

# CSA Newsletter, Week 2 of 20

June 18, 2007

This is a Healthy Alternative 'B' week.

## Farm Report

*by Farmer Tim*

Several weeks with significant rainfall and a string of 90 degree days have sent crew members Andy Hansing and Keith Ginn scrambling to get our drip irrigation system up and running. Lettuce and spinach have sad faces but we have planted more that should be ready soon. Mike Konen nearly finished his first round of planting and will put in about 600 or so pumpkin plants next week. We will need a gaggle of volunteers and trucks to bring in this harvest around the first of October.

The potato beetle problem has overwhelmed the capabilities of our little Dirt Devil vacuum so we would be thrilled to see a hoard of children of all ages swarming the potato patch to help pick them off! (We'll give you a dish of soapy water to flick them into so you don't need to crush them.) If you would like to bring out your little angels, come on Wednesday morning at 9 am or Saturday morning at 10. Also, if you happen to have any butterfly nets, you can harvest some white cabbage moths. This experience will be quite helpful in the fall for those who must write a little essay about "What I Did Last Summer." ;-)

To see what a potato beetle looks like, follow the link:

<http://images.google.com/images?um=1&tab=wi&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&rls=com.microsoft%3Aen-us%3AIE-SearchBox&rlz=117ADBR&q=potato%20beetle>

I visited the Mongerson Farm Hoop house Saturday morning – hadn't been there for about four days. Yikes! It was a jungle of five-foot-tall tomato plants and three-foot-tall bush beans. I started to water and discovered several pounds of green beans hidden under the canopy of leaves! We harvested them and put them in the store where they sold like gang-busters. There should be plenty more for subscribers.

## Volunteers

Thanks for the great help last week! Robin Migalla, Steve Trisko, and Chuck Wettergreen cleaned the weeds from a bunch of vegetable beds at Mongerson and Lauren Ginn worked all day to harvest and process for the Friday pickup. She also took Bucky the Farm Dog round on a leash to visit subscribers – Bucky is staying on a leash at HPM because of his intense interest in the chickens and peacocks. Subscriber Chris Davis has given us some great ideas on how to reprogram him a little. Thanks also to the volunteer tomato and squash plants coming up in the compost pile. ;-)

**Special call for volunteers:** Saturday, June 23, at 10 am. We will build two raised beds with attached row covers to be used for small greens. The row covers should take care of those pesky flea beetles! If you can come, please bring a cordless drill if you have one.

## **CSA Produce Forecast**

*by Farmer Tim*

### **This week's offerings:**

This week we should have various quantities of peas, beans, kohlrabi, swiss chard, kale, baby beets, zucchini, baby carrot thinnings, Egyptian walking onions, garlic scapes, fresh garlic, broccoli, mibuna, komatsuna, and another item or two. We'll try to give everyone a head of fresh (green) garlic. The garlic may be pretty strong so use with caution! Veggie Lovers get the first of the new items and if we have more, but not enough for all, we'll put some into the swap boxes or the "choice table" at HPM.

### **Future offerings:**

First cherry tomatoes look to be about three weeks away, small beets in two weeks, a few raspberries in a week or two, and small cabbages in a couple of weeks. We should have lettuce again in two weeks and more spinach in three.

## **Heritage Prairie Happenings**

*by Beth Propst*

Remember that we are looking for recipe ideas that use the leftover herbs and veggies we are drying.

### **Turkeys to order**

There is not much time to order your free range turkeys. For details see last week's newsletter.

### **Farm Store**

This week we got several wonderful new products in the store. On Wednesday, the wonderful folks from Renaissance Farm came down from Spring Green, Wisconsin (west of Madison) with our first shipment of their wonderful basil products. Renaissance Farm started as a basil farm, where they have grown basil pesticide free for almost 30 years. (Imagine the lovely aroma that must pervade the air over that 20 acre

farm!) Among other things they have seven different flavors of all-natural frozen pesto. I have sampled the sweet basil pesto and it is absolutely delightful! I can't wait to try it on the wonderful pasta we carry in the store. We also have some basil infused olive oils and pesto vinaigrettes. Yum! If you want to find out more about Renaissance Farms, here is a link to their web site. <http://www.renfarm.com/>

Then on Friday, we received our first allotment of Margie's Natural Beauty products. Margie is a delightful young woman who makes herbal skin and hair care products. She grows many of the ingredients herself and those she doesn't grow are all natural. Not a petroleum-based chemical in anything! Her muscle-soothing salt scrub is great for smoothing out the rough spots on your hands acquired while gardening or farming. It works equally well on that dry, itchy, flaky skin on the bottoms of your feet. Every over-worked foot deserves a salt scrub. You can find out more about Margie and her products at <http://www.renfarm.com/>.

