

# Erehwon Farm

Week 5—July 04, 2010

## Farm Report

### Hello from Erehwon!\*

The mud holes are finally gone, the sun is shining brilliantly for fifteen hours a day, and the air is refreshingly dry. It's as if Erehwon has been magically transported from somewhere in England to the San Joaquin Valley in California! Time to get our watering hoses going! Or, hook up the irrigation system, open the car windows, put a few seed packets on the lawn, and wait for a deluge. (*Actually, according to the weather forecast, we could be in for rain every day this week. Oh, well. It was nice while it lasted.—beth*) Early potatoes are nearly mature and we should have an ample supply of different varieties for the rest of the season. Garlic is also almost ready for full harvest—you guys have just been getting a few early ones—and we'll probably be asking for volunteers to help us. It's lots of fun and volunteers might just get to take home some extra garlic. Peppers are fruiting, cucumbers are forming, and cherry tomatoes are turning from green to red, gold, yellow, and brown.

It's always interesting to watch Farmer Tim cruising around the farm on his little lawn tractor, mowing pathways (and happily finding misplaced rocks, tools, and supplies in the deep grass!), looking closely at each row of plants, and occasionally scribbling furiously in one of his note books. Note: Even if your vehicle is the only one on the row, texting while driving is not a good idea! Soon after returning to home base, it's common to see Tim walking back to the field followed by a line of helpers bringing all manner of hoes, axes, rakes, tractors, posts, baling twines, stakes, conduit hoops, lumber, drills, and glossy photographs and diagrams covered with circles and



"M-m-m-m! These mulberries are the best!"

arrows.

One recent day this procession was led to the Swiss chard bed and the assembled entourage listened intently to Farmer Tim who was explaining how they were going to boost production of large shiny and crinkled leaves; we happened to be nearby weeding a line of tomatoes, hidden behind a row of tall pigweed, and overhead this conversation. "The idea is to pull out most of the weeds, water deeply, cover the bed with a heavy

layer of hot compost and water deeply again. The essence of the compost along with billions of active microbes will be washed into the soil and will provide a boost to the plants." The helpers, although sporting some quizzical or dubious looks in their faces, pitched in with their usual vigor, and soon the job was done. A few days later the Swiss chard did look a little perkier but time will tell. Tim was later noticed tractoring through what was left of the rye maze that had been flattened by storms, concentrating deeply, and penciling into his notebook. We'll have more about this later.

### At the Farm This Week

#### This week's produce:

Cherry tomatoes, lettuce, chard, kale, summer squash, cucumbers, red new potatoes, and a choice or two.

#### Pick Your Own:

- Arugula: Thin a bunch for yourself. Some insect holes but good taste.
- 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
- Flowers: See Beth for locations.
- S8-10: S4, dill.
- Section B: Raspberries, about \$4.50 a pound from Belles Berries. Check for availability.

#### Deals:

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

#### Foraging:

- Mulberries, trees near S15, behind the shade hoop house, and also behind the big shed. (See Farmer Tim

### Newsletter Contents

Farm Report	pg. 1
At the Farm This Week	pg. 1
Events	pg. 2
Visiting Farmer Days	pg. 2
Garfield Farm Camp	pg. 2
Illinois Stewardship Alliance	pg. 2

#### Recipe section

Squash Blossoms	pg.3
Squash Blossom Frittata	
Battered Squash Blossoms	
Stuffed Squash Blossoms	

Farmer Tim's Roasted Potatoes	pg. 4
Grilled Veggies	pg. 4

for locations, tarp, and long pole for branch shaking. This will probably be the last week for these.)

-Black raspberries for snacking near the pickup area. (They have wicked thorns—dress accordingly.)

**Gleaning:**

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

-C 4 : Carrots (some in the ground with tops off)

**Activities:**

-Cabbage moth catching (reward for trying).

-Colorado potato beetle scouting (see Farmer Tim and reward offered)

-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

Well, our first Visiting Farmer Days did not go as planned. Cindee from R Family Farm had to cancel because her husband needed surgery last week and on Wednesday Mark from Farm Direct Black Angus was so engrossed in harvesting hay for his cows that he forgot all about it. Mark did show up on Friday and there seemed to me a lot of interest in his meat. We will try again toward the end of July and maybe this time we'll get it right.

## Events

Every Thursday all summer long

[Geneva Green Market](#)

Every Saturday all summer long

[Community Farmer's Market at](#)

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

Saturdays starting June 26

[Batavia Farmer's Market](#)

Visiting Farmer Days

July 28 and 30 (maybe)

## It's Not Too Late to Sign Up for Garfield Farm Camps

It's not too late to sign your child up for Garfield Farm Museum's upcoming Farm Camps. The museum still has openings for both sessions. The camps give children ages eight to eleven years old a chance to discover what life was like back in the 1840's. The first session runs from Tuesday, July 6<sup>th</sup> thru Thursday, July 8<sup>th</sup> and the second runs from Tuesday, July 20<sup>th</sup> thru Thursday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>. Both sessions start at 9am and end at noon each day.

