Notes from the Field by Rachael Richardson, Second Year Apprentice

By six o’clock p.m., the skewed shadows seem interminable and the sun is already partially obscured by a stand of stately cypress trees on the west side of the farm. In this bracing moment of the sun’s withdrawal, we put away our tools for the evening. The chill of night gently besets the old quarry in which we nest. After we disappear into the warmth and brightness of the kitchen, and have washed the mud off our hands, the sky illuminates with the rich brilliance of autumnal night. A barn owl screeches to its mate and a light gust of wind shimmers through the oak branches. The Milky Way reveals a faint white trail across the sky. The air is penetrating, crisp, and heavy with the fecundity of moist black earth.

The 2013 second year apprentices are leaving in just three short weeks. As I anticipate the impending separation from my dear friends and coworkers, the people who have spent a year and a half tending this little piece of beautiful land, I am reminded to savor every day of this dynamic, miraculous life. I will remember the bounty that we have worked to create, and the laughter and love that we have shared throughout the season – the memory will remain in my heart like an inner hearth that will cut the chill of winter. The next succession of second years continues the wonderful work of the farm and gardens, to have had this chance to learn from Liz, such a brilliant and caring farmer. I have learned so much from her, Orin, Christof, and Andy. We have grown amazing food, and I have grown enormously as a person and a farmer and gardener.

I am happy to have had the experience of being part of this CSA that we – you (the members) and we (the field crew and the lovely Amy) – have all been a part of this season. What a year we have shared! From weeks on end of sugary blueberries and strawberries, to the reds of tomatoes and yellows of tomatoes, peppers, apples, to the rainbows of zucchinis, winter squash, and of course, my personal favorite, the diverse greens that you have in your box today! The kale is better each ZHHN²WKHFROGZHDWKHUVZHHWHQVWKHÁDYRUDQGEULQJVRXWWKHQXWW
distinctive undertones. Escarole is by far my favorite item this week. I recommend eating it in a raw salad with a creamy dressing (try buttermilk or mayonnaise) or a sweet dressing (try shallots and honey). Escarole is rich in dietary fiber, vitamin A and K, and many antioxidants. It is excellent for the liver, and my favorite way to eat it is lightly sautéed with lots of garlic, red pepper flakes, and salt. The persimmons need to ripen for a few days, but then they will be an excellent fresh and sweet companion to a kale salad or sauté, or an escarole salad. Enjoy the produce and thank you all for supporting the CSA with your appetite for wholesome, local and organic produce!
**Butternut Squash | Greens | Almond Pasta**

1 butternut squash, cut in eighths, seeds scooped out
8-10 cloves garlic
3 T olive oil, divided
plenty of salt and pepper
3/4 lb. medium pasta shells

1 bunch kale or chard, leaves thinly sliced (no tough stems)
1/3 cup almonds, toasted and coarsely chopped
fresh lemon (optional)
parmesan cheese (optional)

Preheat oven to 425°F. On a rimmed baking sheet, toss together squash, all the cloves of garlic, and 1 tablespoon oil and arrange in a single layer; season generously with salt and pepper. Bake until squash is soft and lightly golden, 30-40 minutes, tossing halfway through. Remove garlic from skins and toss with squash. Check after 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a large pot of boiling salted water, cook pasta 1 minute less than package instructions. Add kale or chard and cook 1 minute. Reserve 1/2 cup pasta water, then drain. Return pasta and kale to pot, add squash mixture and remaining 2 tablespoons oil, and season with salt and pepper. Toss to combine, adding enough pasta water to create a light sauce that coats pasta. Serve topped with almonds, a squirt of lemon, and cheese. Optional: Add sauteed shallots or onions!

Submitted by Rachael Richardson

*Adapted from Martha Stewart*

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**Winter Squash Spice Cake**

1/2 cup butter
1-1/2 cup packed brown sugar or granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1 tsp. vanilla
1 cup mashed roasted winter squash (not spaghetti squash)
2 cups pastry flour, whole wheat or all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg and/or ground allspice
1/2 tsp. freshly ground cardamom (optional)
1/4 tsp. ground cloves (optional)
1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper (optional)

Preheat oven to 325°F and butter an 8-by-8 baking pan. In a large bowl or the bowl of a standing mixer, cream the butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy looking, about 2 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating for 30 seconds after each addition (this step helps build the structure of the cake, don’t skip it). Beat in the vanilla and then the squash.

In a small bowl mix the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and spices. Add to the squash mixture and stir just until completely combined. It will be a thick batter.

Pour the batter into the buttered pan. Bake until cake is golden and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 50 to 60 minutes. Let cool at least 10 minutes before cutting. Serve hot or at room temperature.

*www.localfoods.about.com*

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**Persimmon Pudding**

Serves 6 to 8

2 cups fresh persimmon pulp, skin removed
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 cup sugar
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
pinch of salt

1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1/8 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
2 cups milk
1 egg
1 T melted butter, plus more for buttering dish

Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter a 9x9 baking dish. Stir baking soda and sugar into the persimmon pulp and set aside. Mixture may thicken as it sits… that’s ok! Sift together flour, baking powder, salt and spices. Add to the persimmon mixture all at once and stir until flour is almost completely incorporated.

Whisk together milk, egg and butter and add to the persimmon and flour mixture (batter will be very loose). Pour into the baking dish and bake for 1 hour covered with foil, or uncovered. If the pudding is covered, pudding will be very wet and moist. If uncovered, it will be drier, topped with a bread-like crust. Bake until firm but still very moist.

*www.joythebaker.com*

**Escarole and Garlic**

5-8 cloves garlic
pinch of red pepper flakes (more if you like it spicy)
olive oil
head of escarole
lots of salt and pepper

Coarsely chop the garlic and the escarole. Heat olive oil in a pan, and add the chili flakes. Add garlic and cook until it turns golden. Add escarole, sprinkle with salt, and cook, stirring regularly for 2-5 minutes on medium-high heat. The greens should be wilted and just start to sweeten up but not be totally melted from the cooking process.

Finish the dish with another dash of oil, salt to taste, and a generous dose of black pepper. Enjoy!