

Week 13-September 01, 2008

This is a Healthy Alternative A week

Farmer Tim Reports

Greetings from Erehwon!

At Mongerson this week we plan to complete installing our drip irrigation system which will sharply reduce the time we have been spending on watering by hand. Almost all beds have crops growing and we are starting our fall planting of crops that should be harvestable starting November 1 in time for the fall CSA and winter market. In the next couple of weeks we will begin covering tomatoes, peppers, beans and some other crops so we can harvest late into the fall. We plan heavy mulching of carrots and other root crops so we can continue to harvest after killing frosts.

At Konen's farm the late broccoli should be available starting next week and eggplant should be fruiting the week after. We are still waiting for many of the heirloom tomatoes to ripen. We are beginning to harvest winter squash and we'll be giving out Early Wonder—a small spaghetti squash—this week. Summer squash plants have mostly succumbed to powdery mildew but we should have a late crop at Mongerson in a few weeks.

Soil health at Mongerson continues to improve as we add dried blood, soybean meal, and alfalfa pellets to raise nitrogen, gypsum to loosen up the hard clay soil, and dried molasses to pep up the micro-organisms that are doing the work to break down the compost we are spreading. Earthworms have been spotted at a second location in the field – a good sign!

Last week we talked to two people who want to convert their land from corn



and soybeans to organic production. We encourage this conversion to reduce the vast amount of chemicals applied to the soil in the form of herbicides (the soybeans growing next to Mongerson have been sprayed three times this year with a heavy dose of Roundup which kills every living plant except the beans.), synthetic fertilizers, and pesticides. It is no wonder that little life can remain under these conditions. We estimate that for every additional ten to twenty thousand dollars spent on organic products, an acre or more will be added to organic production. Healthy soil, healthy plants, healthful produce, healthy people. Please buy organic when you can!

September is the time of year when our summer helpers begin to leave for school and we are not planning to replace them in order to conserve cash for the winter months. We have made great gains in productivity this year but we anticipate running short of labor needed to harvest and distribute the maximum quantity for our shareholders. So, shortly, we are going to issue a call for volunteers to help us with some specific tasks. Please respond if you are able – we do need your help!

This fall Farmer Tim is making himself and his tractor available for rototilling up to an acre or two of land at reasonable rates. Put your fall garden to bed, prepare an area for a winter cover crop or till in your compost and other soil amendments (his tractor has a front loader to move materials around). He says he can drive his tractor as far as ten miles from Mongerson, seat belt fastened, lights flashing, and hat tied securely to his head. He reports that motorists passing his slow-moving vehicle raise their arms in salute and shout encouraging words to him but it's pretty noisy so he can't quite make out what they're saying! To receive a free estimate, call him at 630-485-9963 or respond with an email.

In your boxes this week

The theme this week is "Splendid Spaghetti Squash." You can expect to find tomatoes, spaghetti squash, potatoes (various varieties), green mix, garlic, broccoli, peppers, carrots on Tuesday, beans on Wednesday and Friday, garlic, and one or more of the following: peppers, summer squash, cabbage, baby cabbage.

Those who have the Healthy Plus share can expect chard or kale, cucumbers, an herb bunch, sweet potatoes, extra tomatoes, and maybe some beets or tomatillos..

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

I think you might like this site
Cliff Hill

"Bill@MidwestPermaculture"
<Bill@MidwestPermaculture.com>
wrote:

From: "Bill@MidwestPermaculture"
<Bill@MidwestPermaculture.com>

To: "Friends of Midwest Permaculture"
<Bill@MidwestPermaculture.com>

Subject: Fall Tour Updates...and have you heard of the 'Transition Towns' movement?

Thanks Cliff for sending this along. We attended a permaculture farm tour with Bill last summer and it was excellent. The basic design tools can also be applied easily in an urban environment. You might want to also check out the web site of Jules Dervaes who lives in Pasadena and last year grew and sold over three tons of vegetables and fruit on his small urban lot. You can watch a video at

http://www.californiaheartland.org/this_season/episode_908/path_to_freedom.htm tf

The following message was received from Karen Stark, the energy source for the Geneva Green Market, and we are happy to pass it along to you. tf

Please send this on to your family, friends and neighbors....Thank you ...Karen

See "Garbage" Sept. 6!

