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POTOMAC VEGETABLE FARMS
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WINTER CSA is coming soon!

We will send an announcement by email about registering for the Winter CSA. In Vienna, the Winter CSA is on Sundays and will start on November 22 and will continue every week until the last Sunday of 2026. In Wheatland the CSA is on Fridays, it starts on December 4 and goes for three weeks. We take a long break and resume on the last weekend of January, setting up every other week until the end of March.

If you have never tried the Winter CSA, you may wonder what there is to eat in this region. The offerings are limited, but the food is delicious. In the winter, all the greens are sweeter, the roots are wonderfully flavorful, and fresh food feels precious and amazing. We grow chard, kale, lettuce, chicories and choy in the high tunnels. We store root crops all winter. And we also get organic winter vegetables from Sassafras Creek Farm – we pick them ourselves because all their workers go home for the winter.

Watch your inbox on about October 25 for full details about signing up. It is on-farm only, no deliveries. If the weather gets too wild, we reschedule, but that doesn't happen often. Winters in Northern Virginia are more mild than frigid, generally, and our experience is that growing in the winter is getting easier, not harder.

How Do You Feel Having Summer in the Rearview?

Hana Newcomb

Back when my parents were the boss farmers, in the 1960s and 70s and 80s, they tried to keep summer from ending. It wasn't magical thinking, it was a financial necessity. In those days, they didn't know about the fall crops we grow today. We picked tomatoes all the way into November (nowadays the plants die much earlier. Back then they didn't die until frost.) and then we picked all the green tomatoes and wrapped them in newspaper to let them ripen.

When frost came, it was the end of the vegetable season. We still had pumpkins and apple cider, but no real food.

These days, the end of summer is not directly related to frost. Frost kills the tomatoes and peppers and eggplant, but they are already giving up, or only growing very small fruit. Summer ends for me when the delicious tomatoes end. (I will not eat another fresh tomato until next July, or if I do, I will annoy people with my complaints.)

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Cristina Miller

My second season as a farmworker at Potomac Vegetable Farms has been such a joy. As summer disappears in the rear view, I keep thinking about the little moments that made this season special.

There was riding on the back of the transplanter with Eoin, laughing as the tractor rolled down the field and we planted another row. There were days stocking the farmstand with Alf, Rose, or Thomas, surrounded by the vegetables we had spent weeks growing. And on the hottest summer days, there was something wonderful about plunging my hands into the cool soil while digging potatoes.

And then there were the tomatoes.

So many gorgeous tomatoes! Red ones, yellow ones, big ones, little ones—tomatoes everywhere. For weeks, they seemed endless. Then one day, they weren't. I was genuinely sad when tomato season ended. That was when it really hit me: summer was leaving, the fall crops were arriving, and the farm was beginning its slow turn toward the end of the season.

It's funny how much working on a farm changes the way you notice time.

When I was younger, I don't remember paying much attention to the seasons. Now I notice everything. I notice the cooler air in the morning. I notice the leaves beginning to fall. I notice how much earlier it gets dark. And instead of measuring the year only by months on a calendar, I find myself measuring it by what is growing in the fields.

Tomatoes give way to turnips, beets, radishes, broccoli, sweet potatoes, and cabbage. Each season brings something different to look forward to.

One of my favorite fall memories this year was harvesting sweet potatoes. The soil was incredibly soft and cool under my feet. For a few minutes, I pretended I was at the beach—except instead of searching for seashells, I was pulling sweet potatoes from the ground. It was glorious!

Summer may be in the rear view now, but I am not quite ready for this season to end. I'm enjoying every cool morning, every fall harvest, and every chance to get my hands in the soil. And not just any soil. At PVF, there is so much care for the life beneath our feet—for the vitality of the soil, the nutrients it holds, and the connection between the farming practices, healthy soil, and the quality of the vegetables we grow. Working here has taught me that when I hold that cool soil in my hands, I'm holding something that people have spent years caring for. That makes pulling a potato, a beet, or a sweet potato from the ground feel a little more special.

I'm looking forward to finishing my second season at PVF—and, I hope, to many more seasons to come.



