



STONE SOUP

January 8, 2010
Winter, Number 3

Stearns Farm CSA • Community Supported Agriculture
862 Edmands Road, Framingham, MA 01701
www.stearnsfarmcsa.org

From the Field: Greens in Snow/Trish Stefanko

Stearns fields are the frozen tundra now, but for two long tunnels where the leeks and kale are hanging on despite winter conditions. It's a day to day situation for both of these crops as they endure freezing, and yield to sunshine. We have them covered with a layer of heavy Reemay followed by a layer of thick plastic. It's a little world unto itself under there, and we are doing our best to get them to your tables! Meanwhile, on sunny days it's a bit of paradise in the cathedral (my name for our winter greenhouse). Cold tolerant crops are persevering despite freezing temperatures and vole pressure. We have been brainstorming and troubleshooting and trying to outsmart the little guys, who really only want the same thing we do: food!!! Resource competition, plain and simple.



The growth of some greens is slowing, as the earth receives less direct radiant heat, spinach being the exception. It's why I think of her as the workhorse of winter greens—she chugs along regardless of the cold.

Lots of tracks out here including coyote, white tail deer, mouse, raccoon, vole, fisher (on the trails) and of course horse and domestic dog. The gang of crows is quieter now—they are experts at energy conservation. The sight of a male cardinal perched on a limb alongside our root cellar stuns me with a sudden jolt of big red JOY. Time for

kale soup and good poetry; inspiration for both found right here at Stearns.

WHAT'S IN YOUR SHARE? The following items will appear at various times throughout the three months of our winter share:

Beets, cabbage, carrots, celeriac, parsley root, parsnips, purple top turnips, potatoes, popcorn, garlic, red and storage onions, shallots, scallions, leeks, chard, collards, kale, cilantro, dill, lettuce, spinach, salad turnips, radishes, bok choy, a large variety of Asian greens.

The root cellar has done a remarkable job keeping crops in good shape. Many thanks to Brian Holland for his ongoing attention to the cellar, and all of the farm facilities over the winter. I have enjoyed managing this winter share and look forward to a little warmth in the greenhouse in the coming months!

Vegetable Showcase: Kale/Donna Savastio

We are so fortunate to have our gorgeous kale this winter at Stearns. It is really a very pretty plant with its curly leaves and vibrant green color. These beautiful leaves not only provide wonderful flavor, but they pack more nutritional value per calorie than almost any other food around!

Kale has been grown for centuries, providing nourishment to people all over the world, and it has the unique distinction of growing throughout history on every continent in the world. It is a form of cabbage and a member of the Brassica family that includes broccoli, cauliflower and brussel sprouts. Eating kale detoxifies your body and helps protect against cancer. Kale contains carotenoids which help protect eyesight and also provides you with necessary dietary fiber. Because it is so nutritious Kale has a history of being promoted during difficult economic times: during the Great Depression Americans were encouraged to eat Kale as a low cost way to add essential nutrients to their diet, and kale was highly promoted during World

War II to improve nutrition when rationing took place in Great Britain. Kale is an excellent source of vitamins A and C, with just one cup of cooked kale supplying 88.8% of the daily value for vitamin C and that same cup providing 192.4% of the daily value for vitamin A. Those are quite the statistics, especially since that same cup of kale contains only 36 calories! How can you beat that?



Stearns farm kale, growing under Reemay and plastic

Before eating or cooking, wash kale leaves thoroughly under cool running water to remove any sand or dirt that may remain in the leaves. Both the leaves and the stem of kale can be eaten. I have found kale to

be a very sturdy green, standing up to other flavors extremely well. It is the major ingredient in the Portuguese dish Caldo Verde. It goes beautifully in a soup with white beans and tomatoes, and is simply wonderful with smoked meats. One of my favorite ways to cook it is a simple saute with fresh garlic, sprinkled with lemon juice and olive oil before serving. If you choose to add a few potatoes to the sauté you have a wonderfully delicious and extremely simple supper. It's also really good steamed as a topping for pizza (be sure to squeeze out any excess water), added to pasta dishes, braised with apples and even baked into "chips" to have as a snack or with cocktails. It is also my understanding that you can freeze blanched kale very easily in plastic bags, adding the leafy portions to your recipes the same way you would use frozen spinach, popping them into soups and stews straight from the freezer. Good nutrition can't get any easier than that, so enjoy!

Bonus Recipe: Kale Chips/Donna Savastio

1 to 2 bunches of kale

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Coarse Kosher or sea salt or a favorite seasoning blend

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Wash and de-stem kale. Chop or tear it into "chip" size pieces. Spread kale pieces onto a baking sheet. Pour the cider vinegar, oil and seasoning onto the kale. Mix to coat all pieces.

