

Snow... in Brentwood?



Well, no, the recent storm and subsequent cold snap didn't dust our trees with the white stuff, but once the fog cleared, we did get a rare and beautiful view of the flanks of Mt Diablo well powdered with snow. Rain may keep us out of the orchard, but we're always happy to see it soaking into the soil, drenching the trees and filling up the creeks. And cold weather is good for the trees, too. Every frosty hour is another nudge towards a good bloom and hibernation break in the spring. A cold winter can also help knock out pests that might be overwintering in the orchards.

Seeing snow in the distance puts everyone at the farm into a holiday mood. Although the orchard may be quiet, the kitchen and packing sheds are very busy. We're baking like mad to fulfill holiday orders of cakes, cookies, galettes, pastries, and more. The tangy scent of chutneys and jams drifts out onto the chilly air, and the warming scent of browning butter and baking pastries lures the staff to the kitchen doors, hoping for a fresh-from-the-oven peanut butter-and-jam cookie or a hot apple turnover, browned points shattering into crunchy golden shards at a bite.

Apples are the stars of the kitchen right now, as we bake up apple tarts, apple turnovers, and apple

galettes from this season's harvest. At home, the options are endless: applesauce, apple crisp, apple cake, apple fritters, sautéed apple rings, apple salads and apple salsas: is there a more versatile fruit than the crisp, sweet apple? The apple's versatility from sweet to savory, coupled with its ability to last through the fall and into the winter has long made it a culinary favorite wherever it can be grown. Originating in the Caucasus, the apple spread from Central Asia into Turkey, China, northern Europe and beyond.

This week, our apples come from an old friend, Bruce Rider & Sons in Watsonville (Jonagolds), and a new one, Filigreen Farm in the Anderson Valley (Braeburns). Now known for its sparkling wines and high-quality pinot noirs, the narrow, secluded Anderson Valley running between Cloverdale and Mendocino was once known as a prime location for growing hops and apples. A few apple orchards still thrive in the folds of the hills. Once a dairy, Filigreen Farm is now a 90-acre biodynamic orchard, farm, and vineyard, growing apples, pears, blueberries, peaches, cherries and olives, along with pinot noir and pinot gris grapes. The farm's land is leased from the [Yggdrasil Land Foundation](#), an innovative land trust dedicated to preserving sustainable, organic and biodynamic farmland.

-Stephanie J. Rosenbaum

CSA NEWSLETTER

7 December 2009

- **Hachiya persimmons***
Frog Hollow Farm, Brentwood
- **Jonagold apples**
Bruce Rider & Sons, Watsonville
- **Braeburn apples**
Filigreen Farm, Boonville
- **Satsuma oranges**
Pine Hill Orchards, Loomis
- **Clementine oranges**
Olsen Organic Farm, Lindsay

*our Hachiya pick came in lighter than expected so some of you received Fuyus from Kaki Farms in Gridley

CSA Office Hours 9am-4pm, Monday-Friday

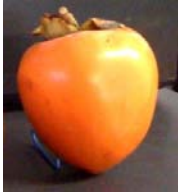
Contact Karen or Danny at
1-888-779-4511 opt 4
or
Email csa@froghollow.com

Can't pick up your box?
Call us the Friday before
your next delivery to
place a hold on your
delivery.

Notes on This Week's Fruit

or, a Treatise on Persimmons

Though persimmons (genus *Diospyros*) are found worldwide, the two cultivars we've recently included in our CSA boxes both have their origins in Japan and were brought to California in the late 19th century.



Hachiya persimmons (which were in our holiday boxes a few weeks ago, and return for most of you this week) are mouth-puckeringly tart unless absolutely ripe. Ripe hachiyas are unbelievably soft - with an almost liquid silky smooth pulp inside. They are elongated and oval shaped. Hachiyas are often thought of as "baking" persimmons and are commonly peeled and pureed into a pulp to add to baked goods (like persimmon pudding!). Frog Hollow Farm has about 50 Hachiya persimmon trees at our farm in Brentwood.



Fuyu persimmons (in the CSA boxes last week) are distinguished by their flat bottoms and squat shape and are at their best when just barely a teensy bit soft. Fuyus are commonly eaten raw, often sliced and peeled and salads, and have a mild, pumpkin-like flavor. Remove and discard the large black seeds as you encounter them.

BEET, CELERY, AND APPLE SALAD

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

This tart, creamy Russian-style salad makes a refreshing addition to the winter table. Adapted from *The Loaves & Fishes Cookbook* by Anna Pump.

- 2 lbs beets, tops removed
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced red onion
- 1 1/2 cup thinly sliced celery
- 1 1/2 cups chopped apples

- 1 cup Greek-style yogurt
- 2 tablespoons half-and-half
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons fresh grated or prepared horseradish, drained
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup finely chopped parsley

Cover red onion slices with ice water and set aside. In a medium saucepan, cover beets with water and bring to a boil. Simmer 25 to 35 minutes, depending on size of the beets, until tender. Drain and let cool. Peel and cut into slender matchsticks. Drain onions, and add with celery to the beets. Toss gently.

Combine yogurt, lemon juice, horseradish, salt, pepper, and parsley, tasting for seasoning. Pour over vegetables and toss to coat. Chill for 1 hour before serving.