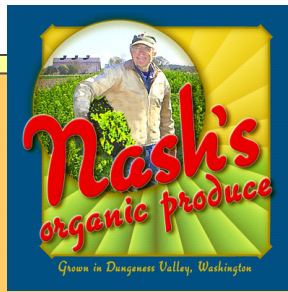


12-11-09

What's in the box?

Golden Beets
Cylinder Beets
Parsnips
Sunchokes



Box 21.5 of 25

Turnips
Jonagold Apples
Yellow Field Peas
Carrots
Onions

Does "Organic" Equal "Sustainable?"

This year, the theme of the Tilth Producers of WA November conference in Yakima was "Organic and Sustainable: The Common Ground." Dr. E. Ann Clark, from the University of Guelph in Ontario was the keynote speaker. While she applauded the organic farmers in her audience for their efforts, she challenged them on the issue of sustainability.

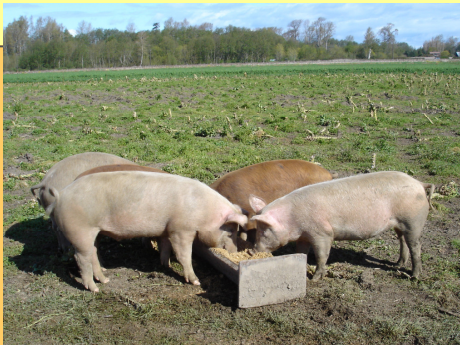
Dr. Clark believes that in the future ALL farming will have to be organic because society will get to a point that it won't tolerate paying for the high environmental costs of conventional agriculture. But that, in and of itself, does not make organic agriculture sustainable because it generally uses the same techniques as conventional agriculture. It's a lot less harmful, but still not sustainable.

For example: A real sustainable system will always mimic nature. Nature hates bare ground and as soon as there is a disturbance that causes bare ground, like a landslide, fire, plow, or bulldozer, nature wants to cover it with plants. These plants (we might call them weeds) start to form new topsoil. They fix nitrogen, hold moisture, and create a structure for living organisms to repopulate the soil.

But humans want specific plants to grow and not have to compete with the weeds. We use machines, chemicals, or manual labor to keep the weeds at bay, to the point that we create bare ground between the rows. Even on the best organic farms, where we work hard to maintain soil health, we expose some of the ground to water erosion, sun bleaching, wind, etc. Given enough time, the soil will collapse. In conventional agriculture that time is short. Organic farming greatly increases that time, but we still can do better.



Next week we'll see what Dr. Clark thinks organic farmers ought to do to become more sustainable.



Pastured Pigs—A Win-Win!

Pigs came to the Americas with the Europeans and have been valued ever since colonial times for their meat, bones, and lard, which was used for cooking, lamp oil, candles, and soap. Until the 1940s, most hogs were raised on small family farms.

Things have changed significantly and today, we "process" pigs as an industrial commodity. Jammed into unspeakably close quarters, fed unnatural diets and antibiotics, they produce millions of tons of chemical-laden waste that pollute lands, rivers and streams throughout the Midwest, Great Plains, and Carolinas. Consumers

see lower prices, but not the hidden costs—the inhumane conditions for the animals and workers. It's the dark side of "the other white meat."

Nash grew up on a small family farm in Illinois and remembers when his family's hogs were an integral part of the entire farm's ecosystem, living on pasture, rooting in the soil, and wallowing in the mud. They did not succumb to diseases because they were not confined in small, artificial areas, and consequently, their waste contributed to the fertility of the soil, rather than polluting it. After slaughter, every part of the animal was used in some way. This is what Nash is seeking to reproduce at his farm in Dungeness.

The pigs at Nash's are pasture-raised, and fed our own organic barley which is ground and soaked in whey from the Mount Townsend Creamery in Port Townsend, as well as left-over vegetables from the farm's organic produce operation. They are free-range and generally lead healthy happy "piggy" lives. Slaughter is quick, efficient, and most importantly, humane. Compared to the poor animals in the industrial food system, these guys are in hog heaven. They reciprocate by eating what's left in the fields after harvest, aerating the soil, contributing to the farm's general fertility, completing the nutrient cycle that is the basis of all traditional agriculture, and feeding the community some of the tastiest and healthiest pork imaginable.

