

Week 12-August 25, 2008

This is a Healthy Alternative B week

Farmer Tim Reports

Greetings from Erehwon!

Today (Sunday) is the day for the Garfield Farm Museum Antique Vegetable Show. Unfortunately, our heirloom tomatoes are still hiding in their cages, looking very green, so we have nothing to show. Jerry Johnson reports that the Museum garden is in the same state. We do plan to drop by to see if there might be some interesting varieties we can add to next year's CSA. Who'd a thunk: August 24 and no ripe tomatoes to speak of!

We're still fighting a few annoying problems on the Farm. Critters of all types have been raising havoc with our seed starting process. The birds and chipmunks apparently have some kind of X-ray vision or super-keen sense of smell which helps them locate, excavate, and gobble down seedlings from the planting beds. If those fat little critters gain any more weight, Bucky the Farm Dog is a gonna catch 'em! Izabel has been trying all sorts of contraptions to stifle the little buggers. She has hidden the seed flats in the forest, covered the flats with row covers, placed them on high tables with greased legs and yesterday, I noticed a long, solid box made from plywood and 4x8's. It was so secure that I needed help to get it open!

Now that the rain has slackened, we are happy to see that Chuck Wettergreen has nearly finished relocating our water storage tanks and hooking up the pumps to the electrical line. Thanks Chuck!

This week at the farm we are continuing to plant crops for the fall and with the knowledge gained from



our fertilizer experiments, we expect improved results. When we prepare planting beds, we are now applying alfalfa pellets, soy bean meal, and dried blood. We water in well to get it working and then we plant. We are getting ready to test some dried molasses to give a little extra energy to the micro-critters working diligently to break down the compost in the soil. Anyway, most all the plants that have had this treatment are looking green and healthy. Another product that needs testing is Azomite, which is mined in Utah and contains all sorts of trace minerals needed by plants. Steve and Sandy Trisko have been taking a teaspoon a day and since they have **not** turned green, we will try some on our crops.

Due to the cool weather this summer (we have not broken 90 in Elburn, and we continue to have a large number of night time lows in the 50s) many of our warm weather crops are in trouble. Some of this is due solely to the temperature (like tomatoes); others we think may be due to a more complex chain of causes, such as the cool weather stressing the plants and making them more susceptible to insect pests and other problems. But the bottom line is that some of the

crops we had expected in late August and September may not materialize in any quantity. Cucumbers, sweet bell peppers, eggplant, and beans are among those crops. In order to make sure that you get a chance to try these veggies at least once during the season we are contacting other farmers in the area who grow organically to see if we can buy them for you. We will always tell you when we have purchased items, and from whom.

Trivia

Thanks to our subscribers who have been bringing materials for our compost piles. If we put in a good mix of greens and browns, water well, and tun the pile frequently, the temperature is maintained around 150 degrees for a number of weeks. Hopefully, we can harness some of this energy to keep our hoop house warm this winter. In the meantime we would like to try cooking in our compost oven. Can anyone tell us how long it would take to cook a 2-pound roast, medium rare, at 150 degrees?

In your boxes this week

The theme this week is "Ta-ta-ta-dum-Tomatoes!" You can expect to find tomatoes, potatoes (various varieties), summer squash, garlic, either Swiss chard or kale, basil or some other herb, green mix, and one or more of the following: beans (purple or green), beets, kohlrabi, or cucumbers..

Those who have the Healthy Plus share can expect cucumbers, green tomatoes, cress, a winter squash, shallots, and possibly eggplant.

Wish List

Yard waste for the compost pile. You can bring to the farm or drop in the back of the farm truck on pickup days (you can recognize our truck as it will surely be the oldest one in the lot!).

Newspapers and cardboard for mulching to kill weeds.

Paint can lids, quart, half and full gallon.

Wagons for use in harvesting

We Get Mail

Add some broiled catfish or tilapia, some crumbled queso fresco and maybe another squeeze of lime to those yummy-sounding cabbage wraps (see last week's newsletter) and you'll have a fine fish taco. Phyllis Deerinck

Yum yum! When's dinner, Phyllis?
-Beth

Delivery Schedule

12:30-van leaves farm
1:00-1:30-delivery at Ball Hort
1:30-2:00-delivery at Wheaton
2:00-3:00-delivery at Lombard
2:45-3:15-delivery at Bartlett
3:00-3:30-delivery at Elgin

All times are approximate and may vary.

Farm pick-up times

Wednesday: 4:00-6:30
Friday: 2:30-5:30

If you have problems or questions about the pick up, please call Beth

(630-485-9964) or Tim (630-485-9963).

Reasons to Eat Local

Here is the rest of that article about eating local contributed by Jackie Kleck.

Eating Locally...benefits local farmers. Eating locally is a great way to connect with hardworking and knowledgeable Vermont farmers. They are valuable members of our community and it is essential that we show our appreciation and respect by buying locally grown food.

Eating Locally...means more variety. Farmers are free to try small crops of various fruits and vegetables when they don't have to worry about long distance travel, shelf-life, or high-yield demand. Often, these diverse crops never make into large supermarkets. A diversity of crops protects the farmer and the food supply from pests, disease and unpredictable market forces

Eating Locally...is more food secure. We can trust locally produced food because our neighbors are more likely to look out for our health than big corporations half way around the world. It's simple - when we know where our food comes from, we are less susceptible to falling prey to the spread of disease, genetically modified foods and other market pressures that could result in a food shortage.

Eating Locally...does not feed into corporate globalization. Globalization and corporate consolidation of the food supply - through vertical and horizontal integration - puts constant and severe pressure on family farmers throughout the United States and the world.

Eating Locally...protects the community from devastating sprawl and farm foreclosures. Supporting local providers supports responsible

land development. When you buy local, you give those with local, open space (farms and pastures) an economic reason to stay open and sprawl-free.

Eating Locally...is a great way to get connected with the land. By eating with the seasons, we are eating foods when they are at their peak taste, are most abundant, and the least expensive.

Eating Locally...just tastes better!

Upcoming Volunteer Event

The September Volunteer Event is scheduled for **Saturday, September 20**. We will be harvesting pumpkins and ornamental gourds. This is a great activity for kids. So we will meet at the Mongerson Farm at noon and caravan down to the Konen Farm. (Latecomers can go directly to the Konen Farm.) Refreshments will be provided.

At approximately 3:00 the caravan will return to the Mongerson Farm where we will engage in a little pumpkin decorating before setting up for the potluck supper around the campfire. So bring your pumpkin decorating supplies (let's not limit ourselves to carving!) and (probably) warm clothing.

Those not volunteering but wishing to participate in the pumpkin decorating will have to purchase their pumpkin and, as always, those not volunteering who wish to attend the potluck will be charged \$5.00 per family. We will provide water, juice, plates, cups, napkins, and plasticware.

Fall shares

Don't forget about those fall shares. If we still have openings at the end of next week we will open it to the general public. So get your applications in now, while there are still spots.

Grandma Beth's Cookbook

Cooking Demonstrations

We are still looking for volunteers to host cooking demonstrations at subscriber pick ups.

Tomatoes

Although tomatoes are closely associated with Italian cuisine, they are actually originally native to the western side of South America, including the Galapagos Islands. The first type of tomato grown is thought to have more resembled the smaller-sized cherry tomato than the larger varieties. The use of tomatoes spread throughout Europe and made its way to Italy by the 16th century, but it was originally not a very popular food since many people held the belief that it was poisonous since it was a member of the deadly Nightshade family. They were wise but not fully accurate, as the leaves of the tomato plant, but not its fruits, do contain toxic alkaloids. Yet, due to this belief, tomatoes were more often grown as an ornamental garden plant than as a food for many more centuries in several European countries. Far from being poisonous, the fruit of the tomato plant is incredibly nutritious.

Tomatoes contain a wide variety of nutrient and non-nutrient components associated with certain health benefits. These include lycopene, vitamins C, A and K, potassium, and fiber. One medium-sized tomato may provide almost half of a person's recommended daily amount of vitamin C. Various tomato components are believed to work together to produce health benefits. These include aiding in the development of healthy teeth, bones, skin and hair; lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels and possibly reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease and some cancers.

Vitamins C and A, the latter notably through its concentration of carotenoids including beta-carotene, are powerful antioxidants. These antioxidants travel through the body neutralizing dangerous free radicals that could otherwise damage cells and cell membranes, escalating inflammation and the progression or severity of atherosclerosis, diabetic complications, asthma, and colon cancer. In fact, high intakes of these antioxidants have been shown to help reduce the risk or severity of all of these illnesses.

In addition, fiber, which occurs in tomatoes, has been shown to lower high cholesterol levels, keep blood sugar levels from getting too high, and help prevent colon cancer.

Some tomato components (e.g., lycopene) are more easily absorbed by the body when tomatoes are heated, either during cooking or processing. In addition, carotenoids are fat soluble, so adding small amounts of oil to tomatoes (e.g., in a salad) helps the body absorb the nutrients better.

Most tomatoes sold in supermarkets are picked while unripe, and then artificially ripened. These tomatoes are usually less red, less flavorful and may be less healthy than tomatoes picked when ripe. Consumers can do certain things to trigger or speed the ripening process. They can also avoid permanently interrupting the ripening process by keeping tomatoes out of the refrigerator until fully ripened. Tomatoes are most flavorful and healthy when eaten shortly after they have been allowed to fully ripen.

One of the most well known tomato eating benefit is its' Lycopene content. Lycopene is a vital anti-oxidant that helps in the fight against cancerous cell formation as well as other kinds of health complications and diseases. Free radicals in the body can be flushed out with high levels of Lycopene, and the tomato is so amply loaded with this vital anti-oxidant that it actually derives its rich redness from the nutrient.

