

EREHWON FARM

Week 2-November 01, 2009

Farmer Tim Reports

Hello from Erehwon!

As the days get shorter, the light a little dimmer, the air cooler and crisper, we like to take a little time for a second cup of coffee and light reading before heading out to the fields in order. It warms us up while allowing the outside air to warm up a bit. Most of our efforts last week involved coping with extremely muddy conditions and protecting crops against the next hard freeze, which may happen tonight with the predicted low of 29 degrees.

We completed version 10 or so of our plastic bed covering system which should allow us to harvest carrots, beets, turnips, radishes, cabbages, and leafy greens through the month of December. So far V10 has neither been blown to smithereens (like v1-v6) nor uprooted by 25-35 mph winds (like v7-v9), and is standing firm against the elements. We have lots of mature and maturing crops in the field and our hoophouse is full of young lettuce and other greens.

This week we are covering more beds and winterizing our small hoophouse. We have lowered the floor by about 18 inches and are preparing our root cellar. We had a little breakthrough last week when we made our first test of V3 of our compost heating system. With the pile about half completed we ran some water through a garden hose in the core of the pile and checked the temperature: 127 degrees! (input water was about 55 degrees.) We're attempting to heat our little house with horse manure – how green it *that*?! (Actually, last time I checked the compost pile, it was mostly brown.—beth)

We saw Farmer Tim spending quite a bit of time last week inside the small hoophouse with his tape measure, level and assorted tools. He was, as usual, scribbling in his note book and muttering continually, “heat sink...thermal mass...BTU formula...water heat retention...hot water recharge rate...post-heater solar temperature accelerator...warm air diffusion rate...” When he dashed off to the hardware store for more materials, we peeked into his notebook and tried to interpret some of the scrawled diagrams. It appears that he is planning to bury a water tank deep into the floor to create a heat storage system for his warm water – heat that might keep the house warm at night. Also, we think he may be installing some sort of solar heater to further raise the water temperature. In addition, while tidying up the big shed, we noticed a large cardboard box under his desk. Opening the top revealed a brand-new solar oven, apparently loaned to him by a friend. We're still pretty skeptical but his warm water data make us feel that he just may be on to something. We do know that if he goes much deeper under his little house, he'll need to start timbering the shaft.

In Tuesday's boxes/ bags.

Apples: More red apples from Acqua Viva Winery, they weren't sure of the variety and not organic. You can order more at \$20 bushel (about 40 pounds) if you like them. Call or e-mail for availability.

Cabbage, green, savoy, or Chinese

Lettuce mix, maybe with some baby

spinach or other baby, mild greens.

Stew mix: Includes large black radishes and Hakeurai mild white turnips.

Stew greens: Collards, red mustard, white turnip greens (you can also throw in your outside cabbage leaves.)

Butternut squash

Honey from Denanne: Because exposure to excessive heat and light destroys these nutrients, Denanne Farm's Honey is only heated to 90 degrees Fahrenheit (the natural temperature inside the beehive). This retains the nutrients while providing a fresh, delectable and exceptional taste. Denanne Farms does not use any chemicals in their honey. What the bees do is their business. See Grandma Beth's cookbook for more info on honey.

Garlic bulbils. You can plant these in a pot and grow garlic shoots (garlic grass) indoors this winter!

Young arugula bunch.

Community Winter Market

Saturday, November 7, marks the opening of the community Winter Market. The market will be held from 9 am through 1 pm on Saturdays, starting November 7. It will be located at 11 N 5th St, Geneva IL 60134. Read more about the market and about the upcoming Thanksgiving Festival at <http://www.genevagreengreenmarket.org>.

Grandma Beth's Cookbook

Honey

This wonderfully rich golden liquid is the miraculous product of honey bees and a naturally delicious alternative to white sugar. Although it is available throughout the year, it is an exceptional treat in the summer and fall when it has just been harvested and is at its freshest.

