



Fresh Prospects

The Prospect Heights CSA Newsletter

News from the Farm: A Note on Flowers and Flower Longevity

Jan is an early riser, having developed the habit while doing chores on the dairy farm she grew up on in Cabot, Vermont. She begins her flower harvest at first light, harvesting into clean buckets in the cool of the morning. Later, after hauling them back to her air-conditioned packing shed, she re-cuts the stems under water and adds a floral conditioner. Flowers keep best when their given this kind of care. The next steps in flower longevity depend on you. When you get your flowers home, re-cut the stems under water, then place the flowers in a clean vase with fresh water, and add the floral preservative Jan has provided. For greatest vase-life, re-cut the stems and replace the water every couple of days. Place the vase out of direct sunlight and away from sources of heat and fresh fruit.

Sunflowers have begun arriving in shares recently. They are everywhere at Windflower Farm. Flower shareholders know that sunflowers are an important part of the share, but they are also central to the vegetable share because we trade them at the Moses farm for sweet corn. Our first swap is tentatively scheduled for next week! Lisianthus, which has been blooming in the unheated greenhouse, may be Jan's favorite cut flower. It's a long-lasting, rose-like flower that comes in purples, pinks, rose, champagne and white. She has tucked them all over the farm—in tunnels, between tunnels, and in the shade between sunflower beds. Expect to see them for a while longer. Because the cut flower share is scheduled to go later into the fall this year, and perhaps beyond the first killing frost, Jan has expanded the number drying varieties she's growing. Among them is larkspur—the tall, wispy relative of Delphinium—which she has just begun to dry in the rafters of our barn. Another is cockscomb, a red and pink cranium-like flower.

Jan and I enjoy experimenting, frequently trying new varieties, and often working on new growing structures that extend the season or protect crops. We have learned to be content when just one or two of these experiments gives us something of value. We now grow about an acre of early flowers and vegetables in tunnels we designed and built. In the spring, we built a new kind of tunnel having multiple 100', two-bed bays. We thought we were onto something, but the wind and weight of hailstones that accompanied the early June storm proved too much for the structure, and it collapsed. The China asters and lisianthus growing inside have been unburied, the materials for the structure have been stowed back in the barn, and the plans... well, back to the drawing board. Our approach to herbs is another of this year's experiments. It's easier for us, and I think will allow us to deliver a greater variety of herbs over the season. We also like the fact that you can eat them immediately or pot them for use later. We'd like to know what you think. Drop us a line (windflowerfarm@earthlink.net).

-Ted

DON'T FORGET!

Please bring bags to pick up your share and please return egg and fruit carts so the farmers can use them again. Can't make it to the distribution? Feel free to ask a friend to come in your place. Just let them know which shares to pick up and provide an itemized list of times for Lewis Waite distribution.

Have a good recipe you want to share with your CSA members? Or some news you think CSA members want to know? Send an email to the newsletter editors at freshprospects.news@gmail.com.