What: a free screening of "Garbage: The Revolution Starts at Home"

When: 7:15 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 6

Where: River Park, 75 N. River Lane, Geneva (just north of Riverside Receptions)

Bring: blankets, flashlights and chairs

Food: Locally made root beer floats, apple cobbler, or three large cookies will be available for purchase for \$5*

Brought to you by: Geneva Film Festival & Geneva Green Market, NFP

Rain location: Geneva History Center, 113 S. Third St.

For more information:

<<http://www.garbageevoluton.com>>

<<http://www.genevafilmfestival.org>>

<<http://www.genevagreengreenmarket.org>>

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*Advance dessert tickets will be sold Thursdays at the Geneva Green Market, five desserts for \$20). All proceeds benefit Geneva Green Market, NFP.

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).

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.



Friday afternoon at the farm, from left: Taylor, Cassandra, Andy, Benjamin, and Izabel.

Grandma Beth's Cookbook

Cooking Demonstrations

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

Winter Squash—Part 1

Squash is native to the Americas. Thought to be the first food cultivated by Native American Indians, squash, along with beans and corn, is part of the Indian triad of the three most important food staples called the Three Sisters. Beans and corn completed the trio, and without those foods for sustenance, many ancient peoples would have ceased to exist.

The Three Sisters were vital to many civilizations. The corn and the beans made a complete protein, the squash supplied beta carotene, Omega 3's and Potassium. Whole communities could survive on these alone if game and other foods were scarce. They were also one of the first Companion Plantings, each contributing to the growth and well-being of the others. The corn supplied support for the beans to climb on, and shade for the squash plants during the heat of the day. The squash plants large leaves shaded the ground, prevented weeds, and deterred hungry wildlife that didn't like to walk through the fuzzy vines. The beans fixed nitrogen in the soil to feed the corn and the squash.

Squash seeds have been found in ancient Mexican archeological digs dating back to somewhere between 9,000 and 4,000 B.C. The first European settlers originally thought squash to be a type of melon since they had never seen them before.

Winter squash comes in many varieties and sizes. Unlike its summer counterparts, winter squash is harvested at a mature age, which makes the skin hard and inedible. The skin, however, is protective and increases its storage life. Winter squash can be stored for 3 months or longer in a cool, dry place between 55° and 60°F. Because of this, they were eaten all winter long, hence the name "Winter Squash."

Higher storage temperatures will shorten storage time, but will not alter the flavor. Storage temperatures below 50°F (as in a refrigerator) will cause squash to spoil more rapidly. If the squash needs to be refrigerated, it can be stored for 1 to 2 weeks. Cut pieces of squash should be tightly wrapped and refrigerated. Cooked, pureed squash can be frozen for use later as a side dish or to thicken, color, or flavor soups, sauces, or stews

The yellow and orange flesh of the winter squash is more nutritious and richer in complex carbohydrates, such as beta carotene, than summer squash. Winter squash is always served cooked and, because of its tough skin, only the inside flesh is eaten.

Spaghetti Squash

This oval-shaped yellow squash is also called the vegetable spaghetti. Larger varieties average 9 inches in length and may weigh 3 - 5 pounds. Smaller varieties are 4-6 inches in length and weigh 1½ - 2 pounds. When cooked, the crisp, tender, spaghetti-like strands yield a mild lightly sweet and fresh taste similar to summer squash. You cut it open, remove the seeds, bake or steam it and it's meat comes out in long strands that look like spaghetti, so it makes a wonderful visual replacement for our high carb, high glycemic old pal spaghetti. In 4 ounces (100 grams) this marvel of nature has only 5 grams of carbohydrates as opposed to 1/8 cup of pasta.

Cooking

To bake it, split lengthwise and remove the seeds in the central cavity. While you CAN bake it whole, it is very painful trying to hold it still to remove the seeds when you have just removed it from the oven and are trying to dish it out to serve it hot. Bake it hollow side up at 350 degrees. The riper the squash, the faster it will cook, but figure about 30 to 40 minutes for a large halved squash to bake. Smaller ones will cook in about 25 minutes.

