



# TUV HASHAVUA

## BEST OF THE WEEK

### Caught Between Spring and Summer Crop Donut-Hole: the Time of the CSA Sub-Seasons

*Momo Hikoza, Member Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA*

#### MANY THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS !

#### 7/28 [Week #10 – B]

5-8pm Pick-up

**Jennifer Jacobson**

**Lisa Lazerson**

**Shari Perkins**

**Sharon Matzner**

1pm Truck Unloading

**Judy Trupin**

**Marci Birnbaum**

**Ariela Fryman +1**

8pm Unclaimed Shares

**Jessica Pace**

#### 8/4 [Week #11 – A]

5-8pm Pick-up

**Erica Foggo**

**Laurie Duke**

1pm Truck Unloading

**Marci Birnbaum**

**Babitha Dhuler**

**Rachael Janowitz**

8pm Unclaimed Shares

**Farah Diaz-Tello**

TUV HA'ARETZ CSA at the  
Forest Hills Jewish Center  
106-06 Queens Blvd.  
Forest Hills, NY 11375  
tuv@fhjc.org

- **Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA:**  
foresthilstuvcsa.com
- **Facebook:**  
www.facebook.com/tuvFHJC
- **Twitter:** @tuvFHJC
- **Golden Earthworm Farm:**  
goldenearthworm.com
- **FHJC:** www.fhjc.org
- **Hazon:** www.hazon.org

Those new to the CSA tend to discover the following broad weekly issues:

- 1) Too many things all at once!
- 2) Nothing in the share works with my meal plan for this week
- 3) Have no clue what these things are / what to do with them

These likely entail the largest reasons for not signing up for a second season. And the waste of beautiful organic fresh-from-the-farm produce fills us with so much guilt and anger, and we can't stand the remorse.

The truth is that using a CSA requires a very different mindset from shopping for groceries. Nancy Singleton Hachisu – author of *Japanese Farm Food* – at first wondered why her husband's family kept eating cucumbers meal after meal. It took a while for her to understand that they eat what is ready to eat when the farm can provide it, not the other way 'round, which is frankly how most of us treat markets and supermarkets. Farms are nothing like the modern stores that we take for granted.

So we all have to learn how to change how we think about the food that arrives in our boxes – it's seasonal, meaning we will get zucchini till there is no more growing. Or no tomatoes till they ripen into delicious edible fruit. It's how you'd eat if you were the one doing the gardening – vegetables and fruit grow and ripen in their own season, and are sensitive to weather, soil condition, etc. That's partly why we subscribe to a CSA, right?

Right now, we are in a "donut hole" – when the springtime crops are no longer producing, but the mid-summer crops are not yet ready to harvest. As farmer Maggie from the Golden Earthworm Farm points out,

*If you're a seasoned CSA member, then the light share won't surprise you this week. Every July we hit a "lull" in our harvest. The true summer crops are not quite in yet (although they're coming along!) and our earlier season summer crops are ending. This leaves us with a few weeks of smaller shares, but I hope you will be excited to hear about what's right around the corner... tomatoes! peppers! potatoes! garlic!*

We want value, we want abundance – I, for one, was caught by surprise my first year when our between-sub-season boxes were light and we got a scant handful of tiny yellow Sungold cherry tomatoes, or a tiny sprig of otherwise perfect parsley. And where were the big bunches of beets with their tops, which I finally learned how to using regularly??

This year, I blanched and sealed the vegetables to keep in the fridge or freezer. In this mid-summer donut-hole, I make spanakopita (instead of wearying of it in spring), frigid pink borscht, pickled cucumbers, and enjoy the pesto of now-plentiful herbs. I was learning to put up and save for sub-seasons of the growing season. I even shredded and froze zucchini for use in all manner of things (even pastry!) and otherwise wrapped long-keeping produce and kept them cold in the fridge – often for weeks!

I am more conscientious of eating what is being harvested right now – and

this helped me understand that craving lettuces when they don't grow mid-summer is as bad as demanding them in mid-winter.

