



The Pod

Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

World PEAS is a program of the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project

Tuesday September 1, 2015

Meet Your Farmers: Rob Fortune and Steve Fowler

In May of 2012, Steve Fowler and Rob Fortune came to Lowell for New Entry's Explore Farming workshop. They were strangers at the time, both interested in starting their own vegetable farm business. A year later, after graduating from the Farm Business Planning Course, they



launched Beyond Seasons Farm as a joint venture and went on to have one of the most successful first seasons of any New Entry graduate.

Rob and Steve both live on the North Shore (Gloucester and Marblehead, respectively), so although they needed land to start their farming venture, New Entry's incubator training farm sites in Dracut, Mass., were a bit too far away. Instead, Steve and Rob were the first farmers to put down roots at Arrowhead Farm, New Entry's newest incubator farm site in Newburyport, Mass.

Collaborating with New Entry's Technical Assistance Coordinator, Eero Ruuttila, they got right to work, building a new produce wash station (including a washing machine converted into a giant salad spinner), setting up an innovative sprinkler irrigation system, and constructing a walk-in cooler for post-harvest storage. In addition to their half-acre of vegetable crops, Rob and Steve partnered with Arrowhead Farm's owner, Dick Chase, to plant another half acre into a low-maintenance cover crop of oats and peas, improving the soil and producing a high-value specialty product – pea tendrils – in the process.

On the other half acre, Beyond Seasons Farm did something seemingly small but a bit unusual for a small diversified vegetable farm in these parts: They didn't grow tomatoes. In fact, they spurned the nightshade family altogether – no peppers or eggplants either. Instead, they asked former World PEAS CSA Coordinator Kate Petcosky what she was having trouble sourcing, and built that demand into their crop plans. They focused largely on greens, selling lots of baby greens and braising greens to the CSA. In addition to greens and pea tendrils, they did branch out into other crops like beets and zucchini, and still managed to deliver several hundred pounds of sweet potatoes for World PEAS.

Steve and Rob are back at Arrowhead Farm this year, now with a full acre at their disposal. With more land and two strong seasons under their belt, we are very excited about the wonderful quality and quantity of produce they have delivered this year!

Produce this week:

Green beans • Summer Squash
Asian or Slicing Cucumbers
Onions • Eggplant • Cherry
Tomatoes • Slicing Tomatoes
Ground Cherries • Pears

Also in Large Shares:

Sage • Sunflowers

Crop Information:

Ground Cherries



Ground cherries – also known as ground tomatoes, husk cherries, winter cherries, or strawberry tomatoes – are in the nightshade family and are closely related to tomatillos. These small, golden fruits have a very characteristic flavor that is often described as a combination between strawberry, melon, and tomato. Sounds strange, but they are sweet and delicious! Ground cherries are native to Central America (like the tomato) and were first cultivated in the pre-Colombian era. They are a tasty snack when pulled out of their papery husk and eaten whole and raw. They are also a great addition to any number of sweet and savory dishes. Try dicing them up in salsa or adding them to a fruit pie. Look at the recipe section below for other suggestions!

Handling: Peel back the papery husk and pluck out the golden fruit before eating or cooking with ground cherries.

Storing: Ground cherries will store for up to 3 days unrefrigerated while still in their husks. After being husked, they will store five to seven days in the refrigerator.

Slicing Tomato & Ground Cherry Appetizer

Adapted from reluctantentertainer.com

Ingredients:

3-4 slicing tomatoes (any size works)

1 pint ground cherries

Sea salt

White pepper

Cayenne pepper (optional)

Rice vinegar

Fresh, sliced basil (optional)

Preparation:

Cut the tomatoes into thin slices and place on a large serving platter as if preparing a Caprese salad. Husk ground cherries and cut in half. Scatter sliced ground cherries over the sliced tomatoes. To season, sprinkle sea salt, white pepper, cayenne pepper and a small amount of rice vinegar over tomatoes and ground cherries. Top with sliced, fresh basil if desired.



Baked Summer Squash

Adapted from thekichtn.com

Ingredients:

2 yellow summer squash or zucchini

¼ cup olive oil

½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

1/3 cup bread crumbs

½ teaspoon flaked salt

¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Remove the stem ends and slice the squash cross-wise in 1/4-inch-thick rounds. Toss with the olive oil.

In a small bowl, combine the bread crumbs, Parmesan, salt, and pepper. Arrange the squash rounds in a 9x12-inch rectangular baking dish, or 10-inch pie plate. Sprinkle the bread crumb mixture over.

Cover the baking dish with foil and bake in the oven for 30 minutes. Remove foil and bake another five minutes until the top is bubbling and crispy.



Baked Pears with Brown Sugar & Vanilla Ice Cream

Adapted from Giada De Laurentis for foodnetwork.com

Ingredients:

1/3 cup apple juice

1/3 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar

3 tablespoons butter

3 pears, peeled, halved and cored

Vanilla ice cream, for serving

Preparation:

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Arrange the pears cut side up in an 8-inch square glass baking dish. Whisk the apple juice and sugar in a small heavy saucepan over medium-high heat until the sugar dissolves. Whisk in the butter. Pour the sauce over the pears. Bake until the pears are crisp-tender and beginning to brown, basting occasionally with the juices, about 35 minutes.

Spoon the pears onto plates. Top with ice cream. Drizzle with any juices and serve. The pears can also be served frozen. To do so, cool the pears, then place them in the freezer until frozen solid, about 8 hours