



Welcome to the 2014 CSA season!

We're glad to have you with us in our 15th growing season here at Waterpenny Farm! This newsletter will come biweekly for the CSA season. It will give you a feel for where your food came from, who is growing it, and how it is grown, and what the farm is looking like, in little installments throughout the season.

It also will give you ideas about how to use the fresh food you will be getting, all grown on our farm, throughout the season. We have a lot of recipes to share, both through the newsletter and in the recipes section of our website. We also hope many of you will contribute recipes and food ideas to share through the newsletter.

Below is a photo of us all on the farm in April, near the greenhouse, where almost everything we grow starts out. Top row: Matt, Sarah, Nora, Eric, Leigh, and Isaac. Bottom row: Amanda, Nicholas, Rachel, and Reuben. We hope you enjoy the season.



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Meet an intern...

You'll have the chance to hear from each of our six interns through the course of the season. Amanda is one of two who have returned this year, and helped to get our crew off to a good start. She's now a pro at using the tractor for unrolling hay bales for mulch, and is great at helping the crew to stay organized. We're so glad to have her back this year!

Hello CSA members! My name is Amanda and this is my second season working at Waterpenny. It's interesting to be a returning intern - I have a totally different perspective on things this year. Already knowing how to do various farm tasks allows me to spend less time thinking about the technical aspect of farming and more time thinking about the bigger picture - why we are doing things a certain way. Having more responsibility in day-to-day activities is nice too. I like being able to teach the other interns things I learned last year.

Next year I plan to work on my boyfriend's family farm, Oak Shade Farm, in Rixeyville, VA. They grow Christmas trees, veggies, mushrooms and honey. I am constantly thinking about how I will be able to use the many things I'm learning here to start my own projects there next season!

I'm looking forward to the next six months of hard work, delicious food, friends, and the beautiful Blue Ridge mountains.
~Amanda

Cilantro Pesto

- 1 cup packed fresh cilantro leaves
- 1/2 cup almonds or walnuts
- 3 stems garlic tops, chopped
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Combine the cilantro, garlic tops, and nuts in a blender or food processor and puree until smooth. Add the parmesan, oil and salt and puree to a smooth paste. Stir into hot pasta and serve. Can also be used as a spread.

Here We Go Again!

Each year as we begin making our CSA shares again it's always fun & interesting to think back about the previous year or two, and see how things have changed or stayed the same. As we start the cycle again the daily tasks bring back clear pictures of the year before.

The big theme of this spring is that it's been a lot easier to work with than last spring. We did have a long, cold winter, and the fall kale & spinach that usually survives the winter and produces in the spring did the worst they've ever done. The cold, snowy winter was, overall, good for this season's prospects though, setting back pest populations that have had it easy during the generally milder winters we've been having.

Once it started to warm up it kept going, gradually getting a little warmer each week, and our plants all gradually grew more and more. 2013 was much more variable, with mild weather in April getting everything to grow quickly, and then a series of May frosts setting some things back or killing them entirely (last year we replanted thousands of squash and tomato plants after a May 20 frost). We had nice spring crops last year, and harvested lettuce, kale, and broccoli earlier than usual, but the summer squash and tomatoes were delayed quite a bit. We appreciate the beautiful spring we had this year, and everything we've planted so far is looking good and appears to be on what we consider a normal schedule. It's always a good sign when we have zucchini and summer squash in the first shares!

We're also remembering how last year Eric broke his foot on Memorial Day weekend, and spent six of our busiest planting weeks on crutches. While we survived that pretty well, Eric much prefers farming on two feet!



Spinach field (Left) May 1; (above) May 30

Fresh Spinach Dip

Adapted from Chow.com

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup shredded carrot (from about 1 medium carrot), finely chopped
- 1/2 cup scallions, chopped small
- 2 stems garlic tops, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more as needed
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more as needed
- 1 pound spinach, washed and chopped finely
- 2 medium scallions, finely chopped (white and light green parts only)
- 1 cup sour cream or Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- crackers, crostini, carrot sticks, squash slices, Kohlrabi slices, or thick-cut potato chips, for serving

1. Place a fine-mesh strainer in the sink.
2. Heat the oil in a large straight-sided frying pan over medium heat until shimmering. Add the carrot, onion, garlic, measured salt, and measured pepper and stir to combine. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables have softened, about 6 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl and set aside.
3. Return the pan to medium heat, add half of the spinach, season with salt and pepper, and stir to combine. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the spinach is completely wilted, about 4 minutes. Add the remaining spinach and cook, tossing occasionally, until completely wilted, about 3 minutes more.
4. Transfer the spinach to the strainer in the sink. Using a ladle, press on the spinach to squeeze out as much liquid as possible. Drain and put in a mixing bowl.
5. Add the scallions, sour cream, mayonnaise, Worcestershire, and lemon juice and stir to combine. Cover tightly and refrigerate until the flavors meld and the dip is thoroughly chilled, about 2 hours.
6. Taste and season with salt and pepper as needed, then transfer to a serving dish. Serve with crackers, crostini, carrot sticks, kohlrabi sticks, squash sticks, or thick-cut potato chips.



Above: Amanda and Nora with an early greens harvest