

Erehwon Farm

Week 7—July 18, 2010

Farm Report

Hello from Erehwon!

The reduction in rainfall is inspiring us to get our drip irrigation system hooked up and working. Drip irrigation uses water efficiently by dripping right into the crop plants' root zones and not watering the weeds. If we cover the drip lines with mulch, very little of the water is lost to evaporation. The daytime high temperature has been running about 5 degrees above normal so heat-loving plants like squash, beans, peppers, cucumbers, and tomatoes are growing well if we can keep the soil moist. Last week we harvested our little test plot of corn and the test eaters reported good reviews. We only had a little and it was distributed to Friday pickup subscribers. We hope for a little more later in the season.

Meanwhile, we are working on a source to get corn for everyone at least once this summer. The farmer we were going to buy it from this year had his corn flooded in the heavy rains we had earlier in the season and lost pretty much his entire crop.

Most garlic was brought in last week and is hanging in neat bunches on a wall in the barn. We have left some garlic in the ground to let the tiny bulbils in the seed pods at the top of the scapes mature; we plan on planting them in pots to produce garlic shoots for use during the winter months.

Several weeks ago Farmer Tim tried to mow down the residual



from the rye maze but the stalks were thick and woody so his little John Deere X300 garden tractor just wasn't up to the task. Finally he decided to flatten the stalks by pushing his tractor bucket over them. Soon the field was covered with a thick mat of straw and he decided to leave it in place and plant pumpkins, gourds, and winter squash right into the mulch. It looks like a good solution for the crops as the fruit should stay clean and dry

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and the mulch will help keep the moisture in and prevent the weeds from germinating.

Bucky the Farm Dog has tried to adjust to the heat through use of several strategies. He spends a bit of the day lying almost up to his nose in his little wading pool, occasionally lapping up a drink. When Farmer Tim is napping in his hammock, Bucky finds a shady spot nearby, scratches out a shallow depression in the soil, turns around a couple of times (we don't know why but he always does so), and settles into the cool earth. In the field he likes to disappear into a weed patch with only his nose visible. He also stands patiently when Farmer Tim, while watering, gives him a cool bath.

This week we should start to see a few peppers and mounds of squash and cucumbers. Subscