

Erehwon Farm

Week 4–June 26, 2010

Farm Report

Hello from Erehwon!*

Our acres are carpeted in green, mostly weeds with a few crops in between. Late last week Farmer Tim spotted the first ripe cherry tomato and it immediately went down the hatch as did the rest that were found. That same day he stopped to visit with some folks who were diligently picking raspberries and he noticed a small boy whose hands and face were covered with purple blotches. Concerned about the health of the little waif, he looked more closely and also saw purple blotches on the tyke's shirt. Farmer Tim was quite relieved when he realized he had seen the same little lad under the mulberry tree scooping up the tasty treats, putting some into his bucket and stuffing the rest into his mouth, purple juice dribbling down his front. There will be more mulberries to forage this week.

Last week we observed Farmer Tim conducting a weed pulling class with some of his helpers and overheard the following dialog:

Most small weeds under 6 inches need only a quick swipe with thumb and forefinger. "Twick, twick, twick", moderato or even up to allegro for those with complete concentration and long reach. Thistles are grabbed just below the soil line, given upward pressure, then yanked. "th-wop, th-wop, th-wop"! Larger weeds to 18" can be yanked with the straight-arm jerk, and thistles by the "two-finger grasp and leveraged wrist-roll". Three footers will usually come out with the one-handed, straight-arm, body-weight-assisted jerk. "Ooh, aaah! Ooh-aaah!" usually larghissimo. (sounds a bit like the emanations by some professional female tennis players we know, after striking a bal.).

Finally, for the really big ones we have the two handed body jerk and even the two-person, four-handed, power rip. For anything bigger, we just pull out our "power saw on a stick, "Screezing, scree-zing", or the big flamer, "ROAR!" (just like standing next to a fighter jet with the afterburner on!).

There was a bit of snickering in the back of the room and one helper muttered to another, "Why not just hoe them when they are tiny? Would save a lot of work."

After the many severe rainstorms we have endured over the past week, it looks like we finally have a week of dry weather before us. Hopefully this will give the muddy spots a chance to dry out. Plan for lots of fun when you pick up this week: visiting farmers, foraging for berries, U-picks, catching bugs, and other activities. Bucky the Farm Dog will be on hand for greeting and playing as well. Some of the adults who have been putting off farm tours due to the mud may also wish to take

advantage of this opportunity to see what's what.

* Erehwon: An old Celtic word meaning a large mud hole with vegetables growing around the edges.

At the Farm This Week

This week's produce:

Some combination of carrots, cabbage, cherry tomatoes, green onions, chard, kale, summer squash, lettuce, broccoli, cucumbers, green garlic and whatever else we can find.

Pick Your Own:

H8 (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):
herbs

D1: Cilantro (small bunch)
S8-10: dill.

Section B: Raspberries, about \$4.50 a pound from Belles Berries. See Izabella in the field for location.

Deals:

Cherry tomatoes: You pick and give half to Farmer Tim.

Foraging:

Mulberries, trees near S15, behind the shade hoop house, and also behind the big shed. See Farmer Tim for locations, tarp, and long pole for branch shaking. This will be the last week for these.

Black raspberries for snacking near the pickup area.

Gleaning:

S20/21: Broccoli small florets. (one row per customer)

Activities:

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Rye Maze: Closed, flattened by the last couple of storms.

Cabbage moth catching.

Beetle scouting (see Farmer Tim)

Hammock lounging: two hammocks, no waiting.

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

Visiting Farmer Days

We have had many inquiries over the years from our subscribers and potential subscribers about the possibility of including items such as eggs, meat, and cheese in our shares. We do not offer those items now, nor do we intend to in the future. The licensing and logistics of doing so are more than we feel we can manage adequately. However, this year we are trying another alternative-Visiting Farmer Days.

On Visiting Farmer Days, farmers who offer items that we do not will come to the farm during subscriber pick-up hours. They will be available to talk to subscribers about their products and their farms. You will be able to purchase items directly from them, thus eliminating us from the process. After they have been to the farm once, you will be able to order from them prior to their visits to ensure a sufficient supply of popular items.

At this time we plan to hold Visiting Farmer Days once a month. **These events are not open to the public, but are for subscribers and farm**

Events

Every Thursday all summer long

[Geneva Green Market](#)

Every Saturday all summer long

[Community Farmer's Market at](#)

[Inglennook Pantry](#), 9:00-1:00

Saturdays starting June 26

[Batavia Farmer's Market](#)

Visiting Farmer Days

June 30 and July 02

friends only. Delivery subscribers are welcome to come to the farm to visit with the farmers. We're sorry we cannot offer to drop off items at the drop points at this time because we have no way to guarantee that the items stay at the correct temperature until you pick them up. If you have any ideas how we might manage this, we will be happy to consider them.

