

# Schreiber & Sons CSA

*It's a Culinary Adventure*

Schreiberandsons.com

July 14, 2009

Week XI

In this week's box, we expect to give you:

- Squash medley - a mix of different kinds of summer squash
- Cucumbers
- Eggplant, Japanese
- Beets
- Fava beans
- Lettuce
- Basil
- Green onions
- Potatoes
- Carrots
- Cabbage
- Peppers
- Farmer's Choice

You will note the last item--Farmer's Choice--What a vague bullet point. This is a catch all phrase meaning we have a lot of odds and ends, but not enough of any of it to get to everyone. This will probably include cauliflower, broccoli, extra carrots, cucumbers, or squash, or something else. When you get something in your box that is not in the first 12 items, that is your Farmer's Choice.

A small portion of you will find that you do not have fava bean in your boxes. Sorry for the shortcoming-we will make it up to you by substituting something else-the first cantaloupes of the season. We are picking our first melons of the season Tuesday morning and will have just a few-so they will go the fava-less. By next week our policy will be "a melon in every box!"

**Cold Room.** At the end of last week we finally got our cold room up and running. It is such a great improvement for our CSA. It is set at 48 degrees-a good compromise temperature for our produce (some does better at lower temperatures (cantaloupe likes 34 degrees) and some like higher temperatures (watermelon likes 60 degrees)). The

cold room will help us three ways. First, the increased cooling capacity will help us get the field heat out of produce faster. This should help maintain the quality of your produce longer. One challenge we have is that if we pick the produce either the day before or day you receive it, it is hard to cool off the produce sufficiently before you receive it. Second, the cold room is closer to our packing area and is more efficient for us to use-more produce cooled faster. Third, we were running out of room with our existing handbuilt tiny cold room. Also, when the workers get hot, they just go into the cold room for a few minutes and presto, you aren't hot anymore.

**The Giant Pumpkin Adventure.** In order to get a really big pumpkin, one has to plant early. The problem with planting pumpkins in early June (as we did) you expose your plants to the beet leafhopper, which vectors curly top virus. If this insect feeds on your pumpkin and it injects the virus in your plant-it dies. This has happened to our pumpkins-to some of your pumpkins. We have experience with this and knew it was coming. We planted a lot of pumpkins, figuring we would lose a fair amount but some would survive. Now for the good news; we have a lot that survived and some of them are getting very big. Today we went through a restaked pumpkins and made sure that everyone's has a good pumpkin plant. The biggest pumpkins are size of beach ball-maybe 18 inches in diameter. For a pumpkin of that size in mid July, stands to become a very large pumpkin by October. This weekend a CSA member came out and tended to their pumpkin.

Our role is to plant the seeds in the greenhouse, keep them watered, get them ready to transplant, transplant them, keep them watered, fertilized and control the weeds until the plants are well established and are competitive against the weeds. If you want to increase the likelihood of having a really big pumpkin, you want to think about making arrangements to come out and give your pumpkin some extra care. At this time you what you need to do is pull any weeds around your pumpkin (there are not a lot right now), pick off extra female blossoms and fruit (just leave one surplus pumpkin, for just in case) and bury the vine that your pumpkin is attached to. There are some other little tricks for later in the season.

If you are interested in tending to your pumpkins you can email or call the office to make sure someone is there and available to show where the pumpkins are. I sure hope this works out... we have the potential for some really big pumpkins. I do not want to raise any false expectations, but there is the potential for some really big pumpkins.

Just so you know it is our goal that everyone in the CSA will be getting several pumpkins besides the Giant Pumpkins.

**Add ons.** We have 8 bottles of rose and 14 bottles of the white wines left. We have lots of flour left. Sorry, but no more eggs than what we are currently getting. There is a lot of meat available-mostly hamburger, but some other cuts of meats.

