



The Cedar Post

Cedar Down Farm's Weekly Newsletter

Winter CSA, Week 6 of 10, January 21, 2013

This week's share:

Carrots, sweet potatoes, onions, garlic, kohlrabi, squash, watermelon radish, spinach

Next week's guess:

Carrots, potatoes, onions, garlic, squash, cabbage, black beans, greens

On the farm...

Some of you may recall back during the summer, photos and news of our grain crop trials that we've been working on with the goal of soon being able to offer a grain share. It's been awhile since you've had news, I know, so we thought we should share a bit of what we've been working on since the summer and how things are going on the grain front. It was a bit of a challenging summer to be trialing our first field crops, what with no rain and all, but we managed to get some decent harvests out of some of our trials and we've been working on cleaning and processing them ever since!

The biggest thing we have learned since starting this project is that there's a lot to learn! Well, that's a bit of an understatement really. The amount of information that you need to know to grow good quality grain is a lot. Add to that all that there is to know about cleaning, storing, processing and then milling that grain and it is tons! So, as you may imagine, the process of growing the grains and then getting them to you is turning out to be longer than we expected. But, we've been slowly making progress over the course of the fall and winter and are trying to network with other growers, millers and processors to try and learn as much as possible with the time and resources that we have (I just got back from an amazing baking course where I met great folks in New York who are working to grow, mill and bake with local grains - so exciting!).

What have we been learning? Well, we've been learning how to clean the grain - how to properly remove stones, chaff, dirt and bad grains from our final product. We've been learning about best harvest conditions, about proper storage and handling, about crop varieties and diseases and proper fertility. We've been learning about milling and processing the grain and making the products that we think you all might want. For example, Jeff and Ahren (our neighbour who is partnering up with us for the grain project), got an old oat roller up and rolling this winter and we've been getting our first taste of farm-grown rolled oats! (See photo of the oat roller below).

It's a long and complex process, we're discovering, but we're also discovering that this is an exciting time to be working on locally-grown grains. One exciting development is that our intern from last year, Bennet, has just bought a farm around the corner and is going to be getting his bakery up and running this summer - we can all be eating wonderful, locally made bread really soon, made with our and Bennet's home-grown grains!

We have decided that this year should be dedicated to learning and experimenting with our grains products and hope to have a grain share to offer come next winter. But, you may see some samples at upcoming CSA pickups - we hope that some of you may want to be our guinea pigs and give us feedback on the products that we've been working on thus far. Like the veggies, we're discovering that nothing tastes better than fresh and homegrown!



Sweet Potato Soup Groundnut Soup with Black Beans

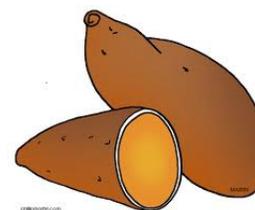
Serves 4-5, adapted from Gluten-Free Goddess

1 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp Thai red curry paste (optional)
1/2 tsp cinnamon
1 medium red or yellow onion, diced
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 large sweet potato, peeled and diced
2 carrots, diced
1/2 lb dried black beans, soaked overnight and cooked until tender
1 quart veggie broth
1/2 cup all-natural peanut butter
1/2 cup boiling water
1/2 tsp red pepper flakes
1 lime
3 tsp brown sugar
salt and pepper to taste

Heat the olive oil in a large soup pot. Add curry paste and cinnamon. Stir for 1 minute or so so that the olive oil gets infused with the spice. Add the onion, garlic, sweet potato and carrot. Stir and cook the veggies for 5-7 minutes until softened.

Add the beans and broth. Melt the peanut butter by mixing it with 1/2 cup boiling water. Add that to the mix. Add the red pepper flakes.

Bring the soup to a boil, then cover and simmer. Cook until veggies are tender, about 25 minutes.



Stir in the lime juice and brown sugar. Season with salt and black pepper.

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Get more involved in your CSA!

