Now comes the tallying up, the measurement of the season. By any measure, it has been a brilliant autumn, with warm days and cool nights and rain here and there. The summer, though, was dry and brutally hot, and our farm paid the price in reduced yields, even where we irrigated. The spring was wet and cold, and crops grew slowly and fitfully throughout May. It wasn’t until Memorial Day that the cold rain stopped, and suddenly the temperatures soared to nearly ninety and our poor shocked crops went immediately to seed.

Remember this when you’re filling out your member survey this fall—this has been a challenging growing season. The diversity of crops and varieties that we grow here at Waltham Fields, fortunately, means that no matter what the weather, something will do well, and many crops were just beautiful this season. The support of our CSA shareholders, in addition to the incredible hard work of our farm staff and volunteers, helped us make the best of this challenging year and arrive in October feeling like we’re looking forward to next season.

We hope you feel this way, too. Our farm staff is in the process of creating a member survey and ‘payout’ summary that will help us get your feedback and do an even better job supplying you with produce next season. We hope you’ll join us at the 3rd Sunday gathering on October 16 to begin this process. We’ll meet at the picnic table outside the distribution shelter and either sit and talk outside or go inside the building, depending on the weather. There, you’ll have an opportunity to ask us questions about the season and make suggestions for the future in person. I can’t stress enough how valuable it is for us to have an exchange of information with our shareholders at the end of the season, to let you know where our concerns and dreams lie even as we hear your thoughts and ideas.

This exchange is critical to my concept of the CSA operation on our farm. We are not just producers, and you are not just consumers. We are a team that works in concert to create a sustainable system for food production and distribution that supports growers, shareholders, and hunger relief partner organizations alike. Again, keep this in mind as you experience the last few weeks of vegetable distribution—as part of a community farm, you are in relationship with agricultural processes that are at once traditional, progressive, and deeply subversive. Your input is part of this process just as surely as are the seeds that we plant in the ground in April.

If you can’t make it to the gathering (or even if you can!), please make sure that you fill out a member survey, which will be available at the final distribution, and get it back to us to help us in our planning process. You can mail the surveys to Waltham Fields Community Farm, 240 Beaver Street, Waltham, MA 02452. As always, a fervent thank you for your ideas and support.

—Amanda, for Ellen, Matthew, Trina and the rest of the farm crew
Vegetablog Excerpt
Shareholder Christine Davis records her CSA experiences at www.vegetablog.net.

9/23/05: I gleaned a couple of small hot red peppers that had been picked and abandoned in the pepper row. Then a long stroll partway around the farm to see what was growing. There was one beautiful patch of greens and cruciferous vegetables—some things that looked like broccoli, some very large leafy greens, and some that were the moody grey-green color of the bottom of a raincloud. Rows and rows side by side, really lovely.

It was the final week for tomatoes. The cherry tomato patches have been plowed under. Sundown was around 7pm, and we saw pink-streaked clouds stretch across the western sky. The lights came on at the baseball field down the street. A commuter train trundled past.

I ate an entire head of lettuce in the car while I drove. For supper, I cooked Swiss chard with garlic and tossed it with wide, eggy pappardelle from Trader Joe’s.

I think these winter squashes are beautiful:

Yummy Waltham Butternut Squash Muffins

The Waltham Butternut Squash, with its distinctive bell shape, was developed at the Waltham Field Station. Waltham Fields Community Farm continues to grow the Waltham Butternut on the site where it was first bred.

2 ½ cups flour
1 cup sugar
4 tsp baking powder
1 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp nutmeg
½ tsp salt
¼ cup butter
2 eggs
1 ½ cup butternut squash, cooked and well drained
¾ cup milk
1 cup raisins


Come to the 3rd Sunday Gathering at 4:00 p.m. on October 16th to join in a discussion about the farm season. Give the farmers your feedback, get your questions answered, and get to know your fellow shareholders. Refreshments provided.

To reach us:
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Community Farms Outreach is a nonprofit organization dedicated to farmland preservation, hunger relief, and education.