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POTOMAC VEGETABLE FARMS
www.potomacvegetablefarms.com
pvfnewsletter@gmail.com

Welcome (Back) to a New CSA Season!

by Hana Newcomb

I saw the first tiny yellow squash on a very small plant the other day. And the garlic scapes began to appear during the week before the CSA started – right on time! The lettuce is glowing with all this rain and the long, cool spring.

Every year on May 1, I think, “Oh, dear, what will we have for the first week of CSA? It’s just four weeks away and everything is so small.” And somehow that one month of growing makes it all come true. It doesn’t bring on the tomatoes and beans – those are still about eight weeks away – but the spring crops are in fine form.

In case we forget to thank you often enough, it is your early season commitment that makes all this possible. Many of you signed up on February 1, at your first opportunity, allowing us to spend your money on seeds and supplies, labor and fuel, repairs and maintenance. We could not do it without your early support.

I worry that the sign-up system is a bit opaque for the new folks. For those of you who just joined, you probably paid some mystery amount

and you might wonder how it all works. If you did not pay in full, then you paid for the first eight weeks in full. After that your card will be charged every week for the rest of the season. I will try to remind all of us on Week Nine that there will be a weekly charge on your credit card.

Every week I write a Farm Happening that shows up in the Harvie messages. While many of you are picking up at the farms, selecting your own vegetables in real life, I hope you will all take two minutes and read the updates from the field. These will help you to understand what is going on behind the scenes. I wonder how many of you already know how long it takes to grow a garlic bulb, or how many months it is from plant to sweet potato. (We should have a quiz for the veteran CSA folks!)

We welcome your feedback at any time. Ask questions. Tell us what is confusing you. This is our 23rd season of the CSA and we are still making changes and improvements. There is always more to learn, and that is part of what we love about growing vegetables. Eat well and be well, everyone!



Rachel swims in a sea of bolted rainbow chard plants as we whisk them away to the compost pile.

Spring Pesto Recipes

by Sydney Morrison

Basil has its time and place, but with so many leafy greens and fresh herbs available, I think Spring is the perfect season to play around with your pesto. Blanching your greens makes them easier on your stomach and allows you to pack more into your pesto. Here are two of my current favorite recipes:

Spring Green Pesto

I usually make this with blanched nettles, but since that particular season is behind us, I'm using other nutrient dense greens instead.

Ingredients:

- 1 bag/bunch of blanched PVF chard, kale, spinach, arugula, radish greens, turnip greens, or a combination of them.
- 1 stalk green garlic or 1/2 a bunch garlic chives
- 1 spring onion (greens included) or several onion chives
- Juice and zest of 1 lemon
- 1/2 cup pumpkin seeds
- 1 tbsp miso paste
- 1/3 cup nutritional yeast
- 2 tbsp ACV
- loads of black pepper
- pinch of red chili flakes
- salt to taste
- 1/4-1/3 cup olive oil

Blend in a food processor until desired consistency is reached. Slather on homemade buckwheat sourdough (your favorite bread), and top with arugula or pea shoots for the perfect savory breakfast toast!

Honey Nut Pesto

This simple pesto has a hit of sweetness, thanks to the honey, and pairs well with your favorite salty cheeses. Think charcuterie boards with briny olives and crisp radishes or a Honey Nut Pesto and Brie Grilled Cheese...

Ingredients:

- 1 bag/bunch blanched PVF kale or chard
- 1/2 cup nut of choice (I love pistachios or cashews)
- 3 tbsp honey
- juice and zest of 1 lemon
- loads of black pepper
- pinch of chili flakes
- salt to taste

Blend in a food processor until desired consistency is reached!

photo courtesy of annie



A bouquet from amongst the cover crop: crimson clover, bachelor's button, and buttercup.



painting by rachel udall

Meet the Neighbors

by Heather Miller

“Did you grow everything here?” Working at the Vienna stand, I get asked that question a lot. We grow a lot of what we sell, but not everything. That shocks people a bit, myself included when I first started. Having spent my life as a ‘clueless suburbanite,’ I had little idea how small farms operated.

