

Week # 16 Timken Farm Community Supported Agriculture

Considering Sustainability– by Dana

The waning summer season brings time for reflection as rows of vegetables go into cover crop one by one and we prepare for next year's growing season. There is much talk of the successes and failures in the fields and I hold on to the lessons this land has offered.

Feelings of exhaustion and being overwhelmed prior to and during the season's peak have transformed into satisfaction and pride.

What makes a farm sustainable over time is an ongoing consideration. As I attempt to understand and answer that question I realize the important personal needs that have been met for me throughout the season. Here are few of them: Connection with the earth and it's magic, companionship with the people I've been working shoulder to shoulder with all season, contributing to my community by providing healthy food and being a part of a larger community of growers attempting to be ecologically sustainable, as well as all of the learning, teaching, laughter and fun while "making a living."

The contentment I experience as I pull 80 beautiful carrots, marvel at rainbow colored chard and pack 20 plus pound boxes for each of you is palpable and is part of a wildly successful picture of sustainability for me as a farmer and I'm guessing for most CSA farmers.

However, as shareholders in this community effort to nurture and sustain ourselves, I want you to know we are troubled by the economics of this CSA. Timken Farm's commitment to paying me, the farm manager, a livable wage, and valuing our intern's time and effort makes economic sustainability a challenge and has resulted in financial loss for the farm. The economic piece of the sustainability question leaves us feeling frustrated, perplexed and discouraged.

We're looking for support. We have some ideas of changes we can make and we will be sharing them with you and looking for feedback. Economics are obviously complex and are relative to each farm. We are interested in dialogue around this issue with our CSA members. I have shared these thoughts with the hope that through increased understanding between the farmers and the shareholders we can perhaps more truly create a community-supported farm and farm supported community together.

"Self-reliance? Yes, but that first spring I had to learn dependency too. By crying for help and seeing help come from several directions, I began to learn what the village is all about: on the one hand respect for privacy, and on the other, awareness for each other's needs. So however solitary some of us may look to an outsider, we are in truth part of an invisible web and supported by its presence."

May Sarton, *Plant Dreaming Deep*

Yellow Squash au Gratin

3-4 medium squash thinly sliced/ 2 lbs.
1/3 cup organic sour cream
1 med. onion or 2 leeks minced
1 large egg, beaten
4T butter, melted
2 tsp. honey or other sweetener
1/2 Tsp salt
1/3 Cup of breadcrumbs or oats and non wheat flour

preheat oven 375
steam squash, mash until almost smooth, drain any liquid away.
sauté onions or leeks until caramelized
mix onion, sour cream, egg, 2 tsp. butter, sweetener and salt into mashed squash
scrape mixture into medium gratin dish or * oz baking dish.
sprinkle bread crumbs on top and drizzle rest of butter on top
bake 45 min.
let sit 10 min before eating

What's in your box:

Lettuce– Baby Mix (Not Washed!)
Basil– Sweet, mammoth
Carrots– Bolero
Tomatoes– Sun Gold, Stupice, Mortgage Lifter, Oregon Spring, Sweet Million, Yellow Brandywine, Early Girl, Black, Green Zebra, Black Plum, Fantastic.
Beans– Kentucky Wonder
Squash– Sunburst, Crookneck
Cucumbers– Marketmoore, X– Country in bag (picklers), Lemon
Chard– Argentata, Bright Lights
Apples– Not known
Leeks– Lincoln
Potatoes– Yukon Gold