

CSA Newsletter, Week 3 of 20

June 25, 2007

This is a Healthy Alternative 'A' week.

Farm Report

by Farmer Tim

Hello all from Erehwon! Well, rain has finally fallen at a level that has gotten down to the roots of the plants—now there is a race to see if our veggies can outgrow the weeds. We would like to have one of our erudite subscribers tell us the Latin phrase for our farm motto, “Always weeding.” “Semper _____!” Can anyone help out?

On Friday Steph and I traveled early in the morning to the **Konen Farm** to pick broccoli and to check out the status of the veggies he is growing for us. We should add cabbage and a few summer squash to our selection next week. Mike can do some amazing cultivating with his old tractor and there is (sigh) hardly a weed to be seen in his fields. We are hoping he can find a little more land to increase what he is growing for us. Sweet corn is tasselling and should start coming in about three weeks – get your butter melted and your bibs out! Mike reports that a weasel got into his chicken pen and has done some damage to his little flock but more baby chicks are on their way to his “pasture in a pen.” We’ll have his free-range chickens available in the store in a few weeks.

Several weeks ago at **HPM** as the weather changed to summer conditions we temporarily lost our seeding process and had a gap in lettuce and spinach production. We have greatly improved the germination rate and are on track to produce heads of lettuce every week throughout the summer with some ready next week and more the week after. On Saturday Craig and Stephanie Coatney braved the rain and drove all the way out from Wheaton to help us plant seeds in trays. Lettuce, cucumbers, and spinach went quickly but then I brought out some very tiny amaranth seeds and a very tiny spoon and handed it to Craig. He gave me an incredulous look that said, “You want me to pick up one seed the size of a pinhead with a spoon the same size and put one in each cell? Can’t we just sprinkle them in?” However, he rose to the challenge and soon all three thousand seeds were in the trays which were being gently watered by a light rain. Thanks for the help!

Tomatoes are growing like crazy and are filling the tomato cages outside. Periodically we go down the row and tuck in the escaping vines to make sure we have good leaf cover to protect ripening fruit from direct sun. Inside the hoophouse the vines are climbing up the strings and are full of fruit. Each day I’m looking closely for the first hint of pink -- can’t wait! Sweet potatoes, an experiment this year, look healthy and the zucchini should be in full production in a week or so.

A week or two ago Candy Crawford drove out from Wheaton with her girls intending to have a brief look at the farm. Two hours later I spied her ensconced in a chair and reading

a book she had found in the store. She said the girls were still happily checking out the animals and didn't want to leave. Then she did an amazing thing. She said she had an almost-new tiller that she had no plans for and asked if we could use it at the farm. We sure could! We had been carting our old tiller back and forth between locations and now we could have one at each and a backup in case of breakdowns. Tilling is our primary means of cultivating between our beds and we've been using the new one every day. Thanks Candy! (You wouldn't also have a manure spreader, mechanical transplanter with a 3-point hitch and a forklift in the back of your garage, would you? ;-)

Next week we plan to build two large raised beds with covers to protect our greens from flea beetles.

At **Mongerson** we continue to weed, plant, weed, harvest, and weed. On Wednesday we had a mini-herd of beetle pickers including Carol Nunns and her son Henry and Colleen O'Keefe with her children, Grace, Michael, and Aidan. One person ran the bug vac and the rest flicked the little critters into jars of soapy water. Then it was off to HPM to feed the bugs to the chickens. Mornings don't get any better than that! Steve Trisko and Chuck Wettergren set up our field for a replacement melon planting, Rebecca LaGessee pulled weeds – my is she quick! On Saturday Jenny Gresko surprised me in the hoop house where I was watering and pruning. Soon she was on her knees reaching into a dark jungle of leaves under the tomatoes snagging some green beans. Thanks to all! (Hope I didn't leave anyone out.)

If you want to visit the Mongerson Farm, Saturday, June 30, might be a good day to come. The Garfield Farm Museum is holding their annual Barn Sale and they have more than a barn full of very interesting donations to sell. More information can be found at <http://www.garfieldfarm.org/index.html> We'll be working and will be happy to show you around.

CSA Produce Forecast

by Farmer Tim

This week's offerings:

This week we should have cabbage, zucchini, some peas, some beans, some lettuce, kohlrabi, mizuna, tatsoi, some lettuce, maybe some spinach, broccoli, Swiss chard, and a few other things.

Future offerings:

Look for cherry tomatoes (probably just for Veggie Lovers at first), sweet corn, lettuce for all, basil, dried garlic. In a couple of weeks we will be opening our herb cutting garden. I think we'll try to cut one herb for the table/boxes each week and you will be

welcome to trot, or meander, if so inclined, out to the herb garden near the peacock pen and to cut your own.

