

Hello Members!

The high tunnels are becoming empty, the greenhouses are looking cleaned up. Many of the tractors are no longer in sight. The full moon will be the cold moon on December 26th and if I can agree with anything, I would agree, it is cold. We have had our employee holiday celebration, and everyone will be going in a different direction for a bit of a break in the next week or so or in the coming early months of the new year. During the winter months the store here in Chester and the Lindeken market will remain open except for Christmas Day so stop by to say hello if you are in either area.

As we get to this time of the year, the farm is being put to bed and we are looking back as well as looking forward. We are planning and preparing for the next season. It is time to look through the seed catalogs and to place orders. Not only is it a good idea to plan. Often ordering early is the most cost-efficient way to operate. Waiting too long could also mean that some of your favored items will not be available.

Many of us will start to reflect as well. We want to be healthier. We want to improve our diets. This is the time of year that many of the superfoods are listed for the next year. Mushrooms, beets, kale, spinach and dark leafy greens, and black beans, popcorn, and sunflower seeds and garlic are some of the crops that we grow that are on the list. Of course, here at the farm we do not grow mushrooms, however we can at times purchase from one of the farms that we partner with. This year we grew black beans and kidney beans for the first time. Beets and kale and many other leafy greens including spinach, lettuce, and swiss chard are grown here on the farm all season long. All of these vegetable have been grown in the high tunnels for the early April shares as well as for these holiday shares. Garlic is already planted for next seasons harvest in June. Sunflowers are grown during the summer and fall season and the sunflower heads can be harvested for seeds, weather depending. Popcorn was harvested in the fall, and it is dry enough now to make a perfect Christmas gift. I always give the gift with directions, and a brown paper bag. It is fun for everyone and just think you are giving a gift of good health. Many lists are not even out yet or not complete. I found a list of possibilities and almost everything that we grow is on it, including some of the herbs that we receive and some of the herb plants that are in our gardens. I hope that you will be along with us in 2024 for another year of shares that have the potential to help maintain good health for all of us. Thankfully, I don't think that we as a group are going to have to make many New Years Resolutions

The celebration of Hanukkah has ended, Christmas will be just a few days away as you pick up on Friday. New Years will be one week later. We can all celebrate with some traditional foods that represent money, prosperity, and good luck. Any greens represent money, pick up some apple cider donuts or bake a ring-shaped cake, they go full circle and we have completed the circle of 2023 and are ready to start the new year. Eat some pork, pigs forge forward, do not eat chicken, they scratch backward. Lentils represent coins so they are a traditional dish on New Years Day.

Jenn Boreale

From all of us at Alstede Farms, we thank you for your support of local agriculture and wish you all a wonderful holiday season!



Week 4 Holiday Harvest - Dec. 22, 2023

- Apples
- Potatoes
- Broccoli
- Potatoes
- Onions
- Carrots
- Parsnips
- Tomatoes
- Butternut Squash
- Lettuce
- Spinach
- Swiss Chard
- Kale
- Cabbage
- Bok Choy
- Brussel Sprouts
- French Horticultural & Kidney Beans

**Your actual CSA share contents will be listed on the label inside of your box and may differ from this list. Your share contents are based on your individual preferences and customizations that you make on your Harvie profile, as well as changes in availability.

(908) 879-7189

info@alstedefarms.com



Batter Dropped Cider Donuts

1 cup of cider, boiled down to 1/4 cup. Let cool.

2 cups flour

1/4 cup sugar

3 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon fresh ground nutmeg

1/3 cup milk

1 egg, slightly beaten

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/3 cup sugar

1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

3 cups of oil or enough to fill pan to 3 inches (Crisco will give a better taste, so use that if you dare.)

- Lightly spoon flour into measuring cup; level off.
- In large bowl combine flour, 1/4 cup sugar, baking powder, salt, 1 teaspoon cinnamon and nutmeg; blend well.
- Add milk, apple cider that was concentrated, vanilla, and egg;
- stir with fork until thoroughly mixed, but do not over-mix.
- Drop by teaspoonfuls into hot oil 4-5 a time, keeping the temperature at 375 degrees.
- Fry doughnut balls 1 to 1-1/2 minutes on each side or until golden brown.
- Remove with slotted spoon. Drain on paper towels.
- In small bowl or plastic bag combine 1/3 cup sugar and 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon; roll or shake warm doughnuts in mixture.
- Enjoy while still warm.