The following information has been excerpted from the World's Healthiest Foods website:

An International Symposium Discusses Likely Benefits of Honey

Speakers at the First International Symposium on Honey and Human Health, held in Sacramento, CA, January 8, 2008, presented a number of research papers. (Fessenden R. Report to the Committee for the Promotion of Honey and Health) Findings include:

- Different varieties of honey possess a large amount of friendly bacteria, which may explain many of the "mysterious therapeutic properties of honey."
- Lactobacilli, which deliver protective and beneficial benefits to bees as well as humans, were not found in the bees' honey stomach during the winter months when the bees under investigation were fed sucrose, indicating that certain bee-feeding practices may have dangerous and unwanted effects on bees.
- Honey may promote better blood sugar control.
- Experimental evidence indicates that consumption of honey may improve blood sugar control and insulin sensitivity compared to other sweeteners.
- In a year-long animal study comparing the effects of sucrose, honey and a low glycemic index (GI) sugar-free diet, rats on the honey-based diet showed: reduced weight gain and percentage of body fat, decreased anxiety, better spatial recognition memory, improved HDL cholesterol, and reduced oxidative damage.
- Honey has been shown to be a more effective cough suppressant for children ages 2-18 than dextromethorphan (see "One Study Finds Buckwheat Honey To Be a Successful Cough Medicine" earlier in this Health Benefits section)
- Honey boosts immunity.
- 32% of the cancer patients involved in the above immunity research reported improved quality of life.

To read more about the health benefits of honey, go to <http://whfoods.org/genpage.php?name=foodspice&dbid=96>.

Local honey is best for you and raw honey is better than processed. Raw honey crystallizes quickly, though. If your honey crystallizes, stand the honey container in hot water from the tap until it melts. If your container allows, you can use a spoon to scoop out the crystallized honey and use it that way. Honey easily dissolves in water or other liquid and crystallized honey can be used in most recipes.

Cooking with Honey

- It's very easy to substitute honey for sugar in your recipes. Honey is up to twice as sweet as table sugar, so you will need to reduce the amount called for in the recipe by one-third to one-half honey for granulated or table sugar. In addition, since honey is composed of up to 18% water, you will need to reduce the liquid called for in baked goods by about one-fifth.
- When baking sweets, you should also lower your oven temperature by 25 degrees F. (15 degrees C.).
- If you are measuring honey by weight, 1 cup will weigh 12 ounces.
- To help that honey slide smoothly from your measuring utensils, simply lightly coat the utensil with a vegetable spray before measuring the honey.
- Unless the recipe calls for sour milk or cream, some cooks add the merest pinch of [baking soda](#) to the recipes of baked goods to counteract the slight acidity of the honey which may cause overbrowning.
- Since it has the ability to absorb and retain moisture, honey is used in the industry to keep baked goods moist and fresh. Use honey in baked goods you plan to mail to keep them bakery-fresh.
- Honey is also an excellent choice to use in [salad dressings](#), since its emulsifying qualities make it a perfect stabilizer.

Infusing Honey with Herbs

1. Use 1 tablespoon of fresh herbs, or half a teaspoon of dried herbs for every 2 cups of honey.
2. If the herbs are fresh, grind them well to aid in the infusion.
3. Tie the herbs in cheesecloth.
4. In a pot, warm the honey and herbs. It is important not to heat the honey too much or the enzymes will be destroyed. Simply warm the honey to a temperature well below 115 degrees.
5. Put the honey and the herbs into a large canning jar with a tight fitting lid.
6. Let the honey sit in at room temperature in a dark place for at least one week.
7. Heat the honey just to warm and press the liquid out of the herbs.

Tips for Making Herbal Honey:

- You can also chop the herbs finely and leave the herbs in the honey.
- Using more herbs will shorten the amount of time it takes to infuse the honey.
- Allowing the herbs to infuse into the honey longer will strengthen the medicinal properties of the herbal honey.

Read more:

http://herbalmedicine.suite101.com/article.cfm/herbal_honey_recipes