

Radishes: Some of last year's bounty.



The Bounty Begins

This month CSA members begin receiving their weekly shares. Here's what they can expect:

Whether you're growing your own garden, shopping farmer's markets, or participating in a CSA share program, early season local eating in northern climates like ours can be decidedly frustrating. The winter and spring have been long, cold and all too dark. Now that warmer, sunnier weather has arrived our bodies and minds crave what we think those days should bring – *produce!* And lots of it.

Unfortunately, that's not always quite how the garden grows. Many warm weather

favorites require more growing time, heat and day length than a Michigan spring can offer them. So while your nearest chain grocer may be able to have a shelf laden with green beans this time of year, that's only really made possible by trucking the produce in from many hundreds of miles south of here. From May through late June nature's local bounty looks a bit different.

Luckily, it can still be quite plentiful. Various greens are truly the center piece of early season local eating. Three types of lettuce, spinach, pak choi and swiss chard are among the varieties growing here on Olive Hill and all are likely to make an appearance in CSA crates during the first few weeks of the season.

Too many greens can get tedious after a while, but bear with us. They'll be

accompanied by radishes and a few cool weather herbs – such as chives – early. Meanwhile, beets, peas, carrots and turnips should be ready to make an appearance a little later in the month. And in July the variety really takes off!

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Old Time Wisdom:

Black Walnut Trees

Any horse owner will tell you that the shavings and saw dust from Black Walnut trees will kill a horse, most gardeners know not to plant near the 'trees of death' and many a pet owner can be found fretting over the yearly bounty that falls from the tree's branches. The nuts too have a reputation of toxicity. But Black Walnut trees and their products aren't all bad. Some plants are tolerant of the compound they release into the soil – onions, melons and squashes are among them – and black walnuts themselves have known anti-parasitic properties making them a valuable tool in natural and organic worming programs.

What's Growing Now?

With the weather finally cooperating we've got more in the ground!

Tomatoes

Eleven different varieties of tomatoes have made the final cut for our garden this year. A hefty number of two canning types are supplemented by nine different open pollinated, heritage type – ranging in size from slicing to cherry.

Peppers

Bell, Banana, and two varieties of hot – perfect for salsa making – were set out in the garden early this month.

Squashes

Squashes are known to be juglone, a toxin produced by black walnut trees, tolerant. So they, along with the year's onions who are also tolerant are sprouting in the new, east garden under the big black walnut tree. Both summer and winter varieties are included.

Cabbages

A household staple, the garden just wouldn't be a garden without a few cabbage plants. This year we're trying a new variety and hoping for good results.

Meat from an American Guinea Hog



Now Available: Pastured Pork from American Guinea Hogs

Raised on pasture and reared humanely our American Guinea Hogs are an excellent source of quality meat. Every hog processed from our farm is antibiotic and hormone free, fed a natural diet of grasses, legumes, grains and other forage, and treated with respect while in our care.

With a live weight of between 80 and 140 pounds, each whole hog produces about 60 - 85 pounds of finished meat. Hogs are sold by live weight in both whole and half shares. A whole share costs \$1.50 per pound, while a half share is \$1.75 per pound. Processing is itemized separate from the hog. Processing is \$80 for a whole hog and \$40 for a half. Any smoked meat requested, such as bacon and ham, is \$0.40 per pound. As a service to all farm clients we offer free delivery to, mediation with and pick-up from the processor.

The meat of the American Guinea Hog is not your typical "other white meat". With a subtle sweet flavor and superb texture it's more reminiscent of the pork of yesteryear. The steaks are delicately marbled, juicy and tender, the chops are the perfect size for a weekday family meal and the roasts are unsurpassed in flavor.

A limited number of shares will be ready for processing in mid to late July. We are taking reservations with a 50% deposit now. Don't Forget: Farm Members get 10% off their hog share purchase automatically! Please Note: Processing is not subject to discount.

New on the Farm: Lamb

Meet Rosemary. A crossbred bottle lamb from a local sheep farm, she's joining us this summer to help with weed and grass control – and to help us get our feet wet with sheep. So far she's doing her job splendidly and has quickly claimed her title as unofficial farm greeter and mascot. She's even learned how to walk on a leash!

She can often be found free-ranging the area around the house, plucking weeds from around trees and bleating at passersby. If you'd like to visit Rosemary we welcome you to contact us and come on out. She will be here all summer.