**What's going on at the farm.** The most rivoting thing (for us) at the farm is that we are undergoing a pair of inspections this week at the farm in order to become certified by a

two different third parties for food safety. We are doing this because we are growing a lot of melons this year and this crop has been implicated in food safety issues. In order for us to freely sale melons to a wide array of outlets, we have to prove that we are doing everything possible to ensure that our food is safe, particularly for microbial contamination. There is a lot of paper work and attention to detail-not to mention a few thousand dollars paid to a consultant and the inspecting agencies. While this is specifically targeting our melon crop, we are applying many of the same rules to the eggplant (our other big crop) and to the CSA.

We will harvest our first few melons last week, and our first few eggplants last week, but in a couple of weeks, the flow of these two crops will turn into a torrent. Most of you are thinking melons, melons, melons, send them to us, and we will. A few of you are thinking, eggplant, eggplant, eggplant, and we will. The funniest story that I have regarding the CSA last year goes like this..... At the end of the year, the CSA members vote on their most favorite and least favorite items of produce. Rutabaga was the least favorite, followed by eggplant as the second least favorite. Interestingly, eggplant was the second most liked item of produce. Eggplant, you love it or hate. We have so much eggplant, it is hard not to put it in your boxes.....regardless, melon and eggplant harvest is taking on.

We are also doing lots of research projects on the farm. Today we evaluated a grape leafhopper trial in some chardonnay grapes, inoculated a Colorado potatoe beetles, weeded a potato nematode trial, got ready to treat a field corn mite trial. Also we are staking and stringing eggplant. And as always, we are irrigating and fertilizing everything.

**Fava Beans.** In your box this week you will notice something that will be completely unfamiliar to you-there is a bag of fava beans. These come to you for three reasons. First, I have an older couple who live near us-he was in the army and was stationed in England during World War II, besides his memories, he brought back a bride. They also brought with them a love for fava beans and they have urged me to grow them for a couple of years. Second ,since I have the best job in the world (I get to grow anything I want that can be grown here), I was interested in growing this exceeding unusual crop-how would it do here. Third, there seems to be fashions in vegetables and we had recieved some requests from members for fava beans. Each year at the end of the season, we give members a chance to vote on their most and least favorite items of produce and to request new kinds of produce. Fava bean was the most commonly mentioned, wished for items.

I cannot just jump in and grow something I have never grown before. Usually I try it on a small scale and if it works, then I ramp up enough for the entire CSA the next year. As it turns out fava beans are easy to grow. We did not grow enough to give to everyone, but most of you will get a serving. I was completely unfamiliar with growing the crop, figuring out how to pick, and most importantly how to cook it.

Our farmworkers came to the rescue in the former. Apparently in the region of Mexico that our workers come from, fava beans (which they call "ava") are a common food items. They knew how to grow them and how to pick them. Our neighbors came to our rescue for the latter. Below is the favorite recipe from our neighbors. Someone else told us that they like fava cooked simply, cook like peas with some butter, garlic and salt. I have now eaten favas almost every day for the past week-here is my short opinion-they are okay, sort of like a lima bean that tastes like a green pea.

In England Fava Beans are called Broad Beans  
Here is the way my Mum prepared them.

First shell the beans -- as in peas. Wash and put in a cooking pan. Cover with water. Bring to a boil, boil for about ten minutes. Keep checking for tenderness until you become familiar with when the beans are tender.  
While the beans are boiling prepare a cream sauce to put over the beans.

Recipe for for parsley sauce (Mum's recipe)

In my English cookbook everything is measured in ounces and pints etc., not cups.

1 oz of butter (not Marg)  
1 oz of white flour  
From 1/4 to 1 pint milk  
1 tablespoon parsley  
Pepper and salt to taste.

Method: Melt the butter in a small saucepan and mix in the flour till very smooth with no lumps.

Add the milk very slowly, stirring continuously until it boils. simmer for 10 minutes stirring constantly,

then add the parsley and pepper and salt.

The sauce should be smooth and glossy if sufficiently stirred.

You may like to add some crumbled already cooked bacon pieces for extra flavour.

Drain the beans, put back into the pan they were cooked in, stir in the sauce and keep warm till  
time to serve.

Beans cooked this way are used as a side dish with all kinds of meat and fish.