In the mid 1800's, most Americans lived on farms and everyone was needed to help with the daily chores and farm operations. Children were considered a valuable source of labor and would be expected to help out whenever needed. Farming was hard work and families had to make do without many of the simple things that we take for granted today, like electricity and running water.

During the camps, children will experience farm life through guided tours of the museum's historic barns and 1846 brick inn. They will begin each day by helping to feed the museum's farm animals. The children will also take part in hands-on activities and witness demonstrations

of everyday activities from the mid 19th century, such as corn shelling, wheat flailing, and scrubbing laundry.

For registration information, contact the museum at (630) 584-8485 or [info@garfieldfarm.org](mailto:info@garfieldfarm.org). The cost is \$75 per session. Proceeds from the camp will go to further the museum's educational program.

## Illinois Stewardship Alliance

*Working to promote family farmers and a healthy food system*

ISA promotes ecologically sustainable, economically viable, socially just local food systems through policy development, advocacy and education.

The purpose of the Illinois Stewardship Alliance is to promote the establishment of sustainable local food systems. A food system is the chain of activities linking food production; processing; distribution and access; consumption; and waste management, as well as all of the associated regulatory and educational institutions and activities, and the environmental and social justice issues.

[Find out more.](#)



**Follow Erehwon Farm on Facebook. Become a fan.**

# Grandma Beth's Cookbook

## Squash Blossoms

Squash blossoms are a treat generally unavailable to all but home gardeners and habitués of farmers markets. (And CSA members who pick their own!) They're so extraordinarily perishable that few supermarkets bother trying to keep them in stock.

Both the male and female blossoms of winter and summer squash varieties can be used interchangeably. The male blossoms appear at the end of thin stems and can be harvested without curtailing production of squash. If using male squash blossoms, remove the stamens first. The female blossoms form at the end of the buds that grow into squash and are often harvested with the tiny, nascent squash still attached.

Squash blossoms are edible raw or they can be incorporated into a variety of recipes. But once you've clipped them out of your garden or brought them back from the farmers market, don't tarry long. "Be warned," writes Kate Heyhoe, of [Kate's Global Kitchen](#). "Squash blossoms live about as long as mayflies—at worst a few hours, at best a few days, and only in ideal conditions." Heyhoe has stored them successfully for as long as two days, "but not without rinsing them, letting them air dry on the kitchen counter, then wrapping them in paper towels, carefully nesting them in a sealed plastic storage container, and refrigerating them in the crisper at a precise controlled 34 degrees."

### Five Ways to eat Squash Blossoms

**Fried:** From Mexico to Italy, frying is one of the most popular ways to prepare squash blossoms. Simply batter and fry them or stuff them first. Cheeses (ricotta, fresh mozzarella, goat cheese) and herbs (basil, thyme, parsley) make good fillings. Try adding lemon zest to the cheese or season the crispy fried blossoms with a squeeze of lemon juice and sprinkling of coarse salt.

• Recipe inspiration: [Fried Squash Blossoms](#), from The Kitchen

**Baked:** If deep frying turns you off, or you just want to try something different, you could stuff the blossoms with cheese – savory or sweet – and then bake them in the oven. Steaming is another healthy option.

• Recipe inspiration: [Waldy Malouf's Baked Squash Blossoms with Ricotta and Honey](#), from New York magazine

**Pasta:** We sometimes gently tear or make a [chiffonade](#) of squash blossoms to serve over pasta, risotto, or salad. The blossoms can also be cooked into a pasta sauce. This is one of our favorite recipes.

• Recipe inspiration: [Pappardelle with Zucchini Blossom Sauce](#), from Orangette

**Quesadilla:** Squash blossoms are abundant in Mexico, where they are known as *flores de calabaza*. There's something very satisfying about the combination of the mildly sweet, squash-y blossoms with creamy cheese.

• Recipe inspiration: [Squash Blossom Quesadillas](#), from Homesick Texan

**Soup:** How about a fresh, summery soup with squash blossoms, zucchini, and corn?

• Recipe inspiration: [Golden Squash Blossom Crema](#), from Rick Bayless

### Squash Blossom Frittata

3-4 blossoms  
1-2 baby squash  
4 eggs  
Dash of milk  
2 green onions  
Asiago cheese  
Chopped parsley and snipped chives (optional)  
Salt and pepper to taste

Pick 3 to 4 blossoms per person and 1 or 2 baby yellow or green summer squash. Rinse blossoms well and drain on paper towels.