The first Visiting Farmer Days are scheduled for the week before the July 4th weekend. That way you can stock up on all of your grilling needs from local farmers. The actual dates are Wednesday, June 30, and Friday, July 1. At this point we have 2 farms scheduled. The first one is [R Family Farm](#), from Poplar Grove, IL. (This is north of Belvidere.) The other is [Farm Direct Black Angus](#) located just this side of Sycamore.

We'll have more information about Visiting Farmer Days as we get closer to the event. If you have any suggestions for making these events more successful, we would love to hear about them.

Web Sites of Interest

[Local food Dude](#)

Local Food Dude® is a website devoted to increasing the consumption of locally grown foods in schools.

[Food Routes](#)

The FoodRoutes Web site is a project of FoodRoutes Network (FRN). FRN is a national nonprofit organization that provides communications tools,

technical support, networking and information resources to organizations nationwide that are working to rebuild local, community-based food systems. FRN is dedicated to reintroducing Americans to their food – the seeds it grows from, the farmers who produce it, and the routes that carry it from the fields to their tables. Our strategic communications programs include:

* The FoodRoutes Web site

* National polling research

* "Buy Fresh Buy Local" (our trademarked program) chapter development to support sustainable food and farming systems

* Communications tools--including our Communicator's and Buy Local Tools

* Implementation strategies for re-building state and local food systems

* Conservancy of our food heritage while working to re-build the ever eroding loss of farms, food processors and food producers in the United States as well as Internationally.

The goal of this Web site is to provide timely information, resources and market opportunities for the food and farming community, community-based nonprofits, the food concerned public, policy makers and the media.

National polling research and message development is generating valuable information on food buyer attitudes and insight into the thinking and opinions of two groups vital to the success of sustainable farming and local food systems: the farmers who produce our food and those who buy it.

Follow Erehwon Farm on Facebook. Become a fan.

Summer Squash

Like winter squash, pumpkins, cucumbers, melons, and gourds, summer squash is a member of the family cucurbitaceae and has a vining habit. Unlike its relatives, winter squash, summer squash varieties are picked while still immature, have thin skins, and don't store very well.

There are several varieties of summer squash based on color and shape of the fruit. The most popular type is zucchini—straight and green. Yellow straightneck is a yellow version of the green zucchini. Yellow crookneck squash tapers toward the stem end and has a slightly bumpy texture. Patty pan squash is greenish-white and disk-shaped. The round varieties you might end up with are round versions of zucchini—the green one is called “Eight Ball” and the yellow one is called “Floridor.”

Summer squash must be refrigerated to keep it hydrated and in good condition. It will last for up to a week in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator.

Wash summer squash gently before using. Remove both ends but do not peel. If the squash is large, you may wish to remove the seeds. Summer squash contains a lot of water so salting the squash and allowing it to drain before cooking prevents your recipe from becoming mushy. (This is not always a concern, so don't feel it is mandatory.)

Health Benefits (taken from World's Healthiest Foods)

Promotes Optimal Health

Although not as potent as root vegetables like burdock, garlic or onion, squashes have been found to have anti-cancer type effects. Although phytonutrient research on squash is limited, some lab studies have shown vegetable juices obtained from squash to be parallel to juices made from leeks, pumpkin, and radish in their ability to prevent cell mutations (cancer-like changes).

Supports Men's Health

In research studies, extracts from squash have also been found to help reduce symptoms of a condition occurring in men called *benign prostatic hypertrophy*, or BPH. In this condition, the prostate gland becomes problematically enlarged, which can cause difficulty with urinary and sexual function. Particularly in combination with other phytonutrient-containing foods, squash may be helpful in reducing BPH symptoms.

Well-Rounded Cardiovascular Protection

The traditional nutrients provided by summer squash are equally impressive. Our food ranking system qualified summer squash as an excellent source of manganese and

vitamin C and a very good source of magnesium, vitamin A (notably through its concentration of carotenoids, including beta-carotene), fiber, potassium, [folate](#), copper, riboflavin, and phosphorus.

Many of these nutrients have been shown in studies to be helpful for the prevention of atherosclerosis and diabetic heart disease. Summer squash's magnesium has been shown to be helpful for reducing the risk of heart attack and stroke. Together with the potassium in summer squash, magnesium is also helpful for reducing high blood pressure. The vitamin C and beta-carotene found in summer squash can help to prevent the oxidation of cholesterol. Since oxidized cholesterol is the type that builds up in blood vessel walls, these nutrients may help to reduce the progression of atherosclerosis. The vitamin folate found in summer squash are needed by the body to break down a dangerous metabolic byproduct called *homocysteine*, which can contribute to heart attack and stroke risk if levels get too high. Finally, summer squash's fiber has been shown to lower high cholesterol levels, which can help to reduce the risk of atherosclerosis and diabetic heart disease.