Delivery Subscribers, please note: The swap box was empty at least one delivery location last week. Please follow the swap box rules and make a deposit into the box before you make a withdrawal. Thanks!

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

If you said you wanted a turkey, you need to pay the \$15.00 deposit as soon as you can. We still have 21 of the heritage breed free range turkeys from Cindee at R Farm. Please reserve your turkey as soon as possible.

Farm Store

Do you like mushrooms? We carry four varieties in the store: portabella, baby bella (also called crimini), white, and shitake. Their flavor compares to store mushrooms about the same as that of our tomatoes to store tomatoes. They are grown in Burlington, Wisconsin, by second generation mushroom grower, Eric Rose. Eric's sister Donna sells the mushrooms at local farmers' markets, which is how we came across them. The first time I had one, I couldn't believe the flavor!

Eric also makes the River Valley Kitchens line of sauces, salsas, and pickled mushrooms. This line of products started as a way to use his extra mushrooms and developed from there. The Spinach Artichoke Dip mix is very popular—all you do to make the dip is mix it with cream cheese. The Five Cheese Garlic Spread (kept in the cooler when we haven't sold out!) is positively addictive. I used one of the pasta sauces for dinner not too long ago. I added some mushrooms and served it with the spinach fettucine we sell in the store. Quick and easy (both good attributes after a long day at the farm) and delicious as well. You can't beat that. To find out more about Eric and his mushrooms, you can visit his website at <http://shroomskitchen.com/index.html>.

Have you seen the books we carry in the store? We have several interesting books about organic gardening, eating local, and bee keeping as well as several vegetable cookbooks. One, *From Asparagus to Zucchini: A Guide to Farm-Fresh, Seasonal Produce*, is published by MACSAC (Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition). So if you would like some to get more recipes for using your wonderful veggies, this might be of interest to you.

Pages from Grandma Beth's Cookbook

by Beth Propst

Kohlrabi

Kohlrabi is a member of the brassica family, along with broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage. The taste and texture of kohlrabi are similar to those of a broccoli stem or cabbage heart, but milder and sweeter, with a higher ratio of flesh to skin. The young stem in particular can be as crisp and juicy as an apple, although much less sweet. There are purple and green varieties, but both are white inside.

Benefits of kohlrabi:

- Low in calories, only 19 for a half cup raw, sliced
- High in dietary fiber, 2.5 grams for one-half cup
- Potassium content peaks at 245 grams for one-half cup
- Vitamin content for that same one-half cup includes 25 I.U. vitamin A, 43.4 mg. vitamin C, 11.3 mcg folic acid, and 16.8 mg. calcium.

Raw

Remove alien whiskers by pulling or cutting them off the kohlrabi globe. Stems and leaves can be chopped and included in a tossed salad. Their flavor is mild and takes well to salad dressing. If the kohlrabi is small, there is no need to peel it, however you may want to cut off the tough base end. If you have larger kohlrabi, peel it and slice off the tough woody base before slicing or dicing. Sometimes the base of the alien whisker things is a little woody and you may have to cut that out as well/

Slice or cut into julienne and include on a relish tray with dips.

Coarsely grate kohlrabi into a tossed salad. Because it is mild, succulent, and porous, it absorbs the flavor of a mild or pungent salad dressing quite well.

Dice kohlrabi and combine with your favorite vegetables and dressing for a chopped salad with delightful crispness.

Slice kohlrabi, wrap in plastic, and pack in your brown bag lunch for a crunchy snack.

Chop and include as one of the ingredients in a raw soup.

Steamed

Slice kohlrabi or cut into bite-sized pieces and put into a saucepan with 1/2" of water. Add a dash of salt, cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Turn heat down to low and steam for 5 to 7 minutes. Leaves can be steamed lightly just as you would do spinach.

Barbecued

Slice or chop kohlrabi and toss in a bowl with a little extra virgin olive oil. Sprinkle with a dash of salt, and wrap in aluminum foil (shiny side inside). Place on the grill and cook for about 10 to 12 minutes.

Stir Fried

Dice or chop into bite-size pieces and stir fry 5 to 7 minutes in a little extra virgin olive oil with a clove or two of minced garlic and a dash of salt.

We first try this new green (for us) as part of an asian-style meal. We purchased tatsoi, an asian dark green vegetable, at the Baltimore Farmer's Market the day before. We cook it as we do spinach, in a little oil until just wilted. Sesame oil and hot pepper flakes complement this green nicely.

Tatsoi

Tatsoi is an Asian green with small, dark, spoon-shaped, black-green leaves. It has a mild taste for salads, stir-fries, and braising. Try this simple recipe.

Tatsoi Sauté

Wash the tatsoi and sauté in oil with onions and/or garlic. When tatsoi is wilted, remove from heat and toss with sesame oil and hot pepper flakes.

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.