



FRESH VEGETABLES & COMMUNITY EDUCATION

## Focus on the Fields

### CSA Newsletter

Week #2, June 21-25, 2010



Summer Squash, Foggy Morning - June 3rd 2010

**C**ucurbits are making an early appearance in the

shares this season. This week we'll begin picking the earliest varieties of summer squash and zucchini which we grow. 3 different cultivars of zucchini are ready for harvest:

- 8-ball – a round French zucchini
- Raven – a dark green zucchini known for its higher vitamin content because of its skin color
- Jackpot - a standard light green zucchini which joins the ranks of other "modestly" named vegetables like cashflow and mortgage lifter

We'll also be harvesting a bi-colored squash called Zephyr which is both productive and flavorful, making it a big hit with farmers and customers for the past decade.

Some folks passing the farm this spring may have wondered what the big long rows of white row cover were and what their purpose was. Like many farms, both organic and conventional, we use floating row cover to help protect our earliest crops. In the case of our cucurbits the row cover was used to add heat to

### Preparing the Bounty

Greens, Greens, and More Greens

The early weeks of the CSA season are often marked by a diversity of greens: greens for salads, greens for steaming, greens for sautéing. Despite the warm May we have been able to harvest a few crops which prefer cooler temperatures, most notably spinach which will be in

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Brix Bounty Farm – Fresh Vegetables & Community Education

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their early season start; on a sunny day the light row cover may add 10 degrees to the air surrounding the seedling and will help heat the soil thereby jumpstarting vital root growth. Perhaps more importantly the row cover serves to protect our cucumber, squash and zucchini plants from the Striped Cucumber Beetle. The striped cucumber beetle is a voracious eater and is especially attracted to the cotyledons (seed leaves) and newer leaves which contain a higher amount of cucurbitacin.

By using the floating row cover we avoid the need for pesticides to control for striped cucumber beetle. Long term we will continue to work to build our soil biology and mineral balance to grow crops which are less susceptible to disease and insect damage. As our brix levels increase in our leaves (already the cucurbits this year are showing levels above and beyond 2009 analysis) we may reach a point where our crops aren't digestible by insects (who can't digest complex proteins). In the future we hope to rely on row cover for heat and wind protection and not as a physical insect barrier. For now we appreciate the role of row

cover on the farm, as it allows us to grow pesticide free crops.

-Derek



## Upcoming Events:

This Sunday June 27<sup>th</sup>: Nutrient Density Training Session with Dan Kittredge at Lindentree Farm in Lincoln, MA. For more information or to register please visit the Real Food Campaign website at [www.realfoodcampaign.org](http://www.realfoodcampaign.org)

## Preparing the Bounty (cont. from page 1)

this week's share but then won't be around again until September.

Our greens are harvested either the morning of distribution day or the previous evening and generally keep quite well in the fridge. Once we cut the greens we aim to control the rate of respiration to prolong quality of our greens. This means both keeping the crop cool and hydrated. In practice washing your greens once you get home and then storing them in sealed bags in the fridge will provide the longest shelf life.

While consuming many greens raw is a great way to enjoy their flavor; some veggies including spinach and greens in the brassica family (think broccoli/kale) are more nutritionally available once they have been lightly cooked. We'll discuss this topic in greater detail in an upcoming newsletter.

*Do you have a favorite recipe or method of preparing your greens? Anyone have a favorite recipe for radish or turnip greens?*

*If so, email recipe suggestions/ideas to us at: [derekchristianson@gmail.com](mailto:derekchristianson@gmail.com)*

## Coming Soon

**Basil Bunches, Beets, Cucumbers**

## Giving Thanks to the Bees

This season we are keeping two colonies of bees on the farm who will help ensure good pollination for many of our crops including cucumbers, squash, and zucchini.

Admittedly I'm just getting my feet wet in the world of beekeeping; and we often struggle to find time for adequate hive observation on the farm. However, we do get to see the bees in the fields as they busily collect pollen and nectar. In addition to the cucurbits they also are quite fond of the white clovers we have growing in our drivestrips and the red clover we use as a cover crop.