

Schreiber & Sons CSA

It's a Culinary Adventure

Schreiberandsons.com

May 1, 2010

A quick note: The Summer CSA kicks off this and we are very excited---wow, it is here. Most of us have been working five days a week for three months on this, some of us have been working Saturdays as well, and I have been working seven days a week for the past two months (Not all day Sunday-but I water things on Sunday so everyone else gets at least one if not two days off each week.) But we are really excited about this, some of us are a little stressed and I am more than a little stressed because there is so much to do before this thing is off the ground.....

In your boxes next week, you should expect:

- Cilantro
- Asparagus
- Salad mix (red leaf lettuce, mizuna, arugula, cress, sorrel and spinach)
- Rhubarb
- Chives
- Spinach
- Sweet onions (Walla Walla sweet onions, grown in Franklin County)
- Radishes
- Dry beans

The cilantro, radishes, spinach and asparagus will be conventional for the conventional members and organic for the organic members. The rhubarb and chives will be organic for everyone. The sweet onions and dry beans are all conventional. The salad mix is mostly organic, but some of the conventional mixes will have some conventional components.

Portion Size. Believe it or not this is something we struggle with. We have small, medium and large share size memberships. Roughly we try to have the medium shares to be half again the size of a small and a large to be half again bigger than a medium, or twice the size of a small. This is harder to do than it sounds. Generally, we will provide the larger the size with either extra portions or larger portion size. For the large shares we often add something of which we have just a few items. It is a little harder in the spring when we have fewer items to offer. In time, some of you will want to complain about portion size or what you are getting versus a member with a different share size. Trust me, this will happen. *If you feel the need to do this, provide your feedback to us, not as a*

complaint, but as an observation and send with it constructive criticism with a suggested solution. We try to be flexible and we respond to serious issues. Sometimes, may be even often, we make mistakes which we try to correct. Sometimes things are happening we do not realize and we need the heads up from you. Sometimes what you think is a wrong is just the way it is. The bottom line is that we appreciate and need feedback, keep it constructive and do not do it anonymously.

The Drop Sites. Here are the drop sites for the Tri-Cities. If you go to our website and click on the button towards the center of the home page that says drop sites, you can get maps to each locaiton.

Under each address is a time interval. This is when you are to pick up your box. Try to pick up during this time, however we realize that this may not always work for you. You can go for up to one hour past the end of the drop site pick up times. We ask you not to go later than that out of respect for the volunteers who are generously providing their homes as a drop site. Also, please respect their property and their privacy. If you see any kind of trash or produce that has been dropped, blown out of a box or is out of place, be kind and pick it up.

South Richland:
1262 LLANDWOOD

4:30 - 6:30 PM

West Richland:
610 S 54TH AVE

4:00-6:30 PM

Kennewick:
2526 W KLAMATH AVE

5:00-7:00 PM

North Richland:
2009 HARRIS AVE

3:30-6:30 PM

Pasco:
2921 ROAD 52

3:00-6:30 PM

Schreiber & Sons Farm:
2621 RINGOLD ROAD

3:00-6:00 PM

If you have not signed up for a drop site, reply to this email and we can sign you up.

Shared Risk. I have not talked a lot about the philosophy of a CSA. In this update I want to go over a core CSA value; that of shared risk. When you buy a membership, you are buying a share, not in the legal sense like a share of stock in a business, but rather a share in the produce from the farm. In sense, you are a co-producer, as a member you are an investor. Like a stock there is risk involved. If the harvest is poor, you receive less, if the harvest is bountiful, so too, will be your box. I suppose there is a

worst case scenario where a hail storm could come through right before harvest and take out most everything and there could be little to nothing in the boxes.

The expectation is that our harvest will be successful and the boxes will carry their usual array of bounty, color and flavors.

Be Nice to Your Friends, Relative and Neighbors. We have plenty of shares available if folks are still interested. If you want or need to start later in the season, we can easily prorate for each week you are not in the CSA (3% per week). If you know someone who might be interested, please pass on this email with the brochure attached.

Your Farmer.

Alan Schreiber

The inevitable questions: Each year we get questions about the produce. In an attempt to preempt some of your questions I am updating my response to questions that came in after the first delivery last year.

What is the preferred method of washing the produce? Does it need a quick rinse or something more? We aren't sure what will have pesticides and what won't.

What is the preferred method of washing the produce?

This is a great question. A lot of the produce from our CSA will be washed immediately after harvest. For example, the lettuce is washed, dried in a huge salad spinner, picked through for quality control and bagged. The asparagus is washed, sorted a little, checked for quality and bunched. The bok choy is washed and bundled. We try to provide you with produce that has been washed or cleaned. **But** do not assume that the produce you receive is always ready to eat. It is your responsibility to determine if additional washing is necessary.

Everyone has a different standard of what is acceptable. I was raised on a farm and have little aversion to food with dirt on it. I have no qualms about pulling a radish out of the garden, wiping some of the dirt off the root and eating it. I expect that if you examine your salad mix closely you may find a piece of dried stem from last year's crop, a bit of a root, a scrap of a decayed leaf or something else you do not want to eat. The moral of this story is... do not assume everything we provide you is always ready to eat. If we had the ability to invest in a multimillion processing facility, your greens

would be grocery store perfect-in our humble little operation, we have to settle for less than perfection. It is a trade off you make to get local, fresh, great taste and quality.

