



Vermont Valley Community Farm

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The Pesto Fest Saturday, September 11th

When: Arrive anytime between noon and 3:00. You begin when you arrive. We expect the last pesto makers to be finished by 5:00, so if you are making a big batch, come early. If you come late, please don't expect to make pesto.

What to bring: The farm supplies basil & garlic. You need to bring all of your other ingredients (oils, nuts, cheese, etc.), a food processor, a bowl or container to harvest basil leaves into, measuring cups and any other utensils you might need. Please leave your dogs behind, as always. Thanks!

What will happen: The event begins with harvesting basil. You will walk out into the field and harvest as much as you will use to make your pesto. You will pick basil leaves and peel garlic for your own use. When you are done with prep work, you will set up your food processor and begin the pesto making. Then clean up and make way for the next pesto-maker!

A dollop for the farm: We would love to enjoy some of the pesto that you make. It is a treat we get from hosting, thanks. There will be a cookie sheet out if you want to donate a spoonful or two for the Perkins!

Picnic: Rather than a pot luck, we prepare a large bowl of pasta for all pesto makers so you can try out your freshly made pesto. You are welcome to bring a picnic and sit in the yard or down by the stream.

Rain or Shine: The event will happen even if it is raining. All pesto making happens under a roof.

Taking basil home: You are welcome to take basil home instead of making pesto on the farm. We may limit the amount for take home so there remains basil for everyone.

Garlic: You can buy garlic to take home for \$5 per pound.

Roma Tomatoes/Hot peppers/Tomatillos: The 'We-Pick' will take place at 11:00 (not 9:00). If you are coming to the Pesto Fest you can purchase your tomatoes before you start pesto making. We still have roma tomatoes available. E-mail your order by Friday morning.

Storage Shares Are Still Available

The Storage Share includes two deliveries:

November 11th & December 9th. We include storage tips so you will know how to keep your produce.

The cost of the Storage Share is \$160.

Each delivery includes: 15# potatoes, 5# carrots, 5# onions; plus winter squash, cabbage, kale, leeks, daikon radishes, beets, celeriac, rutabaga, turnips, brussels sprouts, garlic, winter radish & pie pumpkins.

If you are interested we need your signup by Sept 17th. Send in your check to reserve a Storage Share.

Madison Area CSA Coalition (MACSAC), would like to hear from you! MACSAC is an excellent organization comprised of CSA farms and community members. The Coalition has been instrumental in establishing CSA in this region and is currently evaluating how it can better serve the eating community. MACSAC is looking for 10 - 12 adults to participate in an informal focus group at the MACSAC offices at 303 S. Paterson St. Ste. 1B in Madison on Thursday, September 16 from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided. As a token of their appreciation for your time and input, participants will receive two copies (one to keep and one to share!) of the nationally renowned cookbook, "From Asparagus to Zucchini: A Guide to Cooking Farm-Fresh, Seasonal Produce." Space is limited, and RSVP is required; please register by calling (608) 226-0300 as soon as possible, and thank you for participating.

Directions to the Farm

*From Madison take Hwy 14 (University Avenue) to Black Earth. At the Shoe Box Shoe store turn left onto Hwy 78. Go about 1/2 mile.

*Turn right on County F. Stay on County F for four miles to the intersection with County FF. The farm is at the intersection of F & FF. Turn right. Our website has a map www.vermontvalley.com.

Pumpkin Pick,
Sunday, October 3
Details in the
next newsletter.



It's transition time again. This time we are transitioning from summer crops to fall crops. The days are noticeably getting shorter. It happens very quickly this time of year, nearly 3 minutes each day. Just a few weeks ago our first crew was starting at 5:30, not any more. Their start time has moved to 7:00. They like to start with the sun, but the sun is still sleeping at 5:30 (I wish I was, but that will happen soon enough, winter is on it's way). Yesterday it was warm at 7:00, today it was 39 degrees (our valley is cold).

The red peppers are still heavy on the vines. We harvested 7,000 red peppers for your shares this week and we still see lots of red in the pepper patch. That means more for next week and the week after. This has been an amazing pepper season. After such a cool summer in 2009, we were hoping for more heat for the crops that thrive on heat: peppers, eggplant and tomatoes. And we certainly got more heat. We will continue to harvest all three until the frost takes them down. Sorry to have mentioned the "f" word, it does make the transition from summer to fall quite final. The tomatoes, well you have seen what a good tomato crop looks like each time you receive your share. I must confess that we spend a lot of time harvesting tomatoes each week. I'll give you a peek into the tomato world at Vermont Valley. We have tomato gardens in 4 locations. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday we harvest tomatoes from each garden. One crew, usually 10-12 people, go to the 1/4 acre+ garden where the Garden Peach, Green Zebra, Red Zebra, Roman Candle, Pink Beauty, Wisconsin 55 and cherry tomatoes grow. Two people harvest on each row, one person on each side. We keep all of the varieties separate in the crates. We have been filling 60 crates each time we harvest from this garden. This takes about 2 1/2 hours. Simultaneously there is another crew harvesting tomatoes from each of our hoopouses, usually 8-10 people. First one house, then the other, then outside to the roma tomato garden. This also takes about 2 1/2 hours. All of the tomatoes come into the packing shed where they get washed, counted and weighed. Then they go into the 50 degree cooler and come back out on Wednesday afternoon when we bag them. We set up two bagging tables. One for the colorful salad tomatoes and one for the red slicers. Each table has up to 10 people putting tomatoes into bags and each table bags 1225 bags in about 3 hours. Lots of hands moving really fast. It is quite a Wednesday afternoon happening!

OK, back to transitions. The quantity of tomatoes won't last forever, but likely for a few more weeks. Unless of course that frost comes. The first frost is strongly tied to the full moon. The September full moon is on the 23rd. If the temperature prediction is low during that time, we will take action and harvest everything that we don't want to lose to a frost. If we make it past the September full moon without a frost, we usually have another week or two to enjoy, frost free.

But the transitions begin to take place before the frost. Just this week we harvested leeks and collards for your share. We sat down last weekend and scheduled the remaining deliveries, including all of the crops that patiently wait in the fields to be harvested. Fall crops are patient. I love that about them. The winter squash, pie pumpkins, beets, leeks, cabbage, kale, collard greens, winter radishes, they all patiently wait for us to harvest them. Not like the summer crops. If we wait 12 hours too long a zucchini can become as big as a boat. Cucumbers will become too large, tomatoes will become over ripe, lettuce heads will bolt. Summer crops want to see us keep to a very strict harvest schedule. The fall crops are really not so demanding. So we plan when we will harvest them. We have a bit more say in creating a nice balance of vegetables in the remaining share boxes.



Piles of peppers. While waiting for Barb to return with more crates, LaVina and Stephanie creatively made piles of peppers, 75 peppers in each pile, just the number for each crate.



Many hands bagging tomatoes. Each bag gets passed around the table and each pair of hands puts several tomatoes in. It's fun and fast. 1250 bags of tomatoes.