Like every year, after the fall harvests are in, seed orders are completed and things are a bit more settled on the farm, there is time on the farm to look over the previous season and plan and scheme for the upcoming one. Like many small businesses, we are always analyzing what we do on the farm and how we do it to see where the weak spots are, what improvements could be made, what we can change to be more efficient, work smarter, improve financially, etc.

This year, in going through this process we came up with an idea that we think will help us to be better farmers, get things done on the farm that we haven't been able to and better communicate with you, our members, to make sure that the CSA is the best that it can be, for you and us. It isn't a new idea, in fact it is something that comes from the very beginnings of Community Shared Agriculture (CSA).

The idea is to have a core advisory group. You see, when farms first started to use the CSA model as a means of getting their food to the community, it wasn't the farmers who thought of it. It was community members - people who wanted good quality, fresh and nutritious food - who approached local farmers to see how they could work together. These community members recognized that they had needs that weren't being met and that farmers had the same, and by working together they could create a model that would provide for all these needs and ensure a safe, sustainable food system.

So, the first CSAs were very community-driven and often had community members as the driving force on the farm - helping to make decisions and get things done, helping to organize and coordinate. That is still the case on some CSA farms these days and for even more that has translated into the "core group"; a few CSA members who act as an advisory group, as representatives for the membership and who help to coordinate some of the "extras" that go on at the farm like farm open house days, cookbook creation, website stuff and more. Having the help of others who have other skills and a different perspective and who might have the time and energy to contribute can only benefit the CSA as a whole.

And so you see, as Jeff and I look at the farm business and go through the dreams and ideas we have for how it should run, we think it could be a good idea to have our own core group here at Cedar Down Farm CSA. It wouldn't be a huge commitment - maybe one or two meetings a year to help us plan and brainstorm and possibly contribute some time to those "extras" that we'd love to get done.

Think you might want to be a member of our core group? Send us an email or give us a call! We'd love to brainstorm with some enthusiastic CSA members and see what could happen.

Call us at 519 665 2008 or send us an email at info@cedardown-farm.ca and we'll talk!

Thanks!

Sweet Potato Fries

From <http://cookingweekends.blogspot.ca>

1-2 tbs olive oil
1 large garlic clove, grated
about 1 1/2 lbs / 680 g sweet potatoes
1/2 tsp sweet paprika
1/2 tsp cumin
1/4 tsp freshly cracked black pepper
1/4 tsp salt
1/8 tsp cinnamon
1/8 tsp ground ginger
a few pinches cayenne



Preheat the oven to 450°F/ 230°C.
Combine the grated garlic and the olive oil in a bowl. Set aside.
Wash and peel the sweet potatoes. Cut them into 1/3 inch (0.85 cm) thick sticks. Add the sweet potato sticks to the bowl with the oil and toss them until they're evenly coated.

Mix the spices together in a small dish. Sprinkle this spice mix over the sweet potatoes and toss them to coat them evenly.

Place the fries on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake them for 20 minutes in the preheated oven. Flip them and bake for another 10 to 15 minutes or until cooked to preference.

Deliciously Simple Sautéed Kohlrabi

A Cedar Down Farm Recipe

Serves 4-6

1 large kohlrabi, peeled and cut into 1/2 inch sticks
3 tbs butter
salt and pepper taste



Heat butter in a large skillet. When melted, add cut up kohlrabi. Cover and cook for 10-12 minutes or until the kohlrabi is beginning to get tender. Uncover and cook for 10 to 12 minutes for, stirring often until kohlrabi is nicely browned and tender but not mushy. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Scandinavian Slaw

From www.moosewoodcooks.com

Serves 6

1 1/2 cups kohlrabi, thinly sliced and cut into matchsticks
2 cups grated carrots
2 cups watermelon radish, cut into thin matchsticks
2 cups peeled, cored, and thinly sliced apples
1/3 cup vegetable oil
2 teaspoons ground caraway seeds
1 1/2 cups buttermilk
2 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
Salt to taste

Place the kohlrabi, carrots, radish and apples in a bowl. In a separate small bowl, whisk together the oil, caraway, buttermilk, sugar, and vinegar. Pour the marinade over the vegetables and toss thoroughly. Add salt to taste just before serving.