



December 17, 2009

Greetings CSAers,



I am happy to have an introduction to make this week. You may know that we have been (sadly) without a volunteer coordinator since the end of September, when our beloved Kelly left for love and adventure in Colorado. Well, we have found a worthy successor in Kirk Rose, pictured here in an exotic leaf hat (a clue to his personality—goofy and playful, like us!). Kirk is relatively new to the Pacific Northwest, having arrived here in the early fall from the *original* Northwest, i.e. Minnesota, with his partner Kate. Kirk has been volunteering weekly on the farm for the past couple of months, and over that time we've grown to know and love him. Nonetheless, we interviewed 5 candidates for the volunteer program coordinator position. He was still our first choice. Kirk is a graduate of the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN, where he excelled as a student leader. He describes himself as effective, creative and resourceful, and from what we see he is an energetic, compassionate person who shares our commitment to service. Kirk is also a published poet and (perhaps fanatic) rugby player. Kirk can be reached at the farm, 754-1849, and by email at [volunteer@leftfootorganics.org](mailto:volunteer@leftfootorganics.org). Please join me in welcoming him to the Left Foot family.

### What's in Your Box

- Potatoes—Yellow Finn
- Winter Squash—Buttercup
- Red Onions
- Garlic
- Parsnips



### Beth's Farm News: What's Growing On

As the ground begins to thaw, I'm assessing the effects 5 degrees has had on our crops.

The chard and lettuce are goners, which isn't a surprise, but we're hopeful that the kale and collards will grow back if it doesn't freeze hard again. And wouldn't you know it, there are some spinach starts that appear to have survived, both inside and outside greenhouses! We'll be digging root crops of parsnips, carrots, and potatoes to see what can be salvaged.

The result of the freeze is that we will not be able to deliver as many greens to you this winter as we had planned. Our boxes will be rather hearty with potatoes, onions, garlic and winter squash.

This is part of the CSA experience: enjoying the ebbs and flows of Mother Nature together. I'm grateful for your willingness to go along on this wild ride.



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On the bright side, this hard freeze ought to have wiped out slug eggs and possibly cutworms that damage leaves, so perhaps the 2010 growing season will be easier in that respect. Gardeners and farmers are like sports fans who say, "Just wait 'til next year!" As we approach the Winter Solstice to celebrate both the darkest day of the year and the return of the sun, I am reminded how important it is to have hope in our lives. I'm wishing you lots of it! We'll be back in January!

**Recipes** *to start with, a centerpiece dish for holiday feasts.*

### **Baked Stuffed Winter Squash**

1 medium size Winter Squash

Tamari

Brown Sugar

Prepare the winter squash by cutting off the top the way you would for a jack-o-lantern. Clean out the seeds and fibers, and set seeds aside to roast. Put an inch or two of water in a large pot. Set the winter squash upside down in the pot, and nestle its top in next to it. Bring to a boil over high heat. Cover tightly and steam for 10 minutes to precook slightly. Remove the pot from the heat and let cool. When cool, remove the winter squash from the pot and season the inside with tamari and brown sugar. Store in refrigerator until ready to stuff and eat.

### **Stuffing**

1 cup dried apricots

1 cup dried pitted prunes

1 cup apple juice

1 loaf good-quality whole wheat bread

1 large onion, diced (substitute leeks if you want)

1 to 2 stalks leafy celery, diced (leaves included)

3 to 6 tablespoons of minced fresh sage, or 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon minced fresh rosemary

1/4 cup melted butter

Vegetable stock or water as needed

Tamari to taste

A small amount of dried leaf basil and oregano to taste (optional—or use some of the herb pesto you made and froze during the summer)

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Cooking spray (optional)

Place the apricots and prunes in a small, heat-proof bowl. Place the apple juice in a small saucepan over high heat and bring to a boil. Immediately pour the juice over the dried fruit. Let stand for at least 2 hours, but overnight or even a day or two is fine. Drain the dried fruit, reserving both the fruit and the soaking liquid. Coarsely chop the fruit and set aside.

Preheat the oven to 375, then turn down to 200 F.



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Set a wire rack on a baking sheet and place a single layer of bread slices on the rack. Place in the preheated oven and bake, slowly, turning once, until the bread is hard, crunchy, and dry all the way through, but not browned. This is a fairly slow process--it might take 45 to 60 minutes, but set the timer at 20 minute intervals to remind you to check. You will either need to do 2 sheets' worth of bread (in which case, reverse their positions in the oven halfway through), or repeat the toasting again until all bread is prepared. Remove the dry bread from the oven and let cool.

Coarsely crumble the bread into a large bowl. Add the onion and leafy celery and toss to combine. Measure the sage or rosemary, starting with the smaller amount. Add the sage or rosemary to the bread mixture. Pour the melted butter over the mixture and toss well to combine. Add the soaked dried fruit and toss again. The dressing should still be dry. Begin adding the liquid, a combination of vegetable stock and the reserved fruit soaking liquid. Use more stock than juice, and use just enough to moisten the dressing without making it soggy. Keep tossing, adding stock as needed. Add tamari, starting with about 1 tablespoon. Add salt as needed, plenty of pepper, and more sage or rosemary to taste. This is also the point at which you can add a little dried basil and oregano if you like. The stuffing can be prepared and stored, covered and refrigerated, overnight.

On the day you plan to stuff the winter squash, preheat the oven to 375 F. Spray a baking dish, large enough to accommodate the winter squash, with cooking spray.

Stuff the dressing into the cavity of the prepared winter squash, topping with the squash's cap. Place the stuffed squash in the prepared baking dish in the oven and bake until the squash is slightly brown and looks a bit collapsed in on itself, about 40 minutes. Serve whole, at the table.

### **Maple-Glazed Parsnips**

- 1/3 c maple syrup
- 1/4 teaspoon prepared mustard
- Vegetable cooking spray
- 2 teaspoons margarine
- 5 1/2 cups diagonally sliced parsnips, (1/4-inch thick slices)
- 3 tablespoons water
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 dash pepper
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley

Combine maple syrup and mustard; stir well, and set aside. Coat a large nonstick skillet with cooking spray; add margarine, and place over medium heat until margarine melts. Add parsnips and next 3 ingredients; cover, reduce heat to medium-low, and cook 12 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally. Add syrup mixture; cook, uncovered, over medium-high heat 1 minute or until lightly glazed, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; sprinkle with parsley.



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**Festive Potato Salad**

- 6 medium size potatoes, mixed colors
- 2 medium carrots
- 2 hard cooked eggs
- 1/2 cup black marinated olives
- 1/4 cup capers
- 1 teaspoon fresh Rosemary, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh Chives, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon fresh Oregano, finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh Mint, finely chopped
- Dressing:
  - 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
  - 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
  - 1/2 Teaspoon garlic salt
  - 1/3 cup red salad vinegar
  - 2/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

Slowly boil pierced potatoes with jackets on until tender. Let cool. Halve and slice into 1/8 inch slices. Hard cook eggs and peel. Let cool before slicing. Peel carrots, slice on the diagonal. Microwave for 2 minutes (adjust to your microwave) in a covered cup with a tablespoon of water. Carrots should be al dente, not soft. Finely chop herbs together and sprinkle over vegetables. Mix dressing until smooth and pour over vegetables. Lay sliced eggs over vegetables. Add salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle with more vinegar if necessary.

Enjoy!