## **Swedish Days**

If you are brave enough to walk the streets of Geneva during Swedish Days, look for us in the courtyard just south of Past Baskets. Anyone who would like to volunteer to help for a couple of hours should contact Bronwyn ([bronwyn@archibald.com](mailto:bronwyn@archibald.com)) or Sarah ([sarahannharmon@yahoo.com](mailto:sarahannharmon@yahoo.com)).

## **Pages from Grandma Beth's Cookbook**

*by Beth Propst*

### **Green Beans**

You may be receiving your first green beans of the season this week, so here are some ideas for using them.

#### **Ideas for raw green beans:**

Personally I think green beans are so good raw that there is hardly any need to prepare them any other way. Serve them with dip as a snack or an appetizer or cut them up and add them to salad. You could probably use them raw in a three bean salad as well.

#### **Ideas for cooked green beans:**

If you feel you really must cook your green beans, my philosophy is to keep it as simple as possible. Bean casseroles are for canned or frozen beans, not fresh. Boil them or steam them (see below) and serve with herbed butter or grated cheese. (You can get kids to eat

almost anything if you serve it under their favorite cheese!) Add sliced or slivered almonds for extra texture.

It is possible to cook beans in the microwave. My mother, the queen of cooking things the old-fashioned way (the only two cookbooks I ever knew her to use were The Victory Garden Cookbook and the 1950 edition of Betty Crocker) used to swear by this. Wash the beans, but do not dry them. Place them wet in a microwaveable dish and cover tightly. Microwave a couple of minutes at a time until the desired degree of doneness is achieved. The water on the beans is enough to steam them perfectly.

By the way, the purple beans will turn bright green when you cook them, much to my disappointment.

### **Freezing Beans**

Besides being wonderful fresh, beans freeze very well. So if you are tired of fresh beans, freeze up a bunch and you can enjoy Erehwon's bounty for months.

Wash green beans, snip off tips, and sort for size. Cut or break into suitable pieces or freeze small beans whole. Blanch 3 minutes. Chill in ice water. Pack tightly in freezer bags or rigid containers. Squeeze as much air as possible from bags before sealing. Leave 1/2 inch headspace for expansion in containers.

To blanch vegetables in boiling water, start counting blanching time as soon as the vegetable is placed in boiling water. Blanch no more than 1 pound of vegetables per gallon of boiling water at a time. Immerse wire basket or mesh bag with vegetables in boiling water. Cover and blanch for required time. Remove and cool immediately in ice water for the same length of time as blanching. (In other words, if you blanch for 3 minutes, cool for 3 minutes.) Drain thoroughly.

### **Green beans with Lemon Vinaigrette**

2 tsp. minced fresh parsley  
2 TBS lemon juice  
1 TBS plain, unsweetened yogurt  
2 tsp. chopped chives or green onion with green top  
Salt and black pepper to taste  
1/3 c canola oil  
1 lb. fresh green beans, trimmed  
1/2 c julienne-cut red pepper strips

Combine parsley, lemon juice, yogurt, chives, salt and pepper, and oil in jar with tight fitting lid. Shake vigorously. Chill.

Blanch green beans 4 minutes. Plunge in ice water to stop cooking. Drain.

Toss green beans and red peppers with vinaigrette.

Grandma Beth's Notes: I'll bet this would be good with the lemon basil pesto vinaigrette from Renaissance Farm. In fact, I'm thinking just beans, onions, and vinaigrette. (Add the peppers if you want.) It can't get much easier than that! Tim—are there enough beans for us too?

### **Komatsuna**

Komatsuna is a beautiful blue-green Japanese choy that is longer, leafier, and more slender than the Chinese choys. It has a slightly more assertive flavor than bok choy or mei qing choy but is not at all bitter or sharp. You can eat it raw, steamed, or stir fried. It only takes about 6 minutes to cook the stems and 4 minutes for the leaves. Serve it with tahini or soy sauce, or any Asian-style dressing.

### **Mibuna**

Although mibuna is technically considered a Japanese herb, it makes a great salad green. It is tenderer than Komatsuna and has a mild tangy flavor that is slightly reminiscent of mustard, but not nearly as sharp. It is good in a mixed salad or on its own. Typically, the long stems are not eaten, although I am sure that some of our veggie fanatics will not want to waste any of this delicious green.

Until next week ....

P.S. Please email us with questions, comments, suggestions, recipes, and we will include them in future newsletters. We really hope to get a lot of recipes so that in a year or two we can create the Heritage Prairie Market Cookbook.

All newsletters will be posted on the HPM web site in the Forums section by Monday morning.