

The Gannick* Weekly

Norwood CSA Newsletter

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* Gannick /GAN-nik/ - One who raises, eats or advocates organic foods and/or lifestyle.



This Week's Share

- 1 lb potatoes
- 2 peppers
- 1 tomato
- 2 onions
- 1 garlic
- 1 squash
- 1/4lb cherry tomato

Pick a peach. any peach!



by Michael Putos

Last Saturday, my friend Aleth and I went to a Pick-Your-Own farm in Ghent, NY to pick peaches and nectarines, which are currently in season. The farm is called "Love Apple" farm. I found this farm during a search of the Internet for places upstate to pick peaches and nectarines. I selected "Love Apple" because I had been there many years ago and remember having had a conversation with the owner.

At that time I had asked him about the feasibility of growing tree fruit organically, and he replied that at one time he was organic and was shipping to health food stores all over the Northeast. I don't recall precisely why he had returned to conventional orcharding, but it had something to do with the expense of maintaining such an operation and the trouble of caring for fruit trees 100% organically.

I don't know for sure, but I suspect the current owners, Chris Loken and his wife, are related to the man I met about 20 years ago. Here is a current quote from their webpage: "LoveApple Farm practices an Integrated pest management program and a natural Nitrogen program. We don't use Alar or artificial ripening chemicals." This would place them somewhere in between being 100% organic and being 100% conventional growers. They have been in business for over 30 years and are "one of the largest growers of tree ripe fruit in the State. Wholesale, Retail and Pick-your-own." The orchard has 15,000 trees. Chris and his wife have expanded the operation to a nationwide scale. They ship fruit to places all over the East and South

Message from the Farm

We are now at the end of the second week in August and there is still time for volunteers to come to the farm and help with planting and weeding. Weeding is a continuous battle and a very important task. Weeds can contribute to deficiencies in all crops by taking vital moisture and energy. They also shade the crops and block the wind creating ideal conditions for destructive insects, disease and mold. The summer heat has cooled down making it a lot easier to work in the fields and tunnels. We urge members who have not been to the farm to organize work details, take a break from the city, see where your food is grown and take part in an endeavor that is important to you.

There has also been some discussion about an official CSA farm visit in the coming weeks. Last year, all the CSAs got together and rented a bus for the day. Members who are interested should contact their individual CSA coordinators and decide upon a time.



"Vegetables by Grace" courtesy Grace Miner

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PEACHES, continues from Pge 1

We got there early in the morning at around 9:00 AM and told one of the salesgirls in the farm store that we were interested in picking peaches and nectarines. The price was 75 cents per pound of picked fruit. She gave us a couple of bags which hold a half bushel (20lbs) of fruit and directed us to drive into the orchard and park next to a red barn. From that barn straight back were the rows of peach and nectarine trees.

We started by picking peaches and filled that first bag fairly quickly. There were so many peaches on the ground that you couldn't help stepping on them while picking from the branches. A ladder was not required since the trees are all dwarf size, most of the fruit being within easy reach. Of course, you are free to sample as you go along. We used some bottled water we had brought along to rinse the fruit before sampling. It was not difficult to find loose peaches on the ground that were in good shape and soft to the touch, so I sampled a couple. They were superb! The ones on the trees were still quite firm and crispy, but as I later found out they ripen quickly once picked.

At this point I will offer a tip to those of you who might like to make the trip: Don't fill up the bags to full capacity. The weight of the peaches themselves start to create bruises. By the time I got home there were a significant number that were bruised and even oozing juice. Instead, my suggestion is: ask for additional bags and don't fill them more than half way (about 10 lbs).

We picked a second bag full of peaches and proceeded to the rows of nectarine trees. There were much fewer nectarine trees and, judging by how bare the branches were, I'd say that nectarines are favored by the people who come to pick. We couldn't even fill the bag half way, so we returned to the peach trees and finished filling the third and last bag with more peaches. (BTW - The nectarines we did pick were of intense flavor. I haven't had a nectarine this good since spending time at a Health Resort in Texas a long time ago where they had their own fruit trees and vegetable garden

On our way back to the store to pay for our bounty, we noticed they had a gazebo surrounded by flower beds, so I asked if we could have our lunch there. They said, "why sure." After eating we took some pictures of the area around, and including the gazebo.

For those of you who have small children, this would be a great one day outing. Right in between the store and the pick-your-own part of the orchard is a pond with geese, a petting zoo that includes a Llama and a playground. The store also serves ice cream and has a small enclosed cafe with a limited

menu where you can get coffee and other beverages. From a window in the store you can also watch as they prepare pies for baking.

