

Week 15-September 15, 2008

This is a Healthy Alternative A week

## Farmer Tim Reports

## Hello from a wet and soggy Erehwon!

After about 7 inches of rain in the last three days we're certainly feeling that we've had a little too much of a good thing. On Saturday Farmer Tim and Bucky the Farm Dog braved the rain to see how things were at the farm. Tim pulled on his rubber boots, put the tractor in four wheel drive and took a spin around the garden. Most of the beds in the big field looked saturated and rivulets were racing down the hill on the north and south access roads only to converge in the center of the field just above the sweet potatoes. However, our clover pathways were slowing the flow and limiting the erosion (Hey, we worked hard to improve our soil – we don't want the soybean guy down stream to get the good stuff or, heaven forbid, our soil ending up in the Gulf!) A couple of hours later Farmer T. had diverted much of the flow away from the primary vegetable beds and into some grassy areas where the water could soak in. We're hoping that most crops will survive except for a few recently seeded beds. Lesson: if you don't want your rubber boots to fill with water, keep your pant legs outside your boots. "Slop!", "Slis!" all the way home. Whatever happened to that nice pair of rubber bottoms we had?

We haven't been to Konen's yet but anticipate the second planting of cucumbers, watermelons, and eggplant are under water. It's difficult to predict exactly what will be harvestable this week but Beth is preparing the newsletter and wants to know. (*Not getting any answers, though-Beth.*)



We were harvesting in Sugar Grove last week and Farmer T. volunteered to go for some potatoes. Several attempts of mechanical harvest aids had pretty much fallen short of objectives so he was faced with using the traditional way which was to dig down the row with his fingers and trusty soil knives. He crept down the row, pushed the weeds away and scabbled furiously, Bucky-The-Farm-Dog style, prying out the buried loot with a soil knife. Given the protestations from his worn out knee joints, Farmer T. was soon lying on his side, digging ahead as far as he could reach, making a little pile of the booty then pulling up his knees, reaching forward and pushing hard with his waterlogged boots to gain a couple of feet, much the way a sideways-lying inchworm might move along. As he twisted forward, he had visions of a blind mole burrowing for food and a grizzled hard-rock gold miner creeping along, searching for an elusive quartz vein (a "spud" vein in our case). *Too bad I wasn't there with my trusty camera!-Beth*

The harvest was slim, with the gleaners coming first rather than later. The return was barely one small potato on each plant, approximately

the same amount of seed potatoes we planted. We wondered why we couldn't have just skipped the plant-grow-harvest part and just passed out the seed potatoes. Fifteen 400-foot rows done, about seven to go. With our little haul amounting to about 20 pounds per hour, we'll have plenty of time to think about how we will improve the process next year. Potato work is not all bad. One is close to the soil and can check out the critters in detail and be amazed at what can be seen underground and muse about how all life is interconnected.

This reverie was broken by the first drops of rain which minutes later turned to a downpour. We had twenty pounds in our tub, forty pounds less than our goal. Back at the farm, after washing up, Farmer T. said to no one in particular, "It looks like my fingerprints have nearly worn off." A nearby colleague, sporting a wry smile, reassured us, "Don't worry, they'll grow back".

## We Get Mail

Hi Folks,

Just a last minute reminder, this Thursday is the local food class I'm teaching at ECC. Please tell your friends. The class is a real bargain for only \$10.

CES 206 Organic Food-Locally Grown

Why is it important to buy produce from a locally grown farm? What is organic? Meet Robin Migalla, who knows both answers and more. You can find out about local organic

farmers who are making a difference in providing food that tastes better and is better for you. Whether you are an eater, a gardener, or just gathering information, meet our speaker and find out how you can benefit from sustainable locally grown organic food. Recommended reading: Omnivore's Dilemma by Michael Pollen.

Section 300 Synonym 43749  
Fee \$10.00 Day(s) TH  
Start/End Time 07:00PM - 08:30PM  
Beg/End Date 09/18/08 -09/18/08  
Bldg UBC Rm 123 Instr Migalla

<http://www.elgin.edu/noncreditclassesdetail.aspx?strPrefix=CES&strNumber=206&strTerm=2008FAN&strCategoryCode=BOOM>

*Robin has been a subscriber of ours for years and knows more about food and nutrition than I could ever aspire to know.—Beth*

## In your boxes this week

You can expect to find tomatoes (maybe green), winter squash, maybe some broccoli, beans, tomatillos, an herb bunch. We won't know for sure until we assess the rain damage.

## 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.

## 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).***

## Pumpkin Harvest Volunteer Event

As of today, the forecast for our pumpkin harvest, scheduled for Saturday, September 20, looks like a perfect fall day. 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 leave to caravan down to the Konen Farm about 12:15. 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.

**Schedule** (all times approximate):

12:00 - meet at Mongerson  
12:15 - caravan down to Konen farm  
3:00 - caravan back to Mongerson; unload pumpkins  
4:00 - pumpkin decorating (bring supplies)  
5:00 - potluck supper and campfire

Please call or e-mail Beth (630-485-9964, [alpropt7@yahoo.com](mailto:alpropt7@yahoo.com)) if you plan on attending.

Cut and paste into browser window for map to Mongerson farm

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&msa=0&msid=112104329270292570364.000452b086636db949dfd&l=41.906493,-88.393464&spn=0.023763,0.035448&t=h&z=1>)

map to Konen farm

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&msa=0&msid=112104329270292570364.000456ef1976deed11851&l=41.807405,-88.478823&spn=0.047599,0.070896&t=h&z=14>

## Fall shares

Don't forget about those fall shares. We are now announcing it to the general public. So get your applications in now, while there are still spots.

## Fall Leaves

Don't pay the city to take away your leaves! Bring them to us—we'll give them a good home. You can bring them to Mongerson Farm any day of the week between 8 and 5.

# Grandma Beth's Cookbook

## Cooking Demonstrations

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

## Kale

Kale is one of the healthiest foods around. It's full of vitamins A, C and K, and it is a great source of manganese, calcium and iron. It also has no cholesterol and offers a nice serving of fiber and protein.

The problem is kale is much tougher than other leafy greens, like Swiss chard, collard greens and spinach. Hence, it isn't as versatile for cooking. It doesn't work as well in salads or sauces, for example, as spinach or Swiss chard.

But once you have tried kale in a few recipes and found out that it can be delicious as well as nutritious, you will find yourself eating it more often.

### Roasted Kale with Sea Salt

4 cups firmly-packed kale  
1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil  
1 tsp. good-quality sea salt

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Wash and trim the kale: Peel off the tough stems by folding the kale leaves in half like a book and stripping the stems off. Toss with extra virgin olive oil. Roast for five minutes. Turn kale over. Roast another 7 to 10 minutes until kale turns brown and becomes paper thin and brittle. Remove from oven and sprinkle with sea salt. Serve immediately.

### Caldo Verde

(Portuguese Kale-Potato-Sausage Soup)

1 large yellow onion, peeled and minced fine  
1 large garlic clove, peeled and minced  
4 tablespoons olive oil  
6 large potatoes  
2 quarts cold water  
1 pound chorizo or similar sausage  
2 ½ teaspoons salt  
¼ teaspoon pepper  
1 lb. kale, chopped

Saute the onion and garlic in three tablespoons of oil. Add potatoes and sauté for five minutes. Add water, cover, and boil gently for 20 minutes until potatoes are falling apart.

Meanwhile, chop and fry the sausage in a skillet and drain, then add the kale, remaining tablespoon of olive oil, salt and pepper, and simmer for five minutes. Stir sausage and kale into pot of boiled potatoes. Cook for about 20 more minutes and serve with dark bread.

### Sweet Pepper Pasta Toss with Kale

1 (8 ounce) package uncooked farfalle (bow tie) pasta  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 medium red bell pepper, chopped  
1 medium yellow bell pepper, chopped  
1 cup roughly chopped kale  
4 cloves garlic, chopped  
1 pinch dried basil  
1 pinch ground cayenne pepper  
salt and ground black pepper to taste  
8 ounces feta cheese, crumbled

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add pasta and cook for 8 to 10 minutes or until al dente; drain.

Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat. Stir in red pepper, yellow pepper, kale and garlic. Season with basil, cayenne pepper, salt and black pepper. Cook until vegetables are tender.

In a large bowl, toss cooked pasta with skillet mixture. Sprinkle with feta cheese to serve.

### Braised Tuscan Kale

4 bunches kale, stems removed  
Salt as needed  
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
½ white onion thinly sliced  
½ rosemary sprig  
1 dried small red chile  
2 garlic cloves thinly sliced  
¼ cup chicken stock or water

Coarsely chop the kale leaves and blanch them in boiling salted water, about 3 minutes, then drain.

