

Farm Notes

CSA Newsletter

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Potomac Vegetable Farms
www.potomacvegetablefarms.com

Giving Thanks

Working and Eating Together

The sense of community that is so strongly felt on the Vienna farm is what I'm most grateful for. We are a mixed group, generationally-speaking, yet we have all been working together these past several months to produce beautiful vegetables and berries while having fun. Additionally, our weekly potluck lunches on Friday have been a source of enjoyment because amazing and creative dishes have been shared. Carrot soufflé, homemade ice

cream with berries, sautéed Hakurei turnips, eggplant parmesan, apple and pear crisp to name just a few. I've also become familiar with some members in our CSA community who have provided me with detailed methods of preparing produce. I learned how to roast fennel, use the leafy tops of radishes and beets, and slow roast tomatoes. Overall, there has been a bounty of human interaction as well as food, and for that I give thanks. – Susan Maneechai



Socially distanced Friday Potluck

Learning From My Co-Worker

I am grateful to have shared many conversations with an older (ten years older than I, but not old) coworker of mine on those sticky, mosquito mornings we spent in the tomato patch. Exchanging jokes and thoughts on how hot it was will always be a very special memory of mine; I think I will call on it to bring me joy for a very long time.

In the tomato patch I shared a lot of things I do not usually share with people-- moreover, I was prompted to think about and answer things for myself I don't usually share with people (much less myself.) Talking about comforts I missed in my life that I did not think I was entitled to any longer prompted a response of understanding and stories from other parts of the world. Those exchanges would morph into an additional discussion about self-reliance at all costs and times, with my coworker squashing that notion, and eventually rounding out into a mutual discussion



Dylan in the tomatoes

about realizing one's limits-- which would then lead into the great leaps and bounds humankind has made to make some conveniences available to people so they don't turn into withering, fleshy hulls devoid of humanity.

After these talks, I would often fall into a happy silence, thinking from a

new angle. We sometimes spoke on privilege, allowing me to see things in a different light—I got perspective from a multitude of places, where my coworker was from, where he had traveled, or what he had learned along the way in his life.

I began learning about confidence-- trusting oneself. Knowing that everything in life is simply the way you react to it-- this could be removing the false sense of control you think you have over a situation... or giving you more of a feeling of that control. Being reminded of that, and that I am young (in an uplifting, non-undermining way) was the very thing I needed back in May. I have been forced to grow up too fast for survival's sake-- and I went into a job to learn about self-sustainability. I came out having learned more about community than anything else, however... and I am so glad I did. Thanks, Dylan. Sorry about those mosquitoes. – Tara Kulak

Being Able to Work

I am grateful for many things this year, but the one thing I have been consistently grateful for is being able to work and be a part of the farm here. In a time when so many people are without work or a way to get out of the house, I have been able to work, doing something I am passionate about, and as a bonus get to have my dog and be outside. In this moment I am particularly grateful for this because today I was able to return to work. For the past three weeks, I have been quarantined at home, due to my partner and I having COVID. I love my partner and being able to do things that needed to be done around the house, but after the first week and starting to feel better, I became stir-crazy. I was unable to go to the horse barn and ride, I didn't go much of anywhere, except to walk around the fields and the pond by my house. In returning to the farm I somehow felt more at peace. I was able to be productive in a manner outside of myself and it was a nice feeling. It reminds me that I am doing the right thing for me and following the right path. I am grateful that I have found farming, in particular this farm and this community and that I am going to continue to be a part of it.

– Jess Rice

Good Meals and Memorable Conversations

This year at the farm I am most grateful for the knowledge I learned in the book *Eating with the Seasons: Recipes from Potomac Vegetable Farms*. It's not so much about the physical book, more about the meals I have enjoyed inspired by the book, and the conversations around which veggies if stored too long cause flatulence that didn't get honorable mentions that I will remember fondly long after I forget most details of the past summer. – Caroline Bond



Anna with husband Gordon and son Michael at the Reston Farmer's Market

Coming Back Home After a Generation

I am grateful to have found a way to participate in the family business again. Although I have never lived more than a few minutes' walk from the stand and the fields - raising three boys in my grandparents' house of "Parent's Field" for 16 years, after all - my life felt more complicated and crammed full of non-farm activities for most of the last 30 years. When COVID put a halt to weekend morning running club activities, and Hana suggested Gordon and I join Michael's Market Team at Reston, we jumped at the chance. After 4 months of Saturdays at Reston, we have worked our way into a small part of the farm rhythm, and have found that this has bled into hanging around to unload market trucks, occasionally stepping in to help with packing, and generally hanging out with the cool kids behind the stand. I have probably seen more of my farming family members during COVID than I had in all of the last 3 decades. When COVID told us all to stay in the house, I had no idea it would mean I would actually be finding my way back home. - Anna Newcomb

Health and Family

I am grateful for consistent good health: for myself, for Hana and Jon, and all of our families and workers. We have been able to get through the season without any medical setbacks or accidents.