Aubrey Clendenin

Being a part of the farm crew this year, and witnessing Summer move into Autumn, brought to my mind the vastness of God's Universe. Everything about Potomac Vegetable Farm has a way of bringing me to a deeper appreciation of and love for God. The people, the workers, the vegetables, the four seasons, the sun and moon, the wild geese flying (poem below), the insects, the tractors and automobiles, and seeing all of the food offerings staff bring to Thursday potluck lunches. This is a poem I wrote called When the Geese Fly—

*When the geese fly,
I see how the universe is much
more than me.*

*The farm fields are still, no noise
in my ears;*

*Then, the geese fly; their
noisy bodies flying in formation
overhead,*

*Calling out to each other, or
maybe to God, or maybe to us;*

*Rooting for us with their
squawking,*

*Reminding us that we are doing
the work!*

*It is then when I see how the
Universe is much more than me.*

*When the geese fly,
I remember that God works in
mysterious ways.*

Growing food on a farm team teaches me to be humble surrounding the immense care and discipline involved with doing a good job at it. It requires planning, anticipation of obstacles, lots of vitality and energy, vulnerability, preparation, and intelligence. To bring our surrounding community hope through the food we grow is an honor. Families and children can and do understand the marvelous mystery of a vegetable. The farm creates a legacy of hard-work and care for each other, the earth, the soil, the community, and everyone we know.



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Fall begins for me when the greens come in – tatsoi, choy, arugula. Those are crisp, cool weather crops. But the star attractions of fall are sweet potatoes, carrots and beets. For some people, it's butterkin squash but for me squash can't compete with the root crops. Those root crops are like magic. We plant some tiny seeds in August and we water and weed, but mostly we are too busy to really pay attention, and suddenly we find that there are gorgeous, deep-colored beets, ready to be tugged out of the ground. Carrot plants generally look underwhelming in size, just a small fuzzy green spritz, but after about 100 days of slow growing, down below there are some hefty, long, strong carrots.

These days, having summer in the rear view is not sad. Corn and tomatoes and peaches and melons don't grow in the fall, but we ate so much of those delicious summer foods that we really had enough.

And our shelves are completely full of canned sauce and soup and stewed tomatoes. Our freezers have bags of chopped onions and basil pesto.

We only have five more weeks of the summer/fall CSA – our experience is that some people are truly not fall vegetable people and they stop coming to get their share. They are missing out on some of the most delicious flavors of the year. The broccoli and cauliflower are just now starting to make heads, the sweet potatoes and carrots get sweeter as the weeks go by, and some people love rutabaga and turnips, mashed up with potatoes. Finally it is cool enough to cook a big pot of soup, or turn on the oven. Finally we can eat some food that really fills you up.

Truth be told, if it weren't for the tomatoes, I would skip summer altogether. It's fall that brings out the best meals and brings me back into the kitchen. Two months of drippy tomato sandwiches was just about perfect. Now let's get into some real food.

Gates on the Farm

by Michael Lipsky

When I give tours of the farm to school groups I like to stop at the gate leading to the gravel road going up to the fields. As we go through the gate I announce that now we are truly “on the farm.”

The gate and the fence are eight feet high. With big gestures I explain that the fence goes all around the farm. I ask the children why we have such a tall structure. Some guess that the fence keeps cows in. I’ll say this is a smart answer, but wrong. (We do host three pigs owned by a friend, but don’t have other livestock.) Eventually, one of the kids may say “deer,” and she will be correct.

In Fairfax County and beyond, deer are an enormous problem for homeowners, garden centers and for us, perhaps the last remaining farm in the county. Two generations ago there were hardly any deer. But with the loss of predators and limits on hunting, with greater housing density and suburbanites investing in flower beds and shrubbery, deer are now virtually everywhere.

I explain the farm put up good fencing years ago, and it was an effective barrier. But even with good fencing there’s a problem that remains hard to solve. I ask the kids if they can guess the remaining problem after we have fenced the entire property. Even the eager ones are stumped. “People have to close the gates,” I say.

Instinctively, deer limit their movements during the day.

They start to be active as the light fades. They move about at night, eating as they go, before returning to deep woods towards dawn. Several weeks ago Hana and Carrie announced the deer were coming onto the farm much earlier in the day than they had been. The farm needed to close all gates by five o’clock or so, not at dusk, as we had been doing.

I started closing the gates as close to that time as I could. As backup and to make sure the other gates were closed, Carrie and Zoey began making rounds systematically to make sure all the gates were closed by six or seven (the sun was setting much later then).

During this time there was an incident when I saw why the gates had to be closed early. One evening I came home to find three deer at the lower gate leading up to our house. I expected they would scatter as I drove up, but they hung around, seemingly waiting to be let in.

Closing the gates to keep the deer out would seem to be a solution to deer getting onto the farm, but it isn’t. Every few days, after closing the two gates to get to our house, I have found one of the gates open after it had been closed. Five adults in three houses live behind our gate, and guests come and go during the day and evening. It’s not really a fair fight – we humans have to remember every single night to close the gates and all the deer have to do is walk in if they find an open one. I mean, who can be surprised when they get in?