Now to answer the question..... there is no preferred method of washing produce. It depends on how dirty it is, what it is and a few other items. Leeks should be sliced in half from top to bottom, immersed in water and swished around... remove the leeks from the water and repeat. Do not dump the leeks out of the water, the dirt will settle in the sink or bowl and this will just redeposit what you have worked to remove; just lift the leeks out of the container of water. Asparagus should be rinsed off, the butt end broken (not cut) where it naturally snaps off. Lettuce should be washed, dried and picked through and it is ready to go. Theoretically, the lettuce should be ready to eat, but I am sure that some items will have some extraneous matter. Do not use soap. The rinse chemicals that some companies sell are worthless. Use three things... water, effort and common sense.

Does it need a quick rinse or something more?

Ninety percent of the time a quick rinse and some inspection should be sufficient. Sometimes some items such as potatoes and crops in contact with the soil may need a light scrubbing.

We aren't sure what will have pesticides and what won't.

This is the question that I could spend the rest of the day responding to.

Bear in mind that theoretically, both the conventional and organic produce could contain pesticide residues.... yes, pesticides are used in organics and in many cases very commonly. A study on pesticide use practices in Washington potatoes found that organically grown potatoes received more applications of pesticides than conventionally grown potatoes. However, organically acceptable pesticides have to be naturally derived and in most cases these products have very low mammalian toxicities and usually are relatively benign environmentally.

For the first part of the season all produce should be pesticide-free; I suspect that for most of the year both the conventional and organic produce should be pesticide free. Eventually the weeds, insects and diseases will rear their ugly, ugly heads, buds and hyphae, but until then we go to some lengths to refrain from pesticide use. We try to strictly limit pesticide use and when we do, we use the safest methods. While I have several people who work for me on the farm, I do virtually all of the pesticide applications for the CSA. It is a responsibility I take seriously.

I have not a single qualm about using pesticides; I do not think I ever met one I did not like, but pesticides have their place and the CSA is a place to minimize their use.

Let me count the reasons why we minimize the use of pesticide.

1) Pesticides have something called REIs or restricted entry intervals. Once you apply a pesticide, you cannot go back into that area for 12 to 72 hours and for some products it is up to 7 days. We are going into our fields, beds, rows and orchards every day, usually many times a day. We cannot stay out long.

2) Pesticides have something called PHIs or preharvest intervals. Once you apply a pesticide you have to wait a certain length of time before you can harvest the crop. These times range from 0 to 14 or more days. We are harvesting asparagus, bok choy, lettuces, etc almost every day now. For crops that we are harvesting or may be about ready to harvest, pesticides are out of the question.

3) In our style of growing, we plant a very wide diversity of crops. When you plant a mosaic of crops, insects and sometimes diseases, have a more difficult time becoming established. This reduces the likelihood the pest outbreaks occur and it reduces the need for pesticides. Thank goodness the CSA style of growing reduces pest problems. If we did have huge pest problems, I am not sure what we would do.

4) There are some things we can do in lieu of pesticides, such as hand weeding, hand picking of insects, etc. Last year, Julian our eight year old son, literally picked the Colorado potato beetles off the potato plants.

5) We know that many of our members would rather us use pesticides minimally, so that is what we do.

Bear in mind that eventually there will be some pesticide use. You almost can't escape it in some cases, both in the conventional and organic production. There is an indigenous leafhopper called the beet leafhopper and it transmits both a virus and a phytoplasma. (It is a long story to explain what these are, even the names are long, the curly top virus and beet leafhopper transmit virescens agent or BLTVA.) If we do not use something to protect the tomatoes, we will lose our crop. What we try to do is make our applications prior to the time when fruit is on the plant so there will be no residues on the fruit. Also, we are using a very cool new product that naturally stimulates the plants immune system to make it resistant to the disease once it has been introduced in the plant. If this works, it will be a very promising tool.

The bottom line is that we think about things like pest control, pesticide use and what our customers want. The value system that each of you has runs the gamut from spray it until the bugs are dead, dead, dead, all the way to those who want zero pesticides, organic or otherwise. We will not please everyone, but we will try. We give lots of thought to this and we want pesticides to be one thing you do not worry about. We want you to spend your time thinking about what to do with radicchio, not whether it has pesticides on it.

I do not want to wave credentials around and come across like, *just take my word for it . . .* however, let me also say, I went to school for a very long time. After I graduated from high school back in Missouri, I spent four years on an undergraduate degree, three years working on a Masters degree and then another four years working on a Ph.D. My Ph.D. is in entomology (insects) and pesticide toxicology. I used to work at the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C. and as a professor at WSU, in both positions as a pesticide expert. I say this not to establish my credentials but to let you know that I know something about pesticides and I want every member of our CSA to be comfortable with our policy on pesticides. Worry about what to do with bok choy or whether your kids will eat Swiss chard, but don't worry about the pesticides.