The farm stand/store is pretty big as these things go. The store sells already picked fruit, at a much higher price than the pick-your-own (They have "utility fruit," too, at about 40 cents/lb, which has been bruised and damaged). They have a variety of local vegetables for sale including: corn, cucumbers, peppers, squash, tomatoes and potatoes. In addition, they sell their own fruit preserves and bake their own pies and cookies on the premises. We bought a large peach pie (\$12.95) and a small cherry pie (\$5.95). I wasn't bowled over by the pies. The peach pie was not very deep, only about an inch thick and, to me, not worth the price. It didn't have that fresh, in-its-own-juice quality. I got the feeling that they added something to make the fruit coagulate and have a thicker consistency, so that the

individual pieces of the peaches were not recognizable. I was also disappointed in the oatmeal raisin cookies I bought (3 for \$2.75). Again, I felt they were overpriced for what they were.

In spite of my comments about the pie and cookies, this was a great outing for a family. (Pick the fruit and make your own pies; a kind of pick-your-own, make-your-own pie project). I give this trip a "Highly Recommended" designation. And while your in Columbia County, visit the county seat of Hudson, NY. It is number 8 on the list of top 10 historical towns in America. In the last couple of decades it has attracted a community of "artistic" types. The Main Street, called

Warren Street, is very architecturally interesting and has undergone a considerable facelift since I last visited about 18-20 years ago. They have many antique shops and art galleries now. When I was there last a fixer upper townhouse on Warren could have been had for \$40-50,000. A brief look at online listings indicates a price level of \$350,000 and up.

Another worthwhile side trip is just a few miles south of Hudson, a place called Olana. It is the Persian style home, now museum, of the famous 19th century Hudson River School artist Frederic Edwin Church. The home is perched on a hill high above the Hudson River with a view toward the west of the Catskill Mountains. The Home itself is under renovation and not open this season, but you can go there and picnic on the grounds. \$5.00 for parking on Saturday and Sunday and free during the week.

Well, I hope I've given you a "taste," so to speak, of this pick-your-own adventure, in particular, and Columbia County in general, so that you'll want to go up there and experience it for yourself



Meanwhile. down on the farm...

Weather Conditions

This past week, the weather has been good for crops. During the day, the temperatures were in the high 70s to low 80s. This is perfect weather for growing. The nights have been cool with temperatures falling to the mid-fifties with a few nights dropping below 50 degrees. Ideally, the temperature is best when it remains above 50 degrees. Temperatures in the 40s will slow the growing cycle. Once we experience a "killing" frost, many crops, such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, squash and cucumbers, will die. The normal period for a killing frost is the first week in October. An early frost would be on or near September 25th. A killing frost takes place when the temperature reaches 28 degrees for a period of at least four hours. Other crops, such as the brassicas; broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and especially brussel sprouts, maintain growth after a frost. For the past three years, the frost has been late, arriving in early October.

Crop News

Members have been asking about the dwindling cucumber supply. This season, cucumbers were an early crop because they were grown in the tunnels. Consequently, members received cucumbers much earlier in the season than they would have if they had been grown in open fields. Much of the cucumber crop is now depleted and what little is left is being attacked by beetles.

Tidbits

Norwich Meadows Farm is part of an experimental trial program in conjunction with the New York State Department of Agriculture to track and trap the Swede Midge, an insect responsible for attacking plants in the brassica family (cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower) that has caused problems in Madison county. Traps are set up on the farm using pheromones to attract the insect. The purpose of the experiment is to see how far and wide the insect is spreading.

The farm is also conducting an experiment with NOFA (New England Organic Farmers Association) growing up to 33 varieties of onions to see which types grow best in this area. The experiment will be replicated over a three-year period. The goal is to get local farmers to propagate their own seeds and not to rely on corporations such as Monsanto, a predatory company that is attempting to corner the market on all seeds. Hopefully the outcome will produce farms that will grow their own seeds and possibly farms that will specialize in the propagation of all types of seeds. There are also concurrent experiments being done with peppers, lettuce and tomatoes.

The dominance of mega-corporations such as Monsanto must be challenged if we are ever to achieve an independent and quality food supply.

Winter CSA Program

Last year, the Norwood CSA was one of the few CSAs in New York to participate in the winter share. Deliveries come once a month, with a variety of products including milk, yogurt, cheese, potatoes, garlic, etc. There were two Bronx CSAs participating, so the deliveries alternated between the sites... for the 2 deliveries that went to the South Bronx site, a few Norwood members went down to pick up our stuff. This was not really a problem, since it didn't happen often. The main issue is a distribution site... last year we kept the food in a van parked near the church.

Below are a few more details about the winter share, but we really need to know two things. First -- who is interested? If you are interested, please fill out the Winter CSA registration form. We need to know soon. Second -- who is interested in helping to coordinate certain aspects of it, namely distribution? If so, check the appropriate box on the registration form.

