

## Holcomb Farm CSA Newsletter September 4, 2006

### This Week's Crops:

Turnips

Winter Squash – Carnival, Acorn, possibly Delicata

Onions

Arugula

Broccoli Raab

Beets

Chinese Cabbage

Kale

Mustard Greens

Calaloo

Lettuce

Green Peppers

Summer Squash – limited

Cucumbers - limited

Tomatoes – may be limited, cool nights are slowing the ripening

Garlic – we are almost out of our garlic. If you need more to stock up for winter, check out the Garlic Farm's stand down the street from us.

### Pick Your Own Crops:

Edamame

Possible green beans by the end of the week

Cherry Tomatoes

Flowers

Tomatillos

Raspberries – limited

Basil

Hot peppers

Cilantro – limited



## What is That Thing?



That orange, spidery looking machine sitting outside the barn is an Allis Chalmers model G cultivating tractor. One of the most unique tractors ever built, it features a rear mounted engine to add traction weight to the rear tires and to give the driver a clear view of front mounted seeders, cultivators and other implements. It is light weight, barely disturbs the soil, and it has about a ten-foot turning radius, perfect for the precise maneuvering needed while cultivating. I like seeding and cultivating with the G because I sit so low to the ground and right on top of where the action is happening so I can catch problems with the seeder or see how the cultivator is working.

A relatively rare tractor, G's were built for only a few years in the late 1940's and early '50's for small truck farms that were just converting from horses after WWII. As herbicides became more widespread, manufacturers stopped making cultivating tractors. We also own a 1958 Farmall Cub Tractor and one of the few newer cultivating tractors, a 1988 John Deere 900 High Crop, which was originally developed for tobacco growers. In 1955, a new Allis G retailed for \$750. Half a century later, I paid \$3000 for one and feel fortunate to have found one in good condition close to home.

These days, many smaller organic growers like us depend on these tractors for cost effective mechanical weed control. We don't make up a market large enough for large manufacturers to build suitable tractors for us, so we make do by maintaining these

unique old machines. Many growers replace the original engines with newer diesel engines or even electric motors, something I may eventually do with this one.

## Edamame

Edamame are one of the most rich and satisfying green things I know of. We have an abundant crop of edamame, as many members found last week. We also had many questions about how to prepare it. The consensus seems to be boiling them in salted water for a few minutes until tender, then serving them warm as an appetizer. Folks can “pop” the beans in the mouth by squeezing the pods. You can also pop them out of the pods raw then cook them in stir-fries or freeze them for a winter of stir-fries. The variety we have is called “Envy” and it grows very well for us but is a little hairier than other varieties. Once boiled, the hair is less annoying, but we are going to trial other varieties next year with the hopes of finding one that also grows well but is a little smoother.

Note: You shouldn't eat soybeans raw because they contain trypsin inhibitors that disrupt the proper digestion of soy protein.

## Turnips and Hairy Vetch

We have a very good fall turnip crop that is just beginning to be harvested. I attribute much of the great yield and quality to the good soil conditions after a year of rest and the hairy vetch cover crop. We didn't add any fertilizer because the vetch “fixed” enough atmospheric nitrogen to produce a great crop. The fast developing turnips also point to the value of timely irrigations during the dry summer.

We're noticing a few examples of what vetch can do to soil quality and the growth of the following cash crop. If you tried to pick the u-pick cherry tomatoes, you probably noticed their extremely lush growth. Contrast that with the respectable but less vigorous tomatillo crop right next to it. Both crops experience the same conditions in the greenhouse and the field. The only difference as far as I can tell is that the cherry tomatoes had hairy vetch before it.

Little-known Turnip Fact: The first Jack-O-Lantern wasn't a pumpkin, it was a turnip. For the full story, click here: [www.pumpkinnook.com/facts/jack.htm](http://www.pumpkinnook.com/facts/jack.htm)

## GLAZED TURNIPS

Glazed turnips make a nice side dish for roasted meats or poultry.



Active time: 20 min Start to finish: 35 min

— ingredients —

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2 lb small to medium (2-inch) turnips  
About 1 1/2 cups plus 3 tablespoons water  
2 tablespoons butter  
1 tablespoon sugar  
1/2 teaspoon salt

Garnish: chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

— preparation —

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Peel turnips, then halve horizontally and quarter halves. Arrange turnips in 1 layer in a 12-inch heavy skillet and add enough water (about 1 1/2 cups) to reach halfway up turnips. Add butter, sugar, and salt and boil over moderately high heat, covered, stirring occasionally, 10 minutes. Boil turnips, uncovered, stirring, until tender and water has evaporated, about 8 minutes.

Sauté turnips over moderately high heat, stirring, until golden brown, about 5 minutes more. Add 3 tablespoons water and stir to coat turnips with glaze.

Makes 4 servings.