

Shared Ground Coop Fall CSA Newsletter



Whetstone Farm's guard dog keeping watch over the sheep

Notes for tomorrow

- 1) Same old same old! Don't forget to bring your boxes back!

The next Fall Share pick-up date is:

December 22nd

The next Meat Share pick-up date is:

December 22nd



Eric Larsen from Stone's Throw Urban Farm taking down irrigation hose. The hose

was rigged up and over the alleyway to hook up to a fire hydrant on University and Galtier in St. Paul.

Dear Members,

I wanted to share with you some of my thoughts and experience from the Midwest CSA Conference this past week. The CSA Conference takes place every other year in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. It is a time for CSA farmers to come together and share our challenges and successes within our farm systems, CSA membership, and examples of farm-to-farm collaborations.

As many of you know, the CSA movement grew, and still is growing, quickly, particularly over these last ten years. The first CSA farm in the Midwest, Common Harvest Farm, started only 26 years ago. Today there are over 100 CSA farms that serve the Twin Cities region, for an approximate total of 10,000 CSA members.

The themes that came up through the course of the conference were not new to me. Struggles with labor retention and payment, CSA membership commitment and growth, equity and how to grow social justice work, land access, and accessing markets were a few of the main points of discussion that came up repeatedly. Within these I am most interested in sharing with you a workshop, and conversation that followed, about CSA membership.

The workshop was hosted by two owners and two CSA members of [Spring Hill Community Farm](#), one of the oldest CSA farms in the Twin Cities region, and the farm with the most successful CSA membership retention in the Midwest (95% of their members come back every season!). There are many admirable aspects of their farm, including that their boxes are packed and delivered *by their CSA members* (each member is required to come out to the farm one time per year to lend a hand harvesting and washing vegetables), and the way they empower and engage with their "Core Group", a committee of 10 CSA members that advises and works with them on their budget, investment decisions, system changes and CSA events. Some of the decisions made from the Core Group meetings included: research and installment of a solar power system on the farm, the decision to raise the price of the CSA box in order to pay the farm's workers and start a retirement account for the farm owners (it came to raising the CSA price by only \$30 total), AND the financial and community support of the farm when one season a spring hail storm destroyed multiple crops and farm infrastructure. I was blown away by both their ability to maintain communication and organization with so many people as well as the tangible commitment their members had for their farm.

This workshop got me thinking about next steps in our CSA. We have many members that have been involved with Shared Ground in one way or another- by volunteering, advising us on our coop structure, teaching a cooking class, or sending us words of support. We do not have one specific piece of land that grounds us all like Spring Hill Community Farm. However, many of us do share a curiosity and intention to work to address the systemic inequalities so present in our food system- and to engage in conversation about race, class, whiteness, cooperative movements, etc. Within the staff and board of Shared Ground we have almost daily discussions about race, privilege, and power structures- through informal discussions as well as in equity and coop trainings for the Shared Ground board.

And I apologize, I have not done the best at sharing some of that process with you all! It has been difficult to know what and how to share it.

At this point I don't know what a CSA "Core Group" would look like- whether it be discussion based or involvement with Shared Ground in another way besides just picking up boxes every week. Regardless, I hope to continue the discussion about expanding CSA membership involvement with Shared Ground farmers about this and would love to hear from any of you on your thoughts or reactions about how to take this a step further.

Enjoy the box this week. I look forward to continuing this conversation with you all in the future.

Sincerely,
Robin Major
CSA Coordinator

What's in the Box

Recipe Inspiration



Store all of the veggies in your box in a plastic bag or crisper drawer in your fridge, unless stated otherwise

As you can tell, the Minnesota winter has hit our fields! Due to the hard frost a couple weeks ago we have less of those fresh greens and herbs in the box this week. We do, however, still have kale alive and well! This will likely be the last box with any kind of greens.

Red Beets

Brussel Sprouts

Cabbage

Carrots

Garlic

Onions- *you can leave either in your friend or on your kitchen counter*

Potatoes

Butternut Squash-*you can leave either in your friend or on your kitchen counter*

Kale

Watermelon Radishes

**A note on onions this season- We, unfortunately, are very low on yellow onions this season! We will have some yellow onions in future boxes but you can expect more red*



Potato Pancakes [Latkes] from Smitten Kitchen

My formula is roughly this: a one-pound russet or baking potato to one small onion, a large egg, quarter-cup of flour, teaspoon of salt and a hefty pinch of black pepper. How many you yield has to do with how big you make them; I aim for small ones (approximately three inches across) and get about a dozen per batch.

But, if you're not a formula person, here is a more official-like recipe:

1 large baking potato (1 pound), peeled
1 small onion (4 ounces), peeled
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
Peanut oil, for frying

In a food processor or on a box grater,

than yellow this year.

coarsely shred the potato and onion. For longer strands, lay the potato sideways in the chute of your food processor. Transfer to a colander or wrap in a cheesecloth sling, and squeeze as dry as possible. Let stand for 2 minutes, then squeeze dry again.

In a large bowl, whisk the flour, egg, salt and pepper together. Stir in the potato onion mixture until all pieces are evenly coated.

In a medium skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil until shimmering. Drop packed teaspoons of the potato mixture into the skillet and flatten them with the back of a spoon. Cook the latkes over moderately high heat until the edges are golden, about 1 1/2 minutes; flip and cook until golden on the bottom, about 1 minute. Drain on paper towels. Repeat with the remaining potato mixture, adding more oil to the skillet as needed.

Do ahead: Latkes are a do-ahead-er's dream. You can also keep latkes warm in the oven for an hour or more, if you're waiting for stragglers to arrive. Cooked, they keep well in the fridge for a day or two, or in the freezer, well wrapped, for up to two weeks. Reheat them in a single layer on a cookie sheet in a 400 degree oven until they're crisp again. Bonus: If you undercooked them a bit or didn't get the browning on them you'd hoped for, you can compensate for this in the oven.

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