Nash's Field Pea Soup

- 2 cups dried peas
- 10 cups water or stock
- 1 cup chopped celery w/ leaves, or 1 cup celeriac (celery root, available locally)
- 1/2 cup chopped onions
- 1 clove garlic
- 1-1.5 cup chopped carrots
- Optional ham or beef bone
- dash of cayenne
- 1 bay leaf

Sort and rinse 2 cups of dried peas (as instructed below), and soak them overnight. Drain them & add water or veg stock, an optional ham or beef bone and bay leaf.

Cover and get the pot simmering while you sauté the rest of the ingredients in a saucepan. Add the sautéed veggies to the pot and continue simmering the soup until the peas are “melted”, (about 2 hours total), seasoning with freshly ground black or white pepper, salt and cayenne.

Pull out the optional ham or beef bone, returning the meat from it back to the pot.

When everything is thoroughly cooked, you have a few options. Enjoy the soup as is, or blend some of it up for a smoother soup, thinning with stock, cream or milk as desired. Season to taste and add a small swirl of cream or crème fraîche.



Humans have always turned to root vegetables in times of cold weather. Parsnips and turnips come from northern Europe and were a staple food for people in medieval times because they keep well in root cellars. Rich in vitamins and minerals, they are also filling and satisfying. The Russian word for parsnip is *pasternak*, a common last name and the last name of one of Russia's most beloved writers, Boris Pasternak, who wrote *Doctor Zhivago*.

Parsnips are rich in vitamin C, calcium, potassium, and soluble fiber. In the Middle Ages, they were prescribed for toothache, stomachache, impotence and dysentery! While none of these cures have been verified by modern medicine, turnips and rutabagas have proven to be very rich sources of potent cancer-fighting substances called *glucosinolates*.

Stay warm during the cold weather ahead by making a hot puree out of either vegetable:

- Wash and large-dice 1.5 to 2 lbs. of either parsnips or turnips, and cook them in salted boiling water until tender.
- Drain and puree in a blender with 1/2 cup cream, milk or stock and a pat or two of butter.
- Season with salt and pepper.
- To the parsnip puree, add a pinch of nutmeg and 1 tsp. freshly grated ginger.
- To the turnip puree, add 1 tsp. dried thyme.

You can bulk up either puree by adding the flesh out of 2 baked potatoes to the blender.

NOTES FROM THE FARM

Hello from Nash's Frozen Produce! It's been so cold we haven't been able to harvest much of anything all week. In anticipation of this cold front, we bulked up on our root inventory last week, had enough bins harvested to wash them out for farm share boxes. The harvest crew has had almost the whole week off, and the packing crew has been doing half days in the afternoon, as it takes us all morning just to get all the pipes thawed at the shed. Consequently, there are no greens, cabbages or Brussels sprouts in your box this week.

We are fortunate to have a wide variety of roots, however, and the true nature of the farm share program shines this week as you share the adventure with us and eat seasonally! We've throw in some certified organic Jonagold apples from the Lazy J Tree Farm from down the road, and organic onions from Inaba Farm to round things out, as well as the first hit of a new product from Nash's this year...FIELD PEAS!

Use these legumes for soups, Indian daals and curries, or mash/blend them into a humus-like spread. IMPORTANT WARNING before you use them:

SORT AND RINSE THESE PEAS!

We have screened and cleaned them to the best of our ability, but we don't have sophisticated enough equipment to remove all impurities, such as tiny pebbles.

So, spread them out on a cookie sheet, and go through them thoroughly to pick out any stray pebbles. Then rinse them in a colander and eye them one more time. These extra steps are worth it...thanks for your patience folks and have fun with these wonderful local peas!