Beat 4 eggs with a little milk. Add fresh chopped parsley and snipped chives, if desired. Add salt and pepper to taste.

In a non-stick pan, saute a little butter and cook 2 green onion and thinly sliced baby squash just until soft. Then quickly saute the blossoms for about 30 seconds and remove from pan.

Pour egg mix into pan, sprinkle and arrange the onions, squash and blossoms on top and cook over low to medium heat until almost set. Sprinkle with Asiago cheese and put under the broiler until lightly puffed and browned.

### Battered Squash Blossoms

(With or Without Stuffing)

The Batter:

1 cup flour  
½ cup cornstarch  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 cup fat-free chilled milk, beer or water

Cheese-Mushroom Stuffing:

¼ cup ricotta cheese  
1 garlic clove, minced or pressed  
¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper  
2 tablespoon mushrooms, finely chopped  
1 tablespoons fresh basil or parsley, minced

16 large squash blossoms, washed  
Canola oil for frying

Prepare the batter first. Sift together dry ingredients, then whisk in milk, beer or cold water until smooth. Cover and set in the refrigerator for 30 minutes. Leftover batter can be stored for up to two days. If it is too thick after refrigeration, add a few drops of water to return to original consistency.

Meanwhile, prepare the stuffing. In a bowl combine the ricotta cheese, garlic, salt, pepper, mushrooms and basil. Open the blossoms and spoon about one ½ teaspoon of the mixture into the center of each. Avoid overfilling the blossoms. Twist the top of each blossom together to close. Place on a baking sheet and refrigerate for 15 minutes.

Pour the oil into a skillet to a depth of ½ inch. Heat over high heat until a small cube of bread dropped into the oil turns golden brown within seconds.

Briefly dip each stuffed blossom into the batter, then carefully slip into the hot oil. Cook until golden on all sides, about three minutes total cooking time. Add only as many blossoms at a time as will fit comfortably in the skillet. Transfer with a slotted utensil to paper towels to drain briefly.

Sprinkle with salt, if desired and serve immediately.

## Stuffed Squash Blossoms

### **Ingredients:**

18 zucchini, acorn squash or pumpkin blossoms, stamen removed

### **Cheese Filling:**

3 ounces goat (feta) cheese  
3 ounces cream cheese  
½ teaspoon red pepper flakes  
½ teaspoon dried oregano  
1/4 teaspoon dried basil  
1 clove garlic, minced  
Salt and pepper to taste

### **Beer Batter:**

1/8 cup cornstarch  
½ cup flour  
½ teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon black pepper  
1/4 teaspoon celery salt  
1/4 teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon baking powder  
1 egg, beaten  
½ cup cold flat beer  
Vegetable oil for frying  
Grated Parmesan cheese and sliced chives for garnish

### **Directions:**

1. Gently swirl squash blossoms in cold water to clean. Carefully remove them from water and dry on paper

towels.

2. Combine goat cheese, cream cheese, red pepper flakes, oregano, basil, garlic, salt, and pepper in a bowl and beat until smooth. Carefully spoon 2 teaspoons of cheese mixture into each blossom. Lay flat on a plate and chill.

3. In a shallow dish, whisk together cornstarch, flour, salt, pepper, celery salt, baking soda, baking powder, egg and beer. Heat 2 inches of oil in a large deep skillet to 375 degrees F.

4. Gently dip a filled blossom in batter covering entire blossom and lay in hot oil. Cook on one side until brown, then flip. Continue with remaining blossoms, cooking a few at a time. Remove blossoms with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels.

5. When ready to serve, top blossoms with salt, pepper, Parmesan cheese and chives.

## Three Sisters Fritters

## Farmer Tim's Roasted Potatoes

Farmer Tim cuts the potatoes into smaller pieces, leaving the skins on. He places them in a roasting pan and coats them with olive oil. He sprinkles them with salt and pepper to taste. Sometimes he adds chopped garlic or herbs. Then he roasts them at 375 degrees for a little over an hour. Sometimes he leaves them in a little longer and they get really crispy (which I like, as do other members of my family, but Farmer Tim-not so much). Another way to get them crisp is to turn up the temperature to 425 degrees for the last 10 or 15 minutes of the cooking time. (This recipe even works with the potatoes you buy in the grocery store, but the ones from the farm are much better.)

## Grilled Veggies

Cut a variety of veggies into pieces. It is easy to do with onions, summer squash, strips of sweet bell peppers, eggplant, or other veggies with similar cooking times. Alternatively mix carrot, potatoes, beets, and others with longer cooking times. Coat generously with olive oil. Add salt, pepper, and herbs. Grill for 10-15 minutes, or until desired state of tenderness is reached. We have a specially made pan that has smaller holes in the bottom for grilling veggies, but you could improvise one from foil or string the pieces on kebob skewers for grilling.