I am very happy that Anna and Gordon regularly help out at the Reston Farmers Market. I think that their presence and Anna's signs and organizational skills could have accounted for the increase in sales and morale.

- Mariette Hiu Newcomb

Being Here and Staying Healthy

In spite of everything, there is so much I am grateful for this year. First and foremost the health of everyone on this farm. It's not easy wearing a mask when it's 95 degrees outside and we did our absolute best. Second, I'm just grateful for being able to be on the farm at all. I've met some amazing people, made some new friends, and gotten plugged into this community that I wouldn't have met otherwise. Lastly, I'm grateful for finally tasting REAL tomatoes. I didn't know what I was missing out on. Now I can never go back to grocery store tomatoes, thank goodness! - Keesha Vaughn

Gleaning for Others

Six strangers arrive in two cars on a weekday morning in early summer. They have come to the farm to pick the turnips and radishes still growing in the field but not scheduled for harvesting because there are too few, or other plantings of the same crops are coming along nicely. I spend some time picking with them and making sure they are in the right patches.

They are gleaners--volunteers at one of the food banks we work with to make sure good food we don't plan to harvest finds a good home. Inviting gleaners into the fields is just one of the ways the farm contributes to feeding people who don't have the resources to raise or buy the food they need. I'm grateful for the farm's commitment to making food available to people who can't afford it.

- Michael Lipsky



Planting for Winter

The Joy of a Well Executed Plan, In Real Life

Every Saturday morning at 6:15 I am filled with joy as I watch the market trucks roll out of the driveway, one after the other – they are loaded with gorgeous vegetables that we have picked and washed and packed together in the last few days. When everything goes smoothly as we prepare for the weekend, I am grateful every time. There are so many ways for things to go wrong, so a Saturday morning with perfect choreography brings me much pleasure.

And I am always grateful for the people who do all this work, for the way we work as a team, for the vegetables that are oblivious to the human drama



Sunday morning CSA

that has been unfolding throughout the whole growing season, and for the beauty that surrounds us every single day.

And this year, in particular, I am grateful to have work that has nothing to do with Zoom. It's all happening in muddy, sweaty, rainy, sunny real life. We are so lucky. - Hana Newcomb



Surrounded by beauty, everyday

Seeds and Smells, Light and Beauty

I am grateful for the smell of leaves, and for the quality of light this time of year- in the evenings before the sun has set in particular. I am grateful for rest, and falling asleep after a day of honestly earned movement has caused my body to tire. I am grateful for mystery organisms and wild yeasts in sourdoughs that make loaves rise. I am grateful for seeds being responsible for

nearly every bite of food I eat, and for much of the beauty I see when I look outside my window. I am grateful for biodiversity and beauty.

- Sophia Maravell



Fresh Farm Air and Friday Afternoons

Dear PVF,

This is my thank you note for getting me through the worst first months of school on record. Like everyone else, I dread the end of summer. High school means stress, and grades, and homework, but it also means friends, and Friday night home games, and after-school acapella (for me, anyway). 2020 permits none of these redeeming qualities. The very first day of school ticked by s l o w l y this year. Let's be clear, there is nothing particularly exciting about clicking through a page of links to get to class. But I made it to the end of that day, and at 2:55 when I shut my laptop, I grabbed my compost and drove to the farm. Did I really need to empty my bucket that day? Probably not. What I *did* need was to say hi to real people and the piggies, to be outside, and to just fill my lungs with fresh, breathable farm air (a little

ways down from the pig pen, obviously). From the first week of school until the end of the Fall CSA, coming back to the farm on Friday after school to help with market prep brought me SO much joy. Bunching flowers or bagging mustards, it didn't matter; as long as I was at the farm, I felt better. Thank you, PVF. I'm incredibly grateful for Friday afternoons this fall. - Love, Leah Fenster



Leah bunching flowers after school

Finding Family

GRATEFUL describes my feelings of having discovered PVF 4 1/2 years ago, summer of 2016. During those years of meaningful work, I found family. Thank you all. - Dick Clement