Bake for 10 minutes or until crispy (could take a bit longer than that). Taste for seasoning and serve immediately!

Winter Share Information

It's time to pick up your third (and last) installment of the Stearns Farm winter share. Here's everything you need to know:

When: On your pickup day, come to the farm between 1pm and 4 pm. Because it is cold and gets dark so early, it is important to be on time. Due to winter conditions, alternate pickup times are not available.

Where: In the stationary greenhouse at Stearns Farm.

What to bring: plastic bags for your produce, and shopping bags for carrying. All your produce will be picked for you; there will be no pick-your-own. You will get to choose, bag, and weigh most of your own

produce. Some greens will be pre-bagged.

What: A typical pickup will include about 15 pounds of cellar roots such as parsnips, potatoes, carrots, beets, celeriac, turnips, potatoes, onions, shallots, and garlic; 3 pounds of cabbage and bok choy; 3 pounds of fresh greens including leeks, spinach, salad greens, braising greens, and scallions; and 3 cobs popcorn.

Apples for cash: Apples from Autumn Orchard, which provided our fruit share this fall, will be available for purchase during pickup times. Cash only please.

Work Hours: Please pay for any work hours you were unable to complete. You can bring a check for \$9/hour to the farm at pickup.

Winter Share Storage Tips

You will be receiving a large amount of produce in each of your three Winter Share pickups. These vegetables can provide months of great eating if stored and put away well. Your produce will be given to you *unwashed* as it will store much longer that way. **Never wash vegetables before storing.** Wait to wash them just prior to using. Below are the highlights of the winter share storage information we published in the November newsletter.

KEEP THESE ITEMS IN THE FRIDGE

Lettuce, spinach, kale, chard, collards, bok choy: use within 2-3 weeks or freeze. **Leeks:** will keep for a month or more. **Cabbage:** remove outer leaves when ready to use.

KEEP THESE ITEMS IN THE FRIDGE OR OTHER VERY COOL PLACE*

Carrots, purple top turnips, celeriac, beets, parsnips: Store them unwashed inside a loose plastic bag. They can keep for months.

KEEP THESE ITEMS IN A DARK, COOL SPACE (cellar, unheated entrance, attic space, or unheated spare room)

Winter squash, garlic, onions, shallots, potatoes: Vegetables should be stored one level deep for good circulation, not piled on top of each other. Don't refrigerate potatoes—it changes their texture.

STORE AT ROOM TEMPERATURE

Popcorn: Our Stearns popcorn will last for months on the cob. When ready to eat it, shuck cobs and pop with a little oil in a lidded pot, or put kernels in a folded-over paper bag in the microwave.



*If your fridge space is limited, these vegetables can be stored in a very cool (40 degrees) humid (90% humidity) dark place that doesn't freeze, such as a garage or basement (not near the furnace). If vegetables start to shrivel, sprinkle them with water.

Stearns Farm CSA

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**Community Supported
Agriculture**

Mission Statement

To preserve the historic Stearns farm as a sustainable all-natural garden, providing locally grown food in partnership between the land, the farmer, and the community

- by using the CSA model
- by providing fair compensation, adequate working conditions, and support to the farmer
- by practicing good stewardship
- by donating excess food to the needy
- by encouraging the community to actively participate in the farming process
- by providing learning opportunities
- by fostering relationships between the CSA and the wider community and
- by providing a beautiful place that is nourishing to body and soul

Upcoming Events

January 22 Last pickup for Group 2 sharers



Farm Contact Information

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HEART WARMING: Cabbage, Carrots, Kale, Onions, Potatoes, Turnips

Food cultures all over the world find ways to stay cozy at this time of year with hearty mixtures of winter vegetables and greens. Mashed potato-based colcannon and bubble & squeak—one a splendid Irish inspiration, the other an economical example of English nursery food, and both with as many variations as there are “Mums” in British kitchens—share almost identical ingredients and methods until just at the end, when bubble & squeak gets a crunchy, pan-fried exterior, while colcannon remains creamy. Smooth bean soup with winter vegetables and a bread casing resembles a cold-weather version of Italian minestrone. All of them can warm up a freezing heart.

COLCANNON.

