



# Big Leaf Farm Newsletter Week #17

September 20 – 26

## Farm News

We've been enjoying this slow slide into fall, especially the cloudy misty days that are interspersed with nice sunny ones. It's been breezy the last couple days here at the farm, and the winds are blowing leaves off of the big leaf maple trees. The brown leaves remind us that winter is just around the corner, but for now we are enjoying these nice sunny days.

We continue to prepare for the start of the rainy season. At this point, other than harvesting on Tuesday and Thursday, most of what we do at this time of year is in preparation for next year. On Monday we completed one of the last major plantings of the year – garlic. Here you can see the cloves laid out before they are pushed into the ground. We planted four varieties (two softneck and two hardneck), in two 100 foot beds,



for a total of over 1,000 cloves., and they will be ready to harvest 8-9 months from now. This planting, along with overwintering onions (to be planted out in October or early November), rounds out our planting for 2009.

When you purchased your share late last year or early this year you paid for 25 weeks of fresh

vegetables. This means we still have two months left of our regular season. However, as we reach the end of our planting season for 2009 our minds are already turning to the 2010 season.

Now that we can see how things are shaping up for this fall we are finding that we'll be able to pull off a short winter share. At this point we are planning on four weeks of harvests, from the week of thanksgiving up until a week or so before Christmas. Because this will be for a smaller group than our regular season we are planning on only having a farm and SE Portland pickup. If you are interested please let us know. We'll have more specific details (i.e. prices) in a week or two as we'd like to have folks committed by the middle of October.

As we plan ahead, it is also looking like we will downsize our distribution points for next year. That means that at this point we only plan on having only two pick-up points next year – at the farm and at a SE Portland location, either our current one near Holgate or some other centrally located place. We regret that this change may make it impossible for some of you to continue as members in 2010, but as we focus on the small-business part of direct market farming, we're realizing that we have to make some hard financially-based decisions.

## Cast of characters

- **Spaghetti squash:** The first of the winter squash are here! Check out the recipe section for some cooking ideas. These may get a little better as they cure, so if you don't eat them right away, that's OK. Just let them sit on your counter for up to two weeks.
- **Lettuce:** More 'Mascara' from the same sowing as last week.
- **Mesclun mix:** This is a mix of baby lettuce, arugula, asian mustards, and a little bit of swiss chard. Let us know what you think about this mix. It's a little on the savory side, flavorful but not spicy. A sweet dressing would suit it well.
- **Carrots:**
- **Tomatoes:**
- **Cherry tomatoes**
- **Sweet Peppers**
- **Kale:** This weeks kale (Red Russian) is a different species from the Lacinato kale you received last week. There are two species of kale – *Brassica oleracea*, the Lacinato, and *Brassica napus*, or Ruso-Siberian kale which is what group this week's kale falls into. This Red Russian is tenderer with less of a 'bite' than the Lacinato kale. It will cook faster and can be eaten raw in salad if you remove the stem.
- **Asian Eggplant:** This is likely the last week for eggplant. Several of you have mentioned at pick-ups that you aren't as

familiar with using eggplant. There's a recipe below that you might like to try.

## Recipes

### Uppuma

*This is really tasty*

1 cup finely cracked wheat (bulgur), or white rice or barley  
1 T oil  
½ t black mustard seeds  
¼ cup cashew nuts (or raw peanuts if you don't have cashews)  
1 small onion, minced  
½ T minced ginger  
½ green chilé (or bell pepper), seeded and minced  
1 ½ cup boiling water  
½ t salt  
¼ to ½ cup cilantro or parsley leaves  
¾ t lemon juice

Optional but highly recommended: Try a few handfuls of finely chopped vegetables added to the grain before you boil it. Carrots are great. Eggplant might be nice.

Toast the grain in a big heavy pan, stirring until fragrant and beginning to brown. Remove from the heat and set aside. In the empty pot, heat oil and add mustard seeds. Cover, wait for popping to slow, then remove from heat and add cashews, stirring quickly, until they are golden. Add the onion, ginger, and then chilé and sauté until tender. Then add the water and salt and bring to a boil. Add the browned grain and stir to mix evenly (now is the time to add raw veggies, if doing so). Cover tightly and cook over low heat until tender, ~ 10 min. If the grain isn't done when the water is gone add more water and cook longer. If the grain is too wet, remove the top, stir, and cook off the liquid. Add the chopped herb leaves and mix into the grain with lemon juice just before serving.

*From "The New Laurel's Kitchen" by Robertson, Flinders, and Ruppenthal.*

### Spaghetti squash with cheese and parsley

*Spaghetti squash has pale yellow flesh that is different from other squash. The insides are coarse, and even when cooked they can be pulled into long strands, somewhat resembling spaghetti. We've found that our squash aren't as noodle-like as some, but because this squash is blander than butternut or delicata, they can be treated like pasta to accept spices and sauces. Chilled cooked squash can also be tossed with vinaigrette for an interesting salad. Here's a simple recipe that highlights spaghetti squash. Alternatively, don't be afraid to simply try the squash roasted and eaten from the shell with a little butter.*

1 spaghetti squash, about 3 pounds  
1 cup grated Gruyère or cheddar

2-4 T butter  
¼ cup parsley, chopped with 1 garlic clove  
Salt and pepper

Preheat the oven to 375, and bake the squash, whole, until the flesh is soft and yielding. Don't forget to puncture the squash first, or it may explode like a potato! Remove from oven, allow to cool briefly, and then slice in half and scrape out the seeds. Then drag a fork through the flesh, pulling the strands apart. Toss them with the parsley, cheese and butter. Season with salt and pepper and serve.

### Sautéed eggplant with greens

*The long cooking time on the eggplant brings out its flavors.*

½ - 1 ½ lbs asian eggplant  
salt  
1 bunch of kale or other hearty green  
1/3 cup olive oil, more or less  
1 T minced garlic  
black pepper  
parmesan cheese

Heat the oil in a pan and add most of the garlic (reserving 1 t for later), and cook for two minutes. Then add the eggplant, cut into rounds, and stir and toss continuously for 5-10 minutes, until the eggplant starts to release some of the oil it has absorbed. Continue to cook for up to 30 minutes, until the eggplant is very tender (the length of time will vary). You'll know it's done when the eggplant are very soft and flavorful. Add the chopped greens after the eggplant has cooked for 20 minutes or so. When everything is tender, mix in some grated parmesan and season with salt and pepper. Serve hot or at room temperature.

*From "How to cook everything vegetarian" by Mark Bittman*



6,000 pounds of lime for our new field.