

# Journey School Food Community CSA Newsletter

Week Forty: October 20, 2007

## Final Pickup for our Whole Life, Whole Year CSA

Have we thanked you yet? What a wonderful year of partnership. As we begin our preparations for living and working in Southern Oregon, we are acutely aware that we will not be able to grow for such a large community for awhile. The ache this causes in the heart of our family has compelled us to look closely at our reasons for ever beginning our CSA business.

In the mythical wisdom of mid-life, Jeff and I admit that we test our theories best under pressure. We began our farming experiment in 2003 with just six rows carved out of a hundred year old pasture simply because we could not afford to feed our beautiful babies the pesticide-free produce we knew they needed. It was delightful, easy, and required such a small commitment. Being contrary folk, we were convinced that if it were so easy we must not be doing it correctly. Next came chickens. Oh, how enchanting they were – just scratching around, having fun and giving us delicious eggs every single day no matter what the weather. Surely, being self-sustaining could not be that uncomplicated. What if we were depending on those same skills for our income? How much more costly would farming be if we depended upon it for not only our dinner but our electric bill and the roof over our heads?

After a year of growing for at least 22 families (27 for the twenty week Summer season) on half an acre, we know in our very bones that feeding ourselves is possible. We did worry that we would have enough food for you, that it would be what you wanted to feed your family, that it would be the highest quality and quantity available on the Island. Sometimes we failed but mostly we succeeded. We've felt the double-edge of bartering for more of our essential needs and the freedom of knowing a happiness based on refining those essential needs to the barest. Sometimes we worry that our girls are learning the wrong lessons to succeed in the real world but mostly we know their joy in living is the real world.

Our thesis has been proven: we can make a living and provide a great life for our family by growing food. However, as with many premises, our experiment had an unexpected outcome. We now know in our very bones that it is not enough to feed and house and clothe our own family through our farming efforts. It became essential that we place our efforts and our family in the context of our community. You made the difference. Your commitment to us for a whole year asked us to commit to you with our whole selves. On those Fridays when we were too hot, too cold, too tired, too lazy, we knew that some of you would arrive at 4:01 with your smiles and excitement and appreciation. Your diet preferences made us stretch our seed selection boundaries. It wasn't enough to offer good food, we wanted to offer the whole picture of what good food means to a community of friends.

While we must move from Vashon to find land prices to match a farmer's income, we hold a very clear picture in our hearts of what we seek in our true home community. It will look like you.

Wishing you each Brightest Blessings, The Mathias Family

### Recipe for Preserved Children from Gardeners' Community Cookbook

Take 1 large field, half a dozen children, 2 or 3 dogs, a pinch of brook, and some pebbles.

Mix the children and dogs together well. Put them on the field, stirring constantly.

Pour the brook over the pebbles. Sprinkle the field with flowers. Spread over all a deep blue sky and then bake in the sun. When children are brown, set to cool in the bathtub.

## Fried Green Tomatoes

3 medium, firm green tomatoes	2/3 cup fine dry bread crumbs or cornmeal
1/2 cup all-purpose flour	1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup milk	1/2 teaspoon salt
2 beaten eggs	1/4 teaspoon pepper

Cut unpeeled tomatoes into 1/2 inch slices. Sprinkle slices with salt and pepper. Let tomato slices stand for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, place flour, milk, eggs, and bread crumbs in separate shallow dishes. Heat 2 Tbsp of olive oil in a skillet on medium heat. Dip tomato slices in milk, then flour, then eggs, then bread crumbs. In the skillet, fry half of the coated tomato slices at a time, for 4-6 minutes on each side or until brown. As you cook the rest of the tomatoes, add olive oil as needed. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

## Sweet Baked Pumpkin

1 small sugar pumpkin, top cut off and seeded	1/2 cup walnuts
2 small apples, peeled, cored and chopped	1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup raisins	1 tsp. pumpkin-pie spice

Place all ingredients in the cleaned-out pumpkin, and place in a shallow baking dish. Bake at 325 degrees for 1-1/2 hours or until the apples and pumpkin are soft. Serve hot from the pumpkin over ice cream in a hollowed-out small pumpkin.

## Roasted Fall Vegetables in a Baked Pumpkin

2-3 lbs mixed vegetables (such as red bliss potatoes, sweet potatoes or yams, carrots, turnips, parsnips or beets)  
2 large red onions, cut in large chunks  
6-8 whole peeled shallots  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
2 bay leaves  
1 teaspoon kosher salt or sea salt  
freshly ground black pepper  
5 sprigs fresh rosemary  
5-6 fresh sage leaves  
olive oil  
1 large pumpkin

Cut off the top of the pumpkin in such a way that it gives you a top. Scoop out the seeds of the pumpkin and save them for toasting, or discard them. Clean out the inside of the pumpkin and rub with olive oil. Sprinkle with a bit of salt and add about 1/2 cup of water. Place the pumpkin in a 325 degree oven and bake for about 30 minutes until slightly softened on the inside. Remove from the oven and set aside.

Peel and cut the root vegetables in large pieces all about the same size. Place them in a zipper type plastic bag with about 1/3 cup of olive oil. Close the bag and shake to coat the vegetables well. Pour the vegetables in a large roasting pan. Add the cut onions, shallots, minced garlic, and herbs. Stir with a large spoon. Sprinkle with the kosher or sea salt and some black pepper. Place the pan, uncovered, in a 425 degree oven. Roast for about 20 minutes, shaking the pan two or three times. Turn the pan and reduce the heat to 375 degrees and bake for another 20 minutes, shaking or stirring to keep the vegetables from burning. Continue baking until all veggies are soft, about 10-20 minutes more. Remove the vegetables to the warm pumpkin and cover with the top. Serve, adding small pieces of the softened pumpkin if you like.