Heat the oil in a heavy skillet over medium heat and add the onion, rosemary and chile. Cook for 2 minutes, then add the garlic and ¼ teaspoon of salt. When the onion is translucent and starting to color, 3 to 5 minutes, add the kale.

Cook the kale over medium-low heat for 30 to 40 minutes, stirring often. The kale will turn a deep, almost black color, become soft and then almost a little crisp. Add ½

teaspoon of salt. If the greens get too dry during the cooking, stir in a little stock or water.

Spoon into a serving bowl and serve.

## Winter Squash - Part 3

Though all varieties of squash are good nutrition choices, winter varieties tend to be more nutrient-dense. They generally contain much more beta-carotene and more of several B vitamins than summer squash. As the winter months have less sunlight, the Acorn Squash supplies valuable nutrients and minerals into the diet. It is very high in Vitamin A. Additionally, the winter squash provides, Vitamin C, Potassium, dietary fiber, manganese, folate, Vitamin B complex, omega 3 fatty acids, copper and tryptophan. You might say the Acorn Squash is a perfect eatable item.

The Vitamin A component is good for men's health as well as smokers. Studies show that smoking cigarettes depletes Vitamin A in the system. Winter squash are abundant in the nutrient beta carotene—the darker the flesh the more beta-carotene. Butternut squash's beta-carotene content even rivals that of mangoes and cantaloupe. And that's a boon in the fight against cancer, heart disease, and cataracts. Beta-carotene prevents the oxidation of cholesterol in the blood vessels. Thus, no plaque develops to cause restricted blood flow leading to heart disease. Beta-carotene may also play a role in reducing lung inflammation and emphysema.

Winter squash is also rich in fiber. This fiber was once a routine aspect of all diets, and for the most part has been driven out by processing and modern taste preferences, but it is essential for digestion and has been found a preventive for various forms of cancer, lung disease and all around good health.

The folate found in winter squash may help to prevent certain birth defects if taken by women before and during pregnancy. Folate is also needed by the body to break down a dangerous metabolic byproduct called homocysteine, which can directly damage blood vessel walls. Since high levels of homocysteine are associated with an increased risk for heart attack and stroke, getting plenty of folate in the diet is a good idea.

Folate has also been shown to help protect colon cells from the effects of cancer-causing chemicals. In fact, diets high in folate-rich foods are associated with a significantly reduced risk of colon cancer, especially in people who have a history of alcohol use.

## Preparing Winter Squash

Peeling winter squash can be a challenge to the novice. The thin-skinned varieties (acorn, butternut, delicata and sweet dumpling) can be peeled with a paring knife or vegetable peeler.

Most recipes using these varieties call for cutting the squash in half. Position the squash on a cutting board, stem end facing you. Place the blade of a heavy chef's knife horizontally along the length of the squash. With a hammer or mallet, repeatedly hit the back of the blade near the handle to drive it into the squash until it breaks in half.

Place the larger varieties (Hubbard and Turk's Turban) on newspaper and use a sharp cleaver to split the hard-rind open. Or use the chef's knife method described above. Once you have a slit cut, bang on a hard surface and pull apart. Pieces are easier to peel. With a spoon, scoop out the seeds and strings and discard, or set aside if you plan to roast the seeds. For instructions on roasting seeds, visit our website Pumpkins and More and substitute squash seeds in the recipe.

To cook winter squash, place unpeeled pieces cut sides down on a shallow baking dish and bake in a 350°F oven for 30 minutes or longer. Check for doneness by piercing with a fork or skewer. When tender, remove from the oven and allow the pieces to cool. Spoon out the soft flesh and mash with a fork or process in a blender or food processor. Peeled pieces can be cut into cubes and boiled until tender. Use with any recipe calling for cooked mashed or pureed squash. Or microwave the squash pieces on high for 15 minutes or longer.

Small acorn squash and spaghetti squash can be pierced in several places with a long-tined fork or metal skewer and baked whole. Piercing prevents the shell from bursting during cooking. Place the squash on a baking dish and bake for 1 ½ to 2 hours at 325°F. Test for doneness by squeezing the shell. When it gives a bit with pressure, it is done.

Alternatively, wrap halved and seeded squash in aluminum foil and bake for 30-60 minutes in 325 degree oven or until soft enough to scoop out of the shell.