



Stewarding the Land for Future Generations
Local, Sustainable, Organic

Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

July 13th, 2006- Week 6

Featured Vegetable of the Week: Potatoes

Potatoes are native to the Andes mountains of South America, and were probably first domesticated in Chile. They were discovered by Europeans when Pizarro destroyed the Incan empire in Peru and were brought back to Europe around 1570. From Spain they moved to England and Ireland- it's said that Sir Walter Raleigh introduced them in 1586, but they were popular by 1610. Some, however, resisted them as a food for a long time. Until 1780, they were rigorously excluded from prudent French tables, as they were thought to cause leprosy. Russian peasants considered them unclean, calling them Devil's apples. In colonial Massachusetts, they were considered the spoor of witches.

Ireland adopted the potato first, and even made it the foundation of its national diet, a fact that was to have terrible repercussions in 1845 when a late blight attacked the potato crop and caused the famine that sent Irish emigres all over the world seeking a better life.

In France, potatoes were established during the famine following the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). Frenchman Antoine August Parmentier, who was fed potatoes in a prisoner-of-war camp in Germany, returned to France to find his countrymen starving. He set up potato-soup kitchens throughout Paris to assist the poor.

In terms of cultivation, potatoes grow from eyes which are pieces cut from seed potatoes. As potatoes grow they must be hilled when the plants are about a foot high. Hilling is done by covering the base of the plant with soil to prevent the potatoes from exposure to light which causes them to turn green. Before harvesting, potato vines are killed to allow the skin to set.

The tuber is remarkable for both its adaptability and its nutritional value. As well as providing starch, an essential component of the diet, potatoes are rich in vitamin C, high in potassium and an excellent source of fiber. In fact, potatoes alone supply every vital nutrient except calcium, vitamin A and vitamin D. The easily-grown plant has the ability to provide more nutritious food faster on less land than any other food crop, and in almost any habitat.

In the kitchen, potatoes are incredibly versatile. The yellow fingerlings in your box today are best fried or baked. Look for lots of other potato varieties in your box this season.

Announcements

*Please return all dairy containers and egg cartons to your drop point. You can place them in the box for ice bottles. Thanks!

***Save the date Saturday July 29th.** Join us for our second Farm Day from 11 am to 4 pm at Wolf Gulch Farm. Bring a potluck dish, plate and utensils to eat with, and a bathing suit. Farmer Tom Powell will give tours at 12, 1 and 2.

*Email your weekly order of buffalo or chevre to siskiyoucoop@aol.com.

Ask the Farmers...

CSA member Avara Yaron asks “How has close contact with the earth impacted your life?”



Eden Luz, Quartz Gulch Farm

To start with, my fingernails are dirty all the time. I have also found that working closely with the earth has forced me to be more patient, as things only move as fast as water and sun and not as fast as my brain. I have found that it pays off in the end to take my time and do things well from the beginning. Before I farmed, I wanted to save every bug and every weed no matter what they were doing. Now I am much more clear about what I want growing and what insects I don't want to be present, so I end up killing a lot of weeds and bugs. I am working closely with the earth, but I am also aware the I am manipulating it in order to grow certain crops.

Working closely with the earth has given me a greater appreciation for the seasons- I love the winter because I know the heat is coming soon, and I love the summer because the farm is flourishing. I have also come to appreciate the early mornings when everything is still and I am able to observe things well. In Southern Oregon, heat and irrigation are such important issues that I have had to become intimate with the water on our land. Because we live on the edge of wilderness, I get to experience the richness of biodiversity, which I hope to always learn from.



Michael Mlsna, Wolf Gulch Farm



Stu O'Neil, Boones Farm

Mother Earth has seen me through many changes in my life and I am grateful for the opportunity she creates for me to nurture my connection to something greater than myself. With my hands in the dirt I am able to truly experience the ever changing seasons with gratitude and respect. The quality of life I lead here at Boones Farm is one I would never trade. It is hard, but as I harvest the fruits of my labor, I feel truly at peace.

CSA Member Corner

Laura Beaton & Nathaniel Mitchell: Laura is a student at SOU and Nate works for the sustainable forestry company Out of the Woods. We are both dedicated environmental activists, and we are spending this summer surveying for endangered species in timber sales around Oregon to try to halt old-growth logging on public land. We live in a little cabin in the Siskiyou with our beloved dog and cat.

Eric, Emily, Eliza and Harper Strong have been living in Ashland for three years. Eric is a woodworker who builds custom furniture and Emily is home with their girls (Eliza, 5 and Harper, 2) while also pursuing a writing career. They find great value in supporting local and sustainable businesses making the Siskiyou Coop a natural fit for their family.

Becky Brown and her children **Janey** (10), **Macy** (8) and **Charlie** (5 1/2) recently moved from the Applegate Valley to Ashland. Becky teaches a variety of classes at Willow Wind Community Learning Center, including a class on the natural and cultural history of Table Rocks and Math in Literature. She is currently building her own house in Ashland through the Rogue Valley Community Development Council. In her spare time, Becky loves to read, hike, listen to music and train for marathons.