- 1 pound **kale**, rinsed, tough stems removed
 - 3 pounds **potatoes**, scrubbed
 - 1½ cups whole milk
 - 1 **leek**, cleaned, white and light green finely chopped
 - Salt and pepper to taste
 - ¼ cup melted butter
 - 4 strips of bacon, crisp-cooked, drained, and chopped (optional)
1. Bring a pot of salted water to a simmer, add kale leaves, return to a bubble, and cook 5 minutes until kale is limp. Drain kale and plunge leaves into cold water. Drain again and squeeze to remove as much water as possible. Roll kale leaves and slice into narrow ribbons. Set aside.
 2. Put potatoes into a separate pot, cover them with salted water, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer gently until very tender, about 30 minutes. Potatoes are done when a knife penetrates easily. Drain potatoes and, when cool enough to handle, remove skins. Place potatoes in a large bowl and mash.
 3. Place milk and leeks in a saucepan and bring slowly just to a simmer. Pour hot milk over mashed potatoes and stir, adding a little more milk if needed for a creamy result. Stir in kale and season with salt and pepper.
 4. Preheat broiler. Turn potato mixture into a shallow, lightly buttered, ovenproof casserole. Using a wooden spoon or a teacup, press an indentation into the center of the potatoes. Place under broiler until browned on top. Remove from oven, pour melted butter into indentation, and serve sprinkled with bacon if desired.

Variations: Replace some of the potatoes with other root vegetables, such as **parsnips**, **turnips**, or **carrots**, cooked and mashed with potatoes. Replace kale with **cabbage** or **collards**.

8 servings.

BUBBLE & SQUEAK.

- 2 pounds **potatoes**, scrubbed and tidied, but not peeled, chopped roughly into cubes
 - ½ cup whole milk
 - 3–4 tablespoons butter
 - Salt and pepper to taste
 - 5 or 6 large **kale**, **collard**, or **cabbage** leaves, roughly shredded
 - 1 medium **onion**, peeled, chopped
 - 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1. Place potatoes in a pot, cover with lightly salted water, bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for about 15–20 minutes until tender. Drain, add the milk and 2 tablespoons of butter, and mash the potatoes. Set aside.
 2. Place one tablespoon of oil and 1 tablespoon of butter in a large heavy frying pan over medium heat and cook the onions until translucent and soft. Add kale and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until kale is soft and onions are starting to brown. Remove onion mixture

from the pan with a slotted spoon and stir into the mashed potatoes.

3. Add the rest of the butter and oil to the pan over medium heat. Spread the mashed potato mixture over the bottom of the pan and cook undisturbed for about 5 minutes, or until the bottom of the mixture is brown and crisp. Turn and cook until the other side is also browned. Serve at once. **Sausages are a traditional accompaniment.**
- 4–6 servings.

BEAN SOUP & WINTER VEGETABLES.

- 2 cups small dried beans, such as navy, cranberry, or white beans.
 - 1 **carrot**, scrubbed, peeled, coarsely chopped
 - 2 medium **onions**, peeled
 - 4 cloves **garlic**
 - 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
 - 2–3 cups mixed winter vegetables of your choice, such as **kale**, **turnips**, **cabbage**, **squash**, or **potatoes**, cleaned, peeled, shredded or diced into bite-sized pieces according to their kind
 - 1 small loaf of dense bread, preferably day old
 - Salt and pepper to taste
1. Rinse and pick over beans, then soak overnight. If time presses, cover them with water, bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer 10 minutes, then set aside for 1 hour before proceeding with recipe.
 2. Drain soaked beans and place in a large pot with the carrot and one of the onions. Cover with fresh water, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, covered, until beans are very tender, adding more hot water if needed to keep the beans covered while they cook.
 3. Using a food processor or stick blender, puree beans with carrot, onion, and any remaining liquid in the pot. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
 4. Mince second onion and 3 of the garlic cloves. Sauté onion in ¼ cup of olive oil until softened, then add garlic and continue to sauté until garlic is fragrant—about 1 minute. Add to bean puree and mix well.
 5. In a separate pot, combine mixed winter vegetables with a cup of water, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, covered, until all the vegetables are soft. Add them with their liquid to the bean mixture. Season to taste with more salt and pepper, if needed.
 6. Cut the bread into thin slices, cut the fourth garlic clove in half, and rub the bread slices with the garlic. Brush a large heavy pot or heatproof casserole with ¼ cup of olive oil, line the pot with slices of bread, overlapping slightly and pressing them firmly in place all over the bottom and sides of the container. Drizzle or brush ¼ cup of the remaining oil over the bread. Pour bean mixture over bread and heat gently on the stovetop over medium heat until soup is bubbling (or heat in oven, if preferred). Serve immediately, spooning a portion of bread into each bowl along with the soup. Pass remaining ¼ cup of oil to drizzle over each serving.
- 8 servings.