

Erehwon Farm

Newsletter Week 11–August 15, 2010

Farm Report

Hello from Erehwon!

Too much of a good thing! Over the last several weeks heavy rains have caused some crop damage at the farm. As reported last week, Mother Nature showed incredible timing by dumping heavy rain on our beds the day after we seeded them causing most seeds to be washed away. All together we lost about 12, 400'x 4' planting beds and have reordered seeds and replanted. Also, the volume of water overwhelmed our ditching system and we had standing water in several of our pepper beds and we continue to lose more plants to "water wilt." In addition, the excessive heat has taken its toll on our lettuce and other greens. We are happy to see more seasonal weather and hope to catch up with production soon.

The excessive heat has taken a toll on the farm workers, who have each developed their own techniques for combating the heat.. It seems the size of the water jugs has been increasing as the summer advances. It has not been uncommon to see farm workers turning the hoses on themselves instead of the vegetables they are washing. Even Bucky the farm dog does not complain when someone takes pity on him and hoses him down. He also spends quite a bit of time in his doggie pool hidden discretely under the trees. But sometimes that pool is just too far away. Wednesday he noticed that the workers were running cold water into an open cooler for use in water cooling the chard and kale.



"Oh, yes! This feels good. I wonder if I can get the rest of me in here."



"I fit! Too bad there's no room to lie down. Oh, this water is so good!"

After the greens had been cooled and the cooler abandoned, Bucky

sauntered over for a drink. Pretty soon his front legs were in the cooler, followed in short order by the hind legs. There Bucky stood in the cooler, immersed to his knees in cold water, drinking his fill. He thought this was a pretty cool deal, and the cooler was standing right by the subscriber pick-up area, minimizing his need to walk in the sun to get to his pool, so he paid several repeat visits to the cooler that afternoon.

The bugs have also been an issue in the last few weeks. The smell of insect repellent mingles with the smell of composting vegetables to produce an aroma that is uniquely farm. Even Bucky has his own bug spray to help keep the flies off. Anyone who is thinking of picking their own cherry tomatoes this week had best take note and come prepared. Those durned mosquitoes have a habit of resting in the leaves and swarming anyone who disturbs the foliage.

With the weather turning cooler for a few days, farm workers have returned to the fields with renewed vigor. We are continuing to replant as beds dry out and will be transplanting fall crops in beds that can be covered when the weather cools in late September or early October (we hope!).

This week we should have a good supply of tomatoes, summer squash, cucumbers, potatoes, kale, and Swiss chard. If you would like to pick your own cherry tomatoes, you should be able to find a good

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supply in the four beds we have. These small tomatoes are great for drying and even those that have split can be cut in half, dehydrated, and used over the winter to add tomato flavor to many dishes.

At the Farm This Week

This week's produce:

Lettuce, cherry tomatoes, scallions, peppers, chard, kale, beans, potatoes, cucumbers, summer squash, onions, and maybe some big tomatoes. Also, you might get an unripe winter squash. They got picked last week by mistake and can be cooked as if they were ripe, but the color and flavor won't be nearly as intense as they would be ripe. (Don't fear—there are plenty more on the plants to ripen for fall.)

Special this week:

A very large bag of summer squash for the asking. Delivery subscribers e-mail me by 9:00 am Tuesday morning. Farm subscribers—just pick them out when you come.

Pick Your Own:

-Squash blossoms: H4-5 (look for the small wooden stakes with numbers on the east or south ends of beds and see the farm map at the pick up station for areas)
-S1: herbs
-S8-10: dill.
-Section B: Raspberries, about \$4.50 a pound from Belles Berries. Check for availability.

Deals:

-Cherry tomatoes and beans: You pick and give half to Farmer Tim.
-Potato harvesting: You dig and keep 1/4. Training required.

Foraging:

-Purslane: a tasty and highly nutritious weed growing in many of

Events

Every Thursday all summer long

[Geneva Green Market](#)

Every Saturday all summer long

[Community Farmer's Market at Inglebrook Pantry](#), 9:00-1:00

Saturdays starting June 26

[Batavia Farmer's Market](#)

our rows

Note: Delivery customers are welcome to come to the farm any time for the above activities. Call 630-485-9963 or 630-485-9964 to make sure someone will be there.

Farm Pick-up Times

Wednesday 4:00-6:30

Friday 2:30-5:30

Delivery Times (Tuesday)

1:00-1:30 Van leaves farm

1:45-2:15 Drop off at Wheaton

2:15-2:30 Drop off at Bartlett

2:30-2:45 Drop off at Elgin

Micro Brew Review

Join Seven Generations Ahead, Downtown Oak Park and the Illinois Craft Brewers Guild Saturday, August 21 for the Oak Park Micro Brew Review, which features tastings of 75 craft beers from 25 microbreweries across Illinois and the Midwest. Oak Park restaurateurs showcase samples of select dishes, incorporating sustainable and organic food.

[\(More\)](#)

Potluck Dinner and Outdoor Movie Night

Pushing the Envelope Farm - (Geneva, Illinois)

Bring your family to our monthly Movie nights. Bring a local dish to share and dishes to eat from, and enjoy meeting new people and watching a food related movie projected on the side of our building. Movie will be appropriate for all ages, fourth Saturday of the month during the summer. [\(More\)](#)



Summer squash at the market—one of this summer's best crops!

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Tomatoes

From World's Healthiest Foods

There are few vegetables that better mark the summer months than the sweet juiciness of a vine-ripened tomato. Although tomatoes are now available year-round, the truly wonderful qualities of tomatoes are the best when they are in season from July through September.