Studies involving the tomato have cropped up all over the world of medical science. These studies have proven not only the benefits in preventing cancer, heart disease as well as high cholesterol are also in the tomato's sights.

Cancers such as prostate cancer, cervical cancer, colon cancer, rectal cancer, and cancers of the stomach, mouth, pharynx, and esophagus have all been proven to be staved off by high levels of Lycopene. Researchers introduced Lycopene into pre-existing cancer cell cultures and the Lycopene prevented the continued growth of these cultures.

Additional studies link tomatoes to reduction in heart disease, reduction in frequency of migraines, improved bone health, and a reduction in blood-clotting tendencies. In addition, tomatoes have anti-inflammatory properties. Evidence also shows that a diet rich in tomatoes can help those with diabetes control their blood sugar levels. This is pretty powerful evidence that the health benefits of eating a tomato are really quite phenomenal.

Studies do suggest that the benefits of eating tomatoes are higher when eating the skin. So when cooking, leave the skin on and when buying, look for whole tomato products.

Gazpacho

This wonderful dish, sort of a liquid salad, is the perfect summertime cooler, and no wonder. Gazpacho descends from an ancient Roman concoction based on a combination of stale bread, garlic, olive oil, salt, and vinegar. As Romans labored to build roads and aqueducts across Spain in the scorching heat, this creamy soup replenished them with the necessary salt and vitamins lost through physical exertion.

Later, shepherds and farmers added vegetables to make it more hearty and satisfying. Because tomatoes and bell peppers were not indigenous to Spain, these ingredients were not added to the soup until after Spain's discovery of the New World. Since that time, gazpacho has remained relatively unchanged - an unpretentious soup designed to quench the thirst evoked by the unrelenting Spanish sun.

It's combination of vegetables makes it an easy and delicious way to get your vegetable nutrients. Many studies show that combining vegetables, as in gazpacho, actually creates a synergistic effect in the health benefits.

How to Make Gazpacho

Fresh tomatoes
Tomato juice
Cucumber
Onion
Garlic
Olive oil
Hot pepper, Tabasco sauce, or black pepper

Puree the above in a blender or food processor. Add other seasonings such as lovage, cilantro, parsley, basil, cumin, or chili powder to taste. Then dice and add in any other vegetables you have on hand. These commonly include celery, sweet bell peppers, more tomatoes, more cucumbers, sweet corn, summer squash. Some people add vinegar or lemon juice. You could probably add radishes, broccoli, or cauliflower as well. This is a great way to use up those odds and ends of veggies in your fridge. If you don't like the chunkiness, puree more of the veggies; if you do, keep more of them diced.

Serve chilled.

Tomato Salad

Cut up a bunch of tomatoes. We like tomatoes, so I use lots. I like to use different colors of tomatoes in this dish, as it looks so cheerful. Mix the various colors for a beautiful looking dish. Chop up some herbs. I like lemon

and lime basil. This week I used the dark opal basil with chives and lime basil and white, yellow and red tomatoes. Very beautiful. For a dressing mix apple cider vinegar and sugar. My mother always said equal amounts, but the sugar spoonful was heaping and the vinegar spoonful was not, so I would say about 3 parts of sugar to 2 parts of vinegar by volume. You can use balsamic vinegar, although that can be pretty intense if you use it full strength. Mix the whole shebang (that was one of my dad's favorite words!) together and let it sit for a while. This allows the juice to flow out of the tomatoes and the tomatoes to absorb some of the vinegar-sugar flavor. I find an hour is just about right. Some people like to put mozzarella cheese balls in their tomato salad, but we like tomatoes and we have plenty, so we don't bother.

Tomato Basil Pasta Toss

Cut the tomatoes as for salad. Add in some chopped herbs, a dash or two of balsamic vinegar, and sea salt and pepper to taste. Barely sauté some onions and chopped garlic in a little olive oil. Toss freshly cooked pasta with the tomato mixture, the garlic and onions, and cheese. My sister likes it with cubed brie. I also like it with crumbled feta or crumbled blue.

Tomato Salsa

Chop up tomatoes, onions, garlic, cilantro, and hot peppers. Mix together. Add a little lime juice and salt and pepper to taste. For a little extra dimension add a chopped peach. Serve with tortilla chips.

Fried Green Tomatoes

Slice tomatoes into 1/4 - 1/2-inch slices. Salt and pepper them to taste. Dip in corn meal and fry in hot grease or oil about 3 minutes or until golden on bottom. Gently turn and fry the other side. Serve as a side dish - delicious with breakfast!

Oven Baked Green Tomatoes

Cut green tomatoes in 1/2 inch slices; arrange in a greased baking dish. Season with sea salt and pepper and spread each with about 1/2 tablespoon brown sugar. Cover sliced green tomatoes with buttery crumbs and dot with butter. Bake at 350° until green tomatoes are tender but still firm, or about 25 to 35 minutes.