How to Pop Corn on the Cob

Alstede Fresh Popping Corn, Paper Bag (lunch size or a bit larger)

- Place one dried corn cob into a paper bag, do not add anything else.
- Lunch size bags will work however the larger size brown lunch bag is even better, keeping all of the corn inside the bag. That being said, too large is not good either.
- There will not be enough moisture for keeping the bag from burning.
- Fold the top of the bag over a couple of times to seal the bag. Place the bag in the microwave.
- Use the “popcorn” setting on your microwave to pop the popcorn or you can set for 3 minutes. Do not leave the room and “listen” when the popping slows down as it does for packaged popcorn, stop the microwave. Popcorn can start to burn quickly at this point if left in the microwave.

Lentil and Brown Rice Soup

8 cups of broth (or more)

2 cups lentils, picked over and rinsed

1 cup brown rice or barley

1 c crushed canned tomatoes ,

3 carrots , halved lengthwise and cut crosswise into 1/4 inch pieces

1 1/2 onion, chopped

2 stalk celery, chopped

4 cloves garlic, minced

1/4 teaspoon crumbled dried basil

1/4 teaspoon crumbled oregano

Pinch crumbled dried thyme

1 bay leaf

- Sauté each vegetable in 1/2 T olive oil over very low heat until softened (not brown)
- Celery and garlic can be sauteed together.
- 3 cups chopped kale or spinach or 10 oz package frozen chopped spinach.
- Combine broth, 3 cups water, lentils, rice, and tomatoes with reserved juice, carrots, onion, celery, herbs, bring to boil.
- Simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, 45-55 minutes, or until lentils and rice are tender.
- Add the chopped greens and simmer until tender, if adding the frozen spinach, simmer for 10-15 minutes. Add extra broth as needed

(Adapted from 50 Delicious Popcorn Toppings | Cheapism.com)

- Use caution as you open the bag, it can be hot and the corn cob itself is very hot. When the cob cools a little you can pick the corn off the cob.
- Pour the contents of the bag into a bowl.
- Drizzle over olive oil and sprinkle with Pink Himalayan Salt or the salt of your choice. Other options: add a little butter, a little salt, and sugar, or use your favorite cinnamon and sugar mixture as you would for toast or French toast.
- If preferred, popcorn can be removed from the cob and stored in a cool dry place and then popped using the stovetop method.

Storage Tips & Tricks

Cider - is shelf stable for a couple of hours, but should be stored in the refrigerator. If freezing move into individual containers for serving or to freeze the bottle remove a bit of cider to allow for expansion. When defrosted run through a strainer.

Brussels Sprouts – use them within a couple of days. They look like little cabbages. They are in the same family, however not the same vegetable. They can, develop a strong cabbage flavor if stored for too long.

Basil - fresh cut the end of the stem and trim the leaves from the bottom of the stems . Place the stems into fresh water. Keep the jar or vase on the counter. Basil should be stored at room temperature. Cover the basil with a plastic bag but do not tighten. Change the water daily or every couple of days. Trim the ends of the stems again. Basil should last up to a week.

Winter Squash - Winter squash should be stored at room temperature in a dry location like the kitchen counter or cupboard. Use winter squash in place of pumpkin in your favorite muffin or bread recipes.

Apples - apples should be stored in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator away from other produce as they emit ethylene gas. For the best flavor bring the fruit to room temperature before serving.

Potatoes - keep potatoes in a cool, dark, dry, place, in a paper bag. Potatoes should never be refrigerated.

Onions - store onions in a cool dry place. Do not store in plastic.

Carrots – remove the tops from the root and store separately using the greens within a couple of days. Roast root vegetables together and add some cubes of butternut squash to the pan too.

Lettuce - lettuce must be dry before storing. Lettuce is best stored wrapped in a dry paper towel in a plastic container or plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

Rutabaga – Store in a cool moist atmosphere like the refrigerator crisper drawer. Wrap in a moist cloth or paper towel. Place into a plastic storage bag. Rutabaga should last for a couple of months.

French Horticultural Beans - the beans will come to you dry. Store in an airtight container in a cool dry place or prepare the beans and freeze. To prepare beans to be added to a dish you will first, boil them for 3 minutes remove from the heat. Allow the beans to sit for 10 minutes. Drain and rinse the beans and add back into a large pan. Cover 2” above the beans with fresh water and bring to a boil add a ½ Tablespoon of salt and lower to a simmer. Cover and simmer for up to 45 minutes. Stir occasionally and test for tenderness. If you have more beans than you can use this week, they can be frozen and they can also be canned. I often cook dried beans and freeze them in portions to use in pasta or rice dishes.