Check to see that it is baked by piercing the flesh with a fork. It should be soft and the flesh should separate into fat spaghetti-like strands. Avoid overcooking which will make the flesh become bland and mushy. It is best when still slightly crunchy, as it is 92% water. Use a spoon or a fork to scrape the squash lengthwise. How fun to see the squash come out in spaghetti-like strands! Kids love this.

You can freeze raw, grated or cooked spaghetti squash, but be advised that it makes it less firm and pre-measured amounts will thaw out to smaller serving sizes.

Top a huge pile of spaghetti squash with one of the many pasta sauces out there and be ready to feast on a wholesome, fresh, naturally delicious treat. Besides your traditional spaghetti sauce, spaghetti squash is also excellent with a buttery flavored olive or nut oil and grated cheese, a pesto sauce, a cream sauce or even an onion sauce where the onion is sauteed in olive oil until reduced down to strands of sweet, golden onions and served with herbs to flavor. A dash of nutmeg with olive oil and butter

is also an amazing way to savor the delicate flavor of spaghetti squash.

Spaghetti Squash with Tomatoes and Olives

1 spaghetti squash, halved lengthwise and seeded
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
1 ½ cups chopped tomatoes
¾ cup crumbled feta cheese
3 tablespoons sliced black olives
2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil

Cook the spaghetti squash as explained above. Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat. Saute onion in oil until tender. Add garlic, and saute for 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes, and cook only until tomatoes are warm. Use a large spoon to scoop the stringy pulp from the squash, and place in a medium bowl. Toss with the sauteed vegetables, feta cheese, olives, and basil. Serve warm.

Spaghetti Squash with Parmesan Cheese

Cook the spaghetti squash and separate the strands. Saute in butter or olive oil with onions and garlic. Salt and pepper to taste and add Parmesan cheese.

Spaghetti Squash Ratatouille

1 Medium Spaghetti Squash
¼ cup White Wine
1 small Onion, diced
2-3 cloves Garlic, minced
1 Green Pepper, diced
1 Red Pepper, diced
1 medium Eggplant, peeled and cubed
1 Zucchini, sliced
2 cans Stewed Tomatoes
1 cup Spaghetti Sauce
Oregano, Basil, Pepper to taste

Prepare and cook squash.

Heat wine in skillet. Saute diced onion and minced garlic in wine for a few minutes. Add peppers to the skillet and continue to cook until tender.

Add Zucchini, eggplant, and tomatoes. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture begins to thicken. Add spaghetti sauce and stir. Add oregano, basil, and pepper to taste.

Spoon vegetable sauce mixture over spaghetti squash strands on serving dishes.

No Flour Pizza

3 cups grated raw zucchini OR
3 cups cooked spaghetti squash (click here for instructions)
2 eggs, beaten
2 ½ cups mozzarella cheese
1 ½ cups tomato sauce
½ small onion, thinly sliced
1 small green bell pepper, chopped
½ cup sliced mushrooms
¼ cup sliced black olives
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon dried basil
1 tablespoon olive oil

Preheat oven to 400° F.

Squeeze the excess moisture out of the grated zucchini or cooked spaghetti squash with paper towels. Mix the squash, eggs and 1 ½ cups mozzarella together and press into the bottom of a pie pan. Bake for about 10 minutes.

Remove the pan from the oven and spread the tomato sauce, vegetables or other pizza toppings and the remaining cheeses over the crust. Sprinkle with oregano and basil and drizzle the olive oil over the top. Bake for 25 minutes or until cheese is lightly browned.

Spaghetti Squash with Sausage Filling

Cook 1 spaghetti squash.

Saute in large skillet:
1 pound bulk pork sausage
1 cup chopped green bell pepper
1 cup chopped onion
2 garlic cloves, minced

Mix in 1 ½ cups purchased marinara sauce.

Using fork, pull out squash strands from shells, leaving shells intact. Mix squash strands into sausage mixture. Season filling to taste with salt and pepper. Spoon filling into squash shells. (Can be prepared 1 day ahead. Cover; refrigerate.)

Preheat oven to 400°F. Arrange filled squash halves on baking sheet. Sprinkle each with ¼ cup Parmesan. Bake uncovered until heated through, about 20 minutes (30 minutes if previously chilled). Cut each squash half in two and serve.