Notes from the Kitchen, or the Farmer Mama’s Well-Stocked Pantry

As we were harvesting hundreds of pounds of summer squash one morning last week, one of our dedicated field work shares, Mairead McSweeney, asked me if this was peak harvest season. I laughed. No, I said, hefting the 80 pound bucket awkwardly, this is only the beginning.

After weeks of salads, here come the real fruits of summer and fall. Tomatoes will be ripening by the time you read this, with peppers and eggplant soon to join potatoes, beans, cucumbers and squash on your summer table. In the fall, they’ll be followed by cooking greens like kale, collards and cabbage, winter squash, and more root crops including turnips, rutabaga, celeriac, beets and carrots and another round of radishes. With the addition of garlic and onions and plenty of fresh herbs, you’ll be able to create many truly amazing dishes with your farm food.

But who has time to cook all these veggies? The mother of a two year old, I work at least 11 hours a day during the peak harvest season, and often haul home a load of veggies at the end of the day only to discover that my eyes were bigger than my ability to cook. When I was a farm intern, Mark and I used to put together beautiful, complex meals that incorporated every vegetable we could find. We’d spend happy hours stirring risotto, simmering ratatouille, or making fresh tomato sauce to serve over pasta with a homemade berry crumble for dessert. Now that Jonah is two, we find ourselves eating mac and cheese on a regular basis, and dinner has to be fast, easy, and palatable for the toddler set—while still incorporating all the veggies that we love so much. So we’ve developed a standard way of grocery shopping during the farm season that enables us to be flexible with what comes our way while still pleasing our whole family—most of the time.

Basically, this involves buying a lot of basic carbohydrates at the grocery store—brown rice, quinoa (OK, I’m a hippie), whole-grain pasta, tortillas and couscous—and then augmenting them with protein—tofu, eggs, cheese, beans, chicken and fish—and condiments, which we unfortunately all love. Pretty much every meal we make is some combination of starch, protein, farm veggies, herbs, and a sauce or condiment that gives it a unique identity. For example, we make black bean burritos, a Jonah favorite, once a week. This involves onions, garlic, and any combination of sautéed or grilled vegetables and herbs wrapped in a tortilla with beans, cheese and a grain or potato and served with salsa (from a jar, alas) and guacamole from Trader Joe’s. Jonah picks out the onions and the “lettuce” (otherwise known as parsley) but eats everything else with gusto.

Another variation is grilled tofu, summer squash and onions marinated in your choice of sauce and served on a bed of rice (or quinoa, or couscous) with an accompanying cucumber and tomato salad and carrots. A third is a quick Thai curry involving sautéed veggies and tofu or chicken with coconut milk and curry paste, served over (you guessed it) one of the grains. Pasta tossed with cherry tomatoes, basil, olives, sautéed veggies and romano cheese is another favorite. All of these meals take about 15 minutes to prepare, which is pretty much all the time we have these days.

I’m sure that many of you have even better ways of successfully managing food, farm and family (or the absence thereof, as the shares grow in size)—and we could all use some advice! Let us know your favorite techniques for the bountiful weeks to come. Hope you’re all staying cool and well-hydrated.

Amanda—for the farm crew
**Board Candidates Needed**

Community Farms Outreach is run by a Board of Directors made up of volunteers, most of whom are members of this CSA. We need your help in nominating candidates for next year’s Board (serving Dec ’05–Nov ‘06). Board Directors need to be able to contribute 10 hours a month to Board work. We are especially seeking candidates who have one or more of the following qualities:

- previous experience on a nonprofit board
- financial expertise
- personnel expertise
- fund-raising expertise
- legal expertise
- interest and/or experience in farming, farmland preservation, community food security, and/or education about sustainable agriculture
- lives in Waltham

If someone you know fits one or more of these criteria, please contact them to ask them if they are interested. To apply, or for more information, ask them to email Grett Anderson at board@communityfarms.org. Information about the CFO Board of Directors and general information about nonprofit boards has been posted on the CFOCSA yahoo web site (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cfocsa).

The CFO Board of Directors will nominate a slate of Board Directors and officers during our October 11 board meeting. This slate will be presented for a vote at the 2005 Annual Meeting on Sunday, November 20.

Thank you in advance for your participation. If you have any questions, please email board@communityfarms.org or leave a message at the farm 781-899-2403 in the CFO voice mailbox.

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**Come to a Board Meeting**

CFO is its community. While the CFO board is comprised of elected decision makers who meet on a regular basis, we welcome other community members to participate in discussions about where this organization should go and how we, as a community, should get it there. All CFO members are invited to visit a CFO board meeting in action: 8:00–9:45 the second Tuesday of every month, in the classroom of the grey building adjacent to the greenhouse. We hope you can join us!

**Our next board meeting is August 9th.**

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**Tarragon Carrots**

_from Kathy Diamond’s mother_

Carrots
Celery
Butter
Vinegar (tarragon vinegar if you have it)
Dried tarragon

Peel several carrots and slice them lengthwise into the equivalent of carrot sticks. You could leave whole the slender young carrots we’ve been getting lately at the farm. Cut up some celery into sticks, using less celery than carrots.

Melt some butter in an enameled iron casserole on top of the stove. You need to have enough butter and vinegar to keep the carrots moist, but not swimming in liquid. You could probably add a little bit of water if you wanted to cut down on the amount of butter.

Lay the carrots and celery in the casserole. Sprinkle liberally with tarragon and stir to coat all the veges. Cover and bake in the oven at 350 degrees until the carrots are well done and somewhat browned. The vinegar makes them tangy.

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**Tell Amanda and the rest of us how you cook and store all your veges from the farm. Send submissions to the newsletter to**

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**To reach us:**

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