A Disease-Fighting Food

The nutrients in summer squash are useful for the prevention of other conditions as well. High intakes of fiber-rich foods help to keep cancer-causing toxins away from cells in the colon, while the folate, vitamin C, and beta-carotene help to protect these cells from the chemicals that can lead to colon cancer. The antioxidants vitamin C and beta-carotene also have anti-inflammatory properties that make them helpful for conditions like asthma, osteoarthritis, and rheumatoid arthritis, where inflammation plays a big role. The copper found in summer squash is also helpful for reducing the painful symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis.

Squash Kebabs

Okay, this one is too easy.

Slice the squash or use whole if they are very small. Put on a kebab skewer. I like to alternate the colors for effect. Brush with olive oil or salad dressing (I like honey mustard). Grill until done—about 5-10 minutes.

Stuffed Patty Pan Squash

Scoop out the insides from the stem end of several patty pan squashes. Parboil or steam the shells for several minutes to soften up a bit. Chop up the scooped out

portions of squash and sauté in butter with garlic and onions. Mix with bread crumbs or crumbled croutons, raw egg, sharp mustard, and grated cheddar cheese. Some herbs or pepper could also be added. Stuff the shells with the mixture. Bake at 350 for about 30 minutes. If desired, sprinkle more cheese on top and broil for the last couple of minutes.

Baby Summer Squash and Pasta

Sauté sliced baby summer squash (if baby squash are not available, you can use larger squashes to equal advantage) in olive oil with onions and garlic. Add herbs to taste. (An Italian version might have oregano, thyme, and rosemary, but lemon thyme with spearmint or basil would also be good, as well as many other possible combinations.) Serve over pasta (have you tried the wonderful pastas we have in the store—they have a wonderful flavor and the perfect texture!) Sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese.

This recipe can also be used with zucchini. Cut the zucchini in half lengthwise and scoop out the insides to make zucchini boats.

Cheesy Summer Squash

Onions
Bacon
Summer Squash—washed and sliced or cubed
Grated cheese (I like cheddar)

Chop the onions and bacon. Brown the bacon. Add the onion and cook for about a minute. Add summer squash and cook until the desired degree of tenderness. Just before you turn off the heat, add the grated cheese and stir. Serve over pasta or rice or as a side dish.

Even more summer squash ideas:

- Use them raw with a veggie dip.
- Substitute for potatoes in potatoes au gratin or scalloped potatoes and adjust cooking time accordingly (squash usually need less time to cook than potatoes).
- Make stuffed patty pans or zucchini boats using a stuffed mushroom or stuffed green pepper recipe. Some people recommend precooking the shells so they are more tender.
- Steam with other vegetables and serve with herbed butter.
- Add raw to your favorite pasta salad recipe—especially yummy with Italian Parmesan dressing.
- Batter and deep fry.

Raspberry Vinaigrette Dressing

1/4 c. raspberry vinegar
1/2 tsp. mustard
1 c. olive oil
1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. pepper

Mix together the vinegar, salt, mustard and pepper. Drip in the olive oil slowly and mix with whisk until all is emulsified.

Mulberry Ice

3 c Water
1 ½ c Sugar
1 Zest of 1 lemon -- cut in strips
4 oz Fresh ginger (about ½ cup) thinly sliced
4 c Fresh mulberries
1/4 c Port wine -- (or more)
1/4 c Lemon juice -- (or more)

Combine water, sugar, lemon zest, and ginger in a heavy saucepan and boil about 5 minutes. Add the mulberries, bring back to the boil, then remove from heat and let cool. Puree briefly in a food processor or blender, strain, and rub the berries to release flavor.

Chicken with Chipotle-Mulberry Barbecue Sauce

Thanks to Patrick Hancock, executive chef at El Pinto Restaurant for the concept for the barbecue sauce recipe. For the chicken, I used The Old Spice Shack's Country French Rub, and it was delicious. Note that the sauce can be pureed or not, and that it is the most brilliant purple color that you will ever see.

2 chicken legs with thighs attached
Favorite rub of choice
1/4 cup red raspberry vinegar
1 large clove garlic, minced
1 cup crushed mulberries
1 chipotle in adobo, minced

Place the chicken on a plate and sprinkle the rub over it. All to marinate for at least ½ hour, preferably longer.

In a sauce pan, combine the vinegar, garlic, mulberries, and chipotle and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and cook, uncovered, for 15 minutes. Remove from the heat and puree if you want a smoother sauce.

Grill the chicken over medium heat for about 12 minutes per side, turning often.

Serve the chicken covered with the sauce.