costanta romanesco which is ribbed, and really tasty. Like the cukes, these face a growing list of challenges but so far so good. Available starting week 3.

**Sweet Red Fruits Whose Name I Cannot Mention** – Nice looking crop. Field A1 probably has the best fruit and B1 is in its second fruiting year. It's a little thinner with smaller fruit but it looks pretty nice! Crop will peak in early June. These are U-Pick and we hope you'll have a lot for jam, pies, smoothies, and they FREEZE wonderfully—stem and freeze! We'll keep you informed of amounts each week.

**Swiss Chard** – One of the prettiest, tastiest and healthiest greens we grow. Some call it summer spinach and it's actually healthier! Makes a great partner to potatoes and is excellent steamed. Use leaves and stems (if they aren't too big). We'll try to have chard around throughout the year. Very good in spring. Available week 1 or 2.

**Scallions** – We grow them in bunches and they give us lovely green tops. Top potatoes, use in salads or any place you'd use onion. Nice coleslaw ingredient. Available starting about week 3.



## Thought For Food...

*Headline—The Guardian News May 17th, 2011: Exploding Watermelons Put Spotlight On Chinese Farming Practise*

"The flying pips, shattered shells and wet shrapnel still haunt farmer Liu Mingsuo after an effort to chemically boost his fruit crop went spectacularly wrong. Fields of watermelons exploded when he and other agricultural workers in eastern [China](#) mistakenly applied forchlorfenuron, a growth accelerator. The incident has become a focus of a Chinese media drive to expose the lax [farming](#) practices, shortcuts and excessive use of fertiliser behind a rash of [food](#) safety scandals. It follows discoveries of the heavy metal cadmium in rice, toxic melamine in milk, arsenic in soy sauce, bleach in mushrooms, and the detergent borax in pork, added to make it resemble beef.

From California Watch—December 2, 2010: State Approves Pesticide Despite Cancer Warning.

Over objections from its own scientific advisers, the Schwarzenegger administration yesterday issued its final approval of a highly toxic pesticide that conventional strawberry growers say is critical to their \$2 billion industry. Speaking in a conference call to reporters, MaryAnn Warmerdam, whom Schwarzenegger appointed in

2004 to direct the state's Department of Pesticide Regulation, said that "methyl iodide is the most evaluated pesticide in the department's history."

That [evaluation process](#) included the appointment of a panel of scientists hand-picked from universities and research institutions across the country. Known as the Scientific Review Committee, its job was to help the regulation department consider how toxic methyl iodide might be to farm workers and people who live near strawberry fields. Arguably, no one is more steeped in the science of methyl iodide and its potential health effects than these eight scientists. And every member of the panel had strenuously objected to the pesticide's approval.

"It is my personal opinion that this decision will result in serious harm to California citizens, and most especially to children," wrote panel member Theodore Slotkin, a professor of pharmacology and cancer biology at Duke University, in an e-mail yesterday.

"If You Eat, You're Involved In Agriculture" Wendell Berry



## Fernbrook Farm CSA Events

Throughout the year, we will have various events at the farm in which you are welcome to participate. Events are free of charge unless otherwise noted. Below are a list of upcoming events. We'll usually provide more specific information in the farm shop for a specific event as it gets closer.

**Saturday, June 11th**

**WEED ROUND-UP!**

**8:00am—Noon during shop**

Now of course we won't be using any Round-Up® but we will be pulling weeds and liberating some of our crops. Bring a water jug, some gloves and a 'can-do' attitude. Show up at the farm shop. We provide the weeds, you provide the labor.

**Friday, June 24th**

**Solstice Potluck**

**6:00pm – 8:00pm**

*Bring a dish with farm-fresh food and celebrate the arrival of summer! Wagon Ride to follow. Please bring a dish to serve 6-8 people—main course, salad, side, or dessert. And please bring your own plate, cup and silverware! We try to make these "No Trash Events"! See you there*

**Saturday, June 25th Cooking Demonstration with Chef Matthew McElmoyl 8:00am—Noon (tentative)**

*Join Chef Matthew and Danielle McElmoyl of Oliver a bistro, Bordentown, NJ as he whips up some culinary delights using Fernbrook CSA produce. He'll provide samples of his creations and information on how to use your fresh Fernbrook produce.*

**Please pay the balance of your share if you are not paid-in-full.**

**Don't know what you owe? Call 609-298-0029**