Tomatoes have fleshy internal segments filled with slippery seeds surrounded by a watery matrix. They can be red, yellow, orange, green, purple, or brown in color. Although tomatoes are fruits in a botanical sense, they don't have the dessert quality sweetness of other fruits. Instead they have a subtle sweetness that is complemented by a slightly bitter and acidic taste. Cooking tempers the acid and bitter qualities in tomatoes and brings out their warm, rich, sweetness.

Antioxidant Benefits of Lycopene

In the area of food and phytonutrient research, nothing has been hotter in the last several years than studies on the *lycopene* in tomatoes. This carotenoid found in tomatoes (and everything made from them) has been extensively studied for its antioxidant and cancer-preventing properties. The antioxidant function of *lycopene*-its ability to help protect cells and other structures in the body from oxygen damage-has been linked in human research to the protection of DNA (our genetic material) inside of white blood cells. Prevention of heart disease has been shown to be another antioxidant role played by *lycopene*.

In contrast to many other food phytonutrients, whose effects have only been studied in animals, *lycopene* from tomatoes has been repeatedly studied in humans and found to be protective against a growing list of cancers. These cancers now include colorectal, prostate, breast, endometrial, lung, and pancreatic cancers. While lycopene may play an important role in tomatoes' health benefits, it seems that it is not the only nutritional star integral for giving this food a red-hot reputation for health promotion; recent research discussed below in the section "Protection Due to Synergy of Tomato's Nutrients, Not Just Lycopene" describes how scientists are finding out that it is the array of nutrients included in tomatoes, including, but not limited to lycopene, that confers it with so much health value. All the while, it's still important to understand the many benefits that lycopene provides.

Tomatoes also promote:

- . Colon Health
- . Prostate Health
- . Pancreatic Health
- . Reduction in Heart Disease Risk
- . Significant Anti-Oxidant Protection
- . Improved Cholesterol Profiles
- . Reduced Blood-Clotting Tendencies
- . Better Bone Health

How Tomatoes Promote Optimal Health

When researchers incubated breast and liver cancer cells with lycopene, the carotenoid triggered the production and activity of certain phase II detoxification enzymes that other carotenoids, including beta-carotene, astaxanthin, and phytoene, did not. Since much epidemiological evidence indicates that lycopene acts synergistically with other phytonutrients to give tomatoes their protective effects, and recent studies have shown that eating tomato products prevents cancer more effectively than taking lycopene alone, the researchers concluded that other carotenoids stimulate phase II enzymes via different pathways from that used by lycopene.

Protection Due to Synergy of Tomato's Nutrients, Not Just Lycopene

Recent research clearly shows that tomatoes' protective effects against prostate cancer and cardiovascular disease are due not simply to their lycopene content, but result from the synergy of lycopene with other phytonutrients naturally present in whole tomatoes.

In addition to an animal study published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* that found whole tomato powder was significantly more effective than lycopene alone in preventing the onset of prostate cancer (summarized under [prostate cancer](#)) other research is now demonstrating that lycopene may play only a minor role in tomatoes' heart health benefits. ([more](#))

Tomato Salad

Cut up a bunch of tomatoes. We like tomatoes, so I use lots. 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 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

While pasta is cooking, cut up tomatoes, onions, and garlic. Lightly sauté onions and garlic in olive oil. Add some balsamic vinegar and salt and pepper to taste. When pasta is cooked, drain and place in bowl. Toss with crumbled blue cheese, tomatoes, chopped basil, and the sautéed onions and garlic. Good warm or cold. If you would prefer, feta or brie can be substituted for the blue cheese.

Fresh Tomato Salsa

2-3 medium sized fresh tomatoes (from 1 lb to 1 ½ lb), stems removed, finely diced
½ red onion, finely diced
1 jalapeño chili pepper (stems, ribs, seeds removed), finely diced
1 Serrano chili pepper (stems, ribs, seeds removed), finely diced
Juice of one lime
½ cup chopped cilantro
Salt and pepper to taste
Optional: oregano and or cumin to taste

Start with chopping up 2 medium sized fresh tomatoes. Prepare the chilies. Be very careful while

handling these hot peppers. If you can, avoid touching them with your hands. Use a fork to cut up the chilies over a small plate, or use a paper towel to protect your hands. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and hot water after handling and avoid touching your eyes for several hours. Set aside some of the seeds from the peppers. If the salsa isn't hot enough, you can add a few for heat.

Combine all of the ingredients in a medium sized bowl. Taste. If the chilies make the salsa too hot, add some more chopped tomato. If not hot enough, carefully add a few of the seeds from the chilies, or add some ground cumin.

Let sit for an hour for the flavors to combine.

Serve with chips, tortillas, tacos, burritos, tostadas, quesadillas, pinto or black beans.

Summer Squash Casserole

2 eggs, beaten
½ cup wheat germ, quinoa, or bulgar wheat
1 tsp salt
dash Cayenne pepper
1 tsp Tamari soy sauce
3 cups summer squash unpeeled and pureed in blender
¼ pound mushrooms, sliced
½ onion, sliced in rings
1 green pepper, sliced in rings
paprika to top

In a large mixing bowl mix eggs, wheat germ, seasonings, and pureed squash. Pour half of this mixture into an oiled casserole dish. Layer half of the mushrooms, onion rings, and green pepper rings. Pour the other half of the pureed mixture in, then top with the remaining mushrooms, green pepper rings, and onion rings. Bake at 350 degrees till browned on top. For extra flavor, add slice or grated cheese on the top and melt under the broiler before serving.