Land is limited which means we can only grow a certain variety of foods if we want to have enough for our CSA, farmer’s markets, and both stands. All small farms face this issue. To make the most of the land available, each farm grows a selection of foods. Farms regularly trade with their neighboring ‘sister farms’ so everyone’s customers, no matter where they shop, get a bigger selection of locally grown fruits, veggies, and other goodies.

If you stop by the Vienna stand, you’ll notice a little gallery wall of picture frames. Each frame tells you about one of our sister farms & other local producers whose

products we sell. We know you all can’t stop by to read them, so we’ll be printing them here in Farm Notes.

Small farms thrive by working

together. We hope you visit all our ‘neighbors’ in person one day, but if you can’t, stop by their websites and social media accounts to say ‘hi!’



From left: Annie, Helen, James, and Rachel enjoying their first freeze pops of the year. “This signifies the beginning of true heat and our ignited desire for icy sugar.”

Recently Read // Greenhorns: 50 Dispatches from the New Farmer Movement

by hc

Following my intuition, I meandered through the library, holding a couple of books in my arms. It was late winter, I had weeks to wait before farmwork started, and I was feeling impatient, restless. No thank you, I thought to myself as I passed the epic war memoirs. No thank you to the crochet instruction manuals, no thank you to the baby name books. The words “new farmer” on a green book spine caught my eye, and my heart lit up. I pulled out the collection of lessons learned the hard way from farmers eager to share. Exactly what I needed: farming vignettes to distract me from the fact that I wasn’t spending most of my time outside, out in the fields. I added it to the books I was already hugging and checked out.

This anthology covered so much! There are fifty

different short pieces, clustered into topics such as Money, Land, Body/Heart/Soul, Purpose, Beasts, Nuts & Bolts, Old Neighbors, New Community. Published in 2012, the anthology aged alright. Sure, some of the essays about tools and techniques felt outdated, but I was still inspired, especially by the creative farmer who would engineer the specific gadgets they needed. Some of the emotive essays moved me; the chicken housing lost to a hurricane got me crying and the intergenerational threads some wove into their narratives gave me chill bumps.

When I read, I want to feel connected to the human experience. I want to imagine things that never crossed my mind before. I want to practice patience with the past for not being as aware as the present. This book gave me all that. And then I returned it to the library.

Meet Our Farmers (With More to Come Next Issue)



Annie, she/her

This marks my second season at PVF. I split my time between Loudoun and Vienna, so I get to gab with all the lovely people this farm has to offer and enjoy different landscapes. You'll find me at Arlington, Reston, or Falls Church farmer's markets on Saturday mornings. I aim to eat more of our vegetables this year and learn many more veggie cooking tips from my fellow workers who truly excel at this endeavor. I also have the goal of baking with every fruit that we grow and generally taking culinary advantage of anything with a fleeting season. I hope to continue to grow into someone confident in their own abilities, more decisive, and able to pursue interests without being stressed about not being able to pursue all of them at once. I've fallen in love in more ways than one at PVF, and I look forward to another fulfilling season.



Katherine, she/her

I work at the Loudoun farm and probably love planting days most but can be found doing any number of tasks including irrigation set-up, harvesting, and weeding. The physical and mental work of farming is rewarding and it's so great to be a part of a thoughtful, compassionate team. The delicious vegetables that we grow are a major perk of the job; I love to eat them all! When in doubt, I just sauté with a little olive oil and garlic for a dish of farm fresh goodness. This year, I'm looking forward to cooking more with eggplant, stringing tomatoes, and harvesting beet bunches and blueberries.



Caroline aka Chewy Lu, she/her

This year, like last year, I work farmers market weekends (whichever market I am sent to). In 2020 I worked the full season full time as a farmer at PVF. When I'm not on the farm, I miss all the veggies, so I'll keep working here as long as they still need me.

Rachel Udall, she/her

This is my second year at PVF! Last year a stork dropped me in front of the Vienna stand and Hana and Carrie graciously decided to keep me. Now I earn my keep by washing vegetables and making obscure maps of the cooler. You can find me in the fields soaked in either water, sweat, or mud - look for the person in the dirty overalls (no, not that one... no, not that one either...). I am so very happy to be back and I cherish all the wonderful people and creatures this place has to offer. Cheers to a great season!

