Every farming season is very different, and every one is so much the same. April is chaos and mud, potential and mystery. May and June are demanding, vigorous and fickle, sometimes verdant, sometimes arid. July and August are a grind: keep planting, weeding, harvesting, sweating, put your head down and don’t look up until the season changes. And September brings the change—luminous, transparent, the end in sight, the weather beautiful and the fruits of your labors all around in abundant quantity.

September is the time of year when farmers raise their heads, look around, and begin the process of giving thanks, which in a good year can last until seeding begins again in March. So: thank you. Thank you, most especially at this moment, to our outstanding intern Becky Krauss, who is off to Hampshire College to write her senior thesis and will the Red Sox into the playoffs again this year. We will miss Becky’s determination, her energy, her unsurpassed organizational skills, and her passion for sustainable agriculture, community food security, and the Bosox. We will all be hearing more about Becky in the next few years, no doubt about it.

Crops at the Field Station are growing strong after last week’s rain. We’re still planting in the fields, if you can believe it—more beds of salad and cooking greens went in on Monday the 29th, and we’ll harvest them in October. The summer’s drought has been severe at the unirrigated Lyman Estate fields, and yields of peppers, eggplant and sweet potatoes will suffer this season. We will most likely see our first frost sometime in the next month, bringing the cucumber, summer squash, melon and tomato season to an end. Until it does, these crops will grace September’s harvests along with bok choy, collards, kale, carrots, beets, chard, winter squash, lettuce, arugula, turnips, radishes, potatoes, beans and herbs.

Hope you’re enjoying the change, and the harvest.

—Amanda, for the farm crew

Collect your fruit and vegetable scraps in a container, bring them to the farm, and empty them onto the farm’s compost pile. This will help to enrich the compost that is important to improving the soil at the farm. Today’s vegetable trimmings will help to feed future plants. Compost ingredients don’t need to be organic or grown on the farm to benefit our pile. The compost pile is located at the back of the UMass farm property, behind the left-hand side of the plowed fields as you face them from the distribution shelter. It is shown on the pick-your-own map posted at the distribution shelter.

Do not include cooked or prepared leftovers of any kind if prepared with oils, spices, or other ingredients, just raw scraps like peelings or onion tops or items like beet skins that have been boiled in water only. Egg shells and coffee grounds with unbleached filters only are fine to include in addition to vegetable matter.

Be sure to ask the farm staff if you have any questions.

Roasted Veggies
Submitted by shareholder Katy Chapdelaine

mixed summer squash
carrots
onions
whole garlic cloves, smashed
potatoes
olive oil
fresh basil

Slice veggies 1/4 inch and toss with olive oil and garlic. Spread on baking sheet in single layer with salt and pepper. Optional—sprinkle dried oregano or rosemary at this stage. Roast at high heat or under the broiler with a careful eye for 20 minutes. Remove and toss with fresh chopped basil. Very good leftovers reheated or over a salad. Or make into soup.
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Community Farms Outreach is a nonprofit organization dedicated to farmland preservation, hunger relief, and education.

We’re finally getting some eggplants from the parched Lyman field—time to make some ratatouille!

Ratatouille
Submitted by shareholder Ali Armstrong

1 medium / 2 small eggplant
2 medium yellow onions, sliced into crescents
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
2 medium zucchini, sliced
2 medium summer squash, sliced
6-8 plum tomatoes, peeled and quartered
¾-cup pureed tomato with ¼-cup water added (or the equivalent of tomato paste & water)
pinch of sea salt
generous handful of basil leaves, torn
small handful of oregano, coarsely chopped
a few generous grinds of pepper
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

In a Dutch oven, heat the olive oil over med-high heat. Add the onions, eggplant and garlic. Sauté until onions are translucent, stirring frequently. Add the zucchini, squash, tomatoes, salt & puree. Stir and lower heat to med-low. Cover and let simmer for 30 minutes or until the veggies are tender. Remove from heat and stir in herbs and pepper. Let cool for 15-30 minutes.

Serve just warm over creamy polenta or grilled polenta squares with a quick grate of asiago & parmesan cheese on top.

For a different Mediterranean flavor, try omitting the oregano and adding sliced black ripe olives or kalamatas, a splash of red wine, and a dash of cinnamon. Try adding raw peeled shrimp to a pan of simmering ratatouille and immerse them a couple minutes until they turn pink. Cover it all with crumbled feta cheese and serve.

Collard Greens with Sweet Spices and Cornbread Topping
From Vegetables from Amaranth to Zucchini by Elizabeth Schneider

2 to 2-1/2 pounds collard greens
2 quarts water
1 Tbsp kosher salt
2 Tbsp butter
1 large onion, chopped
1 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp ground cumin
¼ tsp ground cardamom
¼ tsp ground cinnamon

Topping:
¾ cup yellow cornmeal
½ cup flour
1-1/2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp sugar
½ tsp kosher salt
½ tsp grated nutmeg
1 egg
1 Tbsp corn oil

Remove stems and cut leaves into ½-inch strips. Bring water to a boil in a non-aluminum pot 10” in diameter. Add salt, then collards, and return to a boil. Boil gently, stirring now and then, until tender, about 15 minutes. Drain, reserving liquid. Chop collards quite fine.

Melt butter in the same pot over low heat. Add onion and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Add spices and stir a minute or two. Add collards and 1 quart reserved liquid. (If not adding cornbread topping, use 1 cup liquid.) Simmer gently for a few minutes.

To make topping, mix together dry ingredients. Beat egg and oil together along with ½-cup reserved liquid. Mix into dry ingredients with a fork to barely blend. Consistency should be like thick applesauce. Add more liquid if needed.

Bring collards to a boil. Drop batter by tablespoons (about 10) over greens. Cover and boil gently 10 minutes. Uncover and boil a few minutes longer, until dumpling tops feel dry. Serve hot, with hot pepper sauce if desired.