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"Where the Land, Food  
and People Come Together"  
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Hello from Three Rivers Community Farm!

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10.12.2015

## The CSA Season Is Underway!

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### Harvest News

Dear CSA Member,

We are nearly done harvesting our sweet potato crop. We harvested about 2500 pounds in the last two weeks, and they have been curing in our smaller cooler set at 80 degrees and humid. We hope you enjoyed the first taste last week!



A good sweet potato crop makes a mat of foliage and vines that completely covers the ground. That is part of the reason why it is exciting and somewhat suspenseful as we go to harvest. We can take a guess at what the crop will be based on how vigorously they have been growing over the course of the season. We can pull up some of the potatoes in different sections of the field and get an idea of their size, but we never know how good the crop will be until we start digging them in earnest. This year's crop has been an average yield with a mix of standard, large, and finger sized sweet potatoes.

The sweet potato harvest is a multiple step process. Sweet potato vines don't have an end point to their growth. They will just keep growing and growing until it frosts. The potatoes themselves are very frost sensitive so they must be harvested before it frosts. This means the thick mat of vines and foliage must be dealt with in order to get at the sweet potatoes for harvest. The way we do it involves two separate tractor operations before we get on our hands and knees to unearth and crate them up.

The first step is to mow the foliage. In this step we need to be careful not to damage the sweet potatoes as some of them stick out of the ground a little bit. The mower deals with the leaves pretty well but there are still a lot of intertwined vines that are too close to the soil surface to mow. In the second step an undercutter bar or lifter hitches to the back of the tractor. The undercutter loosens the soil and lifts the sweet potatoes a little bit, which makes pulling them out of the dirt by hand exponentially easier.

After the tractor work is done, we then go down each bed on our hands and knees with buckets in hand. We follow the vines into the ground and pull up cluster after cluster of gorgeous sweet potatoes. We fill up buckets and leave them in a ceremonious line along the edge of the field. We'll then return with our truck to load the buckets.

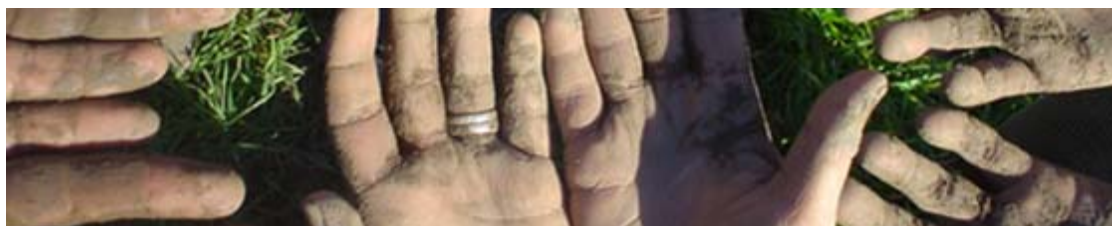


When the harvest is complete we "cure" the sweet potatoes in our heated cooler. Sweet potatoes require curing to heal any wounds from harvest, to sweeten the actual potatoes, and to prolong their storage life. Ideal conditions are hard to achieve, but our greenhouse gets pretty close. Ideally sweet potatoes like 80-85 degrees and 90 percent humidity during the curing period. We can get the temperature correct in there but getting the humidity that high is near impossible. Every day while the sweets are curing we run a humidifier in the cooler to help humidify the air. We keep the sweets at these conditions for a minimum of a week. In addition to healing wounds and prolonging storage life, this curing period triggers the development of the sugar creating enzyme.

After curing, we store the sweets between 55 and 60 degrees. Storage further develops the sugars and maltose sugar-creating enzyme. This enzyme will really kick in while baking at 350 degrees. This results in the finishing of the sweet syrupy sugars that makes sweet potatoes so delicious and appetizing. My mouth is watering just writing about it...

# Enjoy the Harvest!

**Your Farmers,**  
**Amy, Segue, Diego, Lydia,**  
**and our hardworking crew: Nora, John and Rachelle**



## [2016 CSA Membership Renewals Are Underway](#)

2016 will be our 10th CSA season, and we know you want to be a part of it! To join, just click the [link](#) and read about our new membership options such as summer-only and flexible week memberships. On-farm members can learn about our exciting [Farmstand CSA](#) membership. It is easy to pay online through our [website](#), or you can reserve your spot with a \$50 deposit and mail in the form that can be found on our homepage. Send us an [email](#) if you have any questions. We would love to be your farmers again in 2016!