More Info

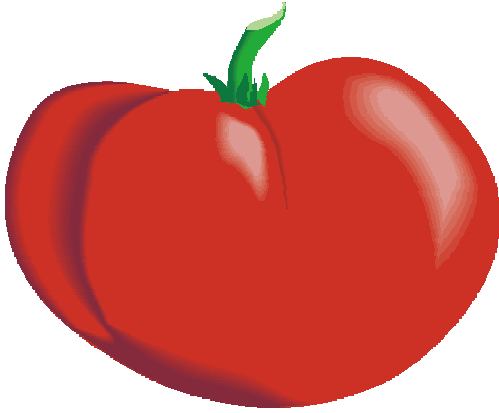
- The cost is \$175
- Deliveries will be once a month from mid-December through mid-April.
- Delivery day to be determined once we know how many members will be participating. There will also be alternate days in case of inclement weather
- There will be two options; Vegetarian (lacto-ovo) and Non-Vegetarian. Non-vegetarians will have a choice of chicken or ground beef with the farm determining what the choice of the week will be. Vegetarians will receive items such as cheese and hummus to compensate for the meat.
- Vegetables that will be available include; most storage crops - a variety of potatoes, winter squashes (acorn, butternut), cabbage, frozen tomatoes and possibly some greens (chard and kale).
- All members will also have their choices of various dairy products from the Evans Farm including cheese and yogurt, plus organic eggs from Norwich Meadows Farm.
- Available dry goods will include; granola, organic beans and possibly dried fruits.
- And local honey and maple syrup (Evans Farm).

As you can see, there will be a wide selection of products. Good nutrition and eating healthy food are year-round concerns and should not be put on hold during the winter months.

KITCHEN AID

Vegetable Spotlight

Tomatoes



The tomato is a plant in the *Solanaceae* or nightshade family, native to Central, South, and southern North America from Mexico to Peru. The genus *Solanum* also contains the eggplant and the potato, as well as many poisonous species.

Fruit or vegetable?

Botanically speaking, a tomato is the ovary, together with its seeds, of a flowering plant, and is definitely a fruit, or more precisely, a berry. However, from a culinary perspective the tomato is typically served as a meal, or part of a main course of a meal, which leads a lot of people to mistakenly consider it a vegetable. This argument has had legal implications in the U.S. In the past, the U.S. has imposed taxes on imported vegetables but not on fruit. Due to the amount of tomatoes that were imported into this country, the U.S., eager to collect all the taxes it could, took its case to the Supreme Court and had the tomato declared a vegetable.

Tomatoes are a great source of vitamin C if they are fresh and also contain a carotenoid called lycopene which helps prevent cancer and heart diseases. Cooked tomatoes are actually higher in lycopene. However, high heat also destroys most of the vitamins in tomatoes.

How To Peel Fresh Tomatoes

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Cut an "X" through the skin on bottom of each tomato. Drop tomatoes into water for 10 to 15 seconds. Remove tomatoes with a slotted spoon to a bowl or sink filled with ice water to cool them down. The skin will easily slip off each tomato.

Tomato & Mozzarella Salad

- 2 pounds of vine ripened tomatoes
- 1 pound of fresh (high quality) mozzarella
- 1/4 cup of packed fresh basil or arugula
- 1/4 teaspoon of dried oregano (if using arugula instead of basil)
- 3 to 4 tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil
- Sea salt and pepper to taste

Slice tomatoes and mozzarella into 1/4 inch slices. Arrange them on a large serving platter, alternating and overlapping them. Spread basil evenly over tomatoes and mozzarella. If using arugula, sprinkle with oregano. Drizzle olive oil over entire platter and salt and pepper to taste. Serve with crusty Italian bread. *Serves 4 to 6*

Blue Cheese and Baked Tomatoes

- 4 medium tomatoes, peeled
- 1 cup crumbled blue cheese
- 1/4 cup sliced green onion
- 1/4 cup toasted walnuts (chopped)
- 4 teaspoons chopped fresh parsley
- 4 Tbs. olive oil

Slice stem end from tomatoes. With a sharp knife make 3 or 4 vertical cuts onto top of tomato, cutting about halfway through tomato. Place, cut side up, into an ungreased 8-inch square baking dish. Pour 1/4 inch of water into baking dish.

Preheat broiler. In a small bowl, combine crumbled blue cheese, green onions, olive oil; spoon a heaping tablespoon of mixture over each tomato. Broil 4 minutes or until bubbly and lightly browned. Remove from oven and garnish with crumbled walnuts and parsley. *Serves 4*

Mock Frozen Peach "Daiquiri"

Courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control

- 1 cup juice packed canned peaches
- 1 Tbsp. Fresh lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp. Frozen pink lemonade concentrate

Chill peaches in freezer until very cold. Add to blender container with pink lemonade concentrate, lemon juice, and crushed ice. Puree until smooth. Pour into glasses.

Serves 2