Not knowing what you are going to have can be rough when menu planning. Optimally, we should use the vegetables as a starting point instead of thinking, "we must have steak today." And use the time saved to research things like kohlrabi or celeriac, which you might not normally buy in the markets. Look at past newsletters (foresthilstuvcsa.com, goldenearthworm.com) to see what the farm had planted previously – that will give you a hint of what you could be researching for future shares, and rough idea of what to expect and when (climate change notwithstanding!)

Subscribing to a CSA is a different way to get produce; it's reasonable to expect that you need to approach meal preparation and planning differently to take full advantage of what the farm is offering. Besides, I am doing none of the sweaty back-breaking labor (no, carrying the share home doesn't count!), and I do not need any knowledge of crop rotation, insects, infestation, weather issues, irrigation ... and they even wash and deliver the vegetables, too! It's a bargain for ~\$25 a week – and at times I'll have so many vegetables that preserving is a significant issue. Other weeks, I will use some of my stored provisions ... or I may even need to go to the market to supplement. The least I think I should do is to do my part and learn how best to use this frankly beautiful bounty – no matter how lean or abundant it is, and no matter what is in the box that week.

Finally, the weekly surprise aspect has really changed how I cook and eat. The week we got lots of zucchini, I learned about "zoodles" and I cut down on carbs so I'd have more room to eat the then-plentiful vegetables. I initially generated leftovers on purpose because vegetables generally keep better cooked than raw ... but then I didn't need to warm

up the kitchen to make dinner when summer's heat finally arrived. An unintentional win!

*Momo Hikoza is a farmgirl who dislikes farm life – but she misses the great produce, and thus the CSA is the best compromise, even in a donut-hole.*



## WHAT'S IN THE BOX??

**Fennel, Onions, Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Cabbage, String Beans**  
**FRUIT: Sugar Plums, Blueberries**

**EQUAL EXCHANGE PICK-UP THIS WEEK AND NEXT – A & B HALF-SHARES, PLEASE PICK UP ON YOUR RESPECTIVE PICK-UP WEEKS.**

### SOUTH FRANCE-STYLE BRAISED FENNEL

*Bert Greene | Greene on Greens | Serves 4*

- 1 large or 2 medium heads of fennel (1.5 lb), chopped
- 2 tbsp butter or olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped fine
- 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
- pinch dried thyme
- ¼ cup vegetable broth
- 1 ½ tsp Pernod or anise flavored liqueur (optional)
- salt and pepper, to taste

Boil and salt water in a pot and blanch the fennel for 2 minutes and drain. Heat butter or oil in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Cook the onion till golden, about 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, thyme, broth, fennel. Cover and cook over low heat till tender, about 24 minutes. Remove the cover and cook away excess liquid. Add Pernod, raise heat slightly and evaporate liqueur, 2 minutes. Season to taste with salt, pepper.

### ZERO-POINTS CABBAGE SOUP

*Based on Weight Watchers | Serves 6-8*

- 1 tbsp olive or vegetable oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups chopped cabbage
- 1 onion, chopped
- ½ cup chopped fennel or celery
- ½ cup chopped string beans
- ½ cup chopped carrots
- 3 c vegetable broth
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- ½ tsp dried basil
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

In a large lidded pot, heat the oil and fry all vegetables till brightly colored and fragrant. Add broth, tomato paste and herbs and simmer till vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

### Do your work-out with the TRUCK UNLOADING mid-day volunteer shift!

We need volunteers for August, September, and beyond. This is a wonderful shift for those who want a mid-day volunteer task: it is from 1-2pm on Tuesdays.

*You'll have to sign up for 4 weeks, however they need not be in a row. Thank you for fulfilling your mandatory commitment!*

Questions? Please contact Alexa  
**alexaweitzman@gmail.com**

### DRIVERS WANTED!

We are still in need of a few additional volunteers for some unclaimed shares delivery slots:

**09/01 (A-week) and 10/27 (A-week)**

If you have access to a car, please email me directly with the date(s) you can help:

**IWARCH @GMAIL.COM**

Even if you have already fulfilled your volunteer requirement by doing another task, you can still take one of these shifts. All volunteers are greatly appreciated!