## [Local Thyme Recipes](#)

### **Stone Soup**

Servings: 6

Prep Time: 25 mins

Cook Time: 25 mins

Total Time: 50 mins

### Ingredients

2 tablespoons Olive Oil

1 Onion, diced

2 large Carrot, diced  
2 stalks Celery, diced  
2 Bell Pepper, cored, seeded and chopped  
2 tablespoons Garlic, minced, optional or add 1 teaspoon garlic powder  
12 ounces Smoked Sausage, or 1 dash Liquid Smoke for vegetarians  
1 pound Potato, diced, or sweet potato  
1/2 head Cabbage, cored and shredded  
1 Bay Leaf  
1 teaspoon Dried Oregano, or 2-3 sprigs of fresh, if you have it  
1/2 teaspoon Dried Thyme, or 2-3 sprigs of fresh, if you have it  
2 teaspoons Paprika  
1 dash Hot Sauce  
2 quarts Chicken or Vegetable Stock  
1 14 ounce Cannellini Bean, drained and rinsed  
Salt and Pepper

### Instructions

Preheat a large soup pot over medium heat. When it's hot, add olive oil and tilt the pot so the oil spreads over the base of the pot. Add onion, carrot, celery, bell pepper and garlic, and sauté for 5 minutes.

If using sausage or Linguica, slice it into rounds and add this to the vegetables, and continue to sauté for another 3-4 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender. (If using liquid smoke, add it here.)

Add the cabbage, potato, bay leaf, oregano, thyme, paprika, and a dash of hot sauce. Stir the cabbage into the sautéed vegetables. Pour stock into the soup pot, increase heat to high and bring the soup to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, and skim the surface of the soup of any foam that rises to the top. Taste and add salt and pepper, and simmer for 20-30 minutes.

During the last five minutes of cooking, add the drained cannellini beans, and taste again to adjust seasonings to your liking. Discard the bay leaf. Ladle into bowls, and enjoy with crusty bread or crackers.

## *Braised Sausage, Peppers and Onions*

Servings: 4-6

Prep Time: 5 mins

Cook Time: 30 mins

Total Time: 35 mins

### Ingredients

4 - 6 Italian Sausage or Veggie Links

4 tablespoons Olive Oil, divided use

3 Italian Frying Pepper, cored, seeded, sliced or green bell peppers

1-2 Onion, peeled, halved, sliced

2 cloves Garlic, minced, optional

1/4 cup White Wine

1 teaspoon Dried Basil

1/4 cup Chicken or Vegetable Stock

1 Baguette, split in half and divided into 4 lengths (gluten free-use GF brat rolls)

### Instructions

Heat half the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat until the oil shimmers, and sear sausages on all sides until nicely browned. Remove sausages to a plate; add remaining oil, onions and peppers with some salt and pepper to same skillet and sauté until wilted, about 6 minutes; then add garlic and sauté another 30 seconds.

Pour the white wine, basil and stock into the veggies and stir to loosen any browned bits in the bottom of the pan. Return sausage to pan, cover and simmer gently until sausage is cooked through, about twenty minutes.

Serve either as a sandwich in the split bread, or in a bowl with the broth and use the bread for dipping.

## *Carrot Raisin Salad*

Servings: 4

Prep Time: 10 mins

Total Time: 10 mins

## Ingredients

- 1 pound Carrot, shredded
- 3 tablespoons Raisins
- 1 tablespoon Honey, for vegan, substitute raw agave nectar
- 3 tablespoons Lemon Juice
- 6 tablespoons Olive Oil
- 1 teaspoon Cinnamon, ground

## Instructions

Stir together the carrots and raisins. Then in a small bowl whisk together the honey, lemon juice, olive oil and cinnamon. Toss the dressing with the carrots and raisins, and season to taste with salt and pepper.

## *Local Thyme Recipes*

Chef Patricia Mulvey's recipes for this week's produce are [here](#). You need to create your free account to access this link!

Create [your free account](#) by following the instructions below to have access to all the benefits of Chef Patricia's website. In addition to recipes, she is providing helpful storage and preservation tips for your weekly CSA box of vegetables.

## *Create Your Local Thyme Account!*

Get access to  
great recipes and lots more!

Go to [www.localthyme.net/register](http://www.localthyme.net/register)

Enter the farm code *3RIVFREELT*  
under "I belong to a CSA"

Click the sign-up button

Choose our farm and click the sign up button



Fill in the form with your user name, email address and password

Click "I Agree" to the terms (this can be easy to miss on small screens like cell phones and tablets)

Click "register my account"

Click 'Subscribe' on the next page

You should see the our farm's logo in the center of the page and a welcome message. Click *Home* and you should now see a navigation bar that says Home, Week's Plan, Recipes, Veggie Guide, Resources, Support. If you don't see these, please contact [pat@localthyme.com](mailto:pat@localthyme.com) with the name of our farm and your pick up day and she will fix your account.

### [Three Rivers Community Farm](#)

22867 Chautauqua Road, Elsau, IL 62028

PO Box 122, Elsau, IL 62028 | 618.946.7974

[info@threeriverscommunityfarm.com](mailto:info@threeriverscommunityfarm.com)