



Stewarding the Land for Future Generations
Local, Sustainable, Organic

Featured Vegetable of the Week: Pumpkin

The word pumpkin comes from the Greek pepōn for a large melon. The English termed it pumpion or pompion. This term dates back to 1547, yet it did not make an appearance in print until 1647. The pumpkin was one of the many foods used by the Native American Indians in the new world and was a welcome discovery by the Pilgrims. The Indians pounded strips of pumpkin flat, dried them, and wove them into mats for trading. They also dried pumpkin for food. European-Americans heartily embraced the sweet, multi-purpose fruit which became a traditional Thanksgiving food. The colonists used pumpkin not only as a side dish and dessert, but also in soups and even made beer of it.

Pumpkins are a tasty source of vitamins and minerals, particularly beta-carotene, vitamin C, and potassium. It also helps prevent arteriosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries, which can lead to strokes and/or heart attacks. Pumpkin seed oil and pumpkin seeds are a good source of zinc and unsaturated fatty acids which are effective help for prostate ailments.

Since the Halloween season is upon us, I thought it would be interesting to learn about the history of the Jack O'Lantern. Here is an excerpt from the website www.pumpkinook.com/facts/jack.htm:

“The Irish brought the tradition of the Jack O'Lantern to America. But, the original Jack O'Lantern was not a pumpkin. The Jack O'Lantern legend goes back hundreds of years in Irish History. As the story goes, Stingy Jack was a miserable, old drunk who liked to play tricks on everyone: family, friends, his mother and even the Devil himself. One day, he tricked the Devil into climbing up an apple tree. Once the Devil climbed up the apple tree, Stingy Jack hurriedly placed crosses around the trunk of the tree. The Devil was then unable to get down the tree. Stingy Jack made the Devil promise him not to take his soul when he died. Once the devil promised not to take his soul, Stingy Jack removed the crosses and let the Devil down.

Many years later, when Jack finally died, he went to the pearly gates of Heaven and was told by Saint Peter that he was too mean and too cruel and had led a miserable and worthless life on earth. He was not allowed to enter heaven. He then went down to Hell and the Devil. The Devil kept his promise and would not allow him to enter Hell. Now Jack was scared and had nowhere to go but to wander about forever in the darkness between heaven and hell. He asked the Devil how he could leave as there was no light. The Devil tossed him an ember from the flames of Hell to help him light his way. Jack placed the ember in a hollowed out Turnip, one of his favorite foods which he always carried around with him whenever he could steal one. For that day onward, Stingy Jack roamed the earth without a resting place, lighting his way as he went with his “Jack O'Lantern”.

On all Hallow's eve, the Irish hollowed out Turnips, rutabagas, gourds, potatoes and beets. They placed a light in them to ward off evil spirits and keep Stingy Jack away. These were the original Jack O'Lanterns. In the 1800's a couple of waves of Irish immigrants came to America. The Irish immigrants quickly discovered that Pumpkins were bigger and easier to carve out. So they used pumpkins for Jack O'Lanterns.”

Ask the Farmers...

CSA member Emily Chenowith asks, "how has your experience this season impacted your planning for next season?"



Ryan Ginn, Quartz Creek Farm

This season I learned how important it is to plant according to the growth rate of the season and to plant in methodical stages. For instance we planted out hundreds of lettuce transplants in late May and we were deluged with lettuce in late June and on the flip side we planted lots of lettuce in late August and its still not really ready. So next season I will restrain myself during the peak growing period (June/July) and get an earlier start for early fall crops.

Results gathered from this year and the decisions made for next season are part of a continuum of information that we constantly evaluate. The main questions are: are we meeting our overall goals and mission as a farm, is the farm a viable business, and is the farm environmentally sustainable. Then we look at particulars like what crops did well, what pests were damaging, what is the proper seeding rate for carrots to ensure good germination but minimize thinning, etc.



Tom Powell, Wolf Gulch Farm



Mookie Moss, Boones Farm

Lessons taken from this season are still revealing themselves into the fall. I'm still really focused on what it will take to have a strong fall finish for the animals and the fields. Around here, that means making sure there's a good buck or two on the farm spending quality time with the does. Establishing a hearty cover crop stand, spreading fall manure compost, and all the things associated with the coming seasonal change. One clear adjustment I know we'll have to be making is the number of folks who physically work on the farm. Our creamery will be making a greater volume and variety of cheeses next season, we'll a few more sets of hands around here to keep up. This years CSA was really wonderful as a grower, and having a opportunity to farm and play with all the other great farmers in the Coop was a great experience. Thanks again for your wonderful support!

Announcements

*Today marks the last delivery of this year's CSA! Thank you all for making this season so gratifying and fun. We really enjoyed providing you with weekly produce, newsletters and recipes and hosting the Farm Days.

*Please take a few minutes to fill out an evaluation form, either a paper copy at your drop point or via email. We always take into consideration your feedback and suggestions. Also, if you are planning to sign up for a 2007 share, please consider doing so soon. It helps us a great deal in planning for both marketing and crop production to have a sense of our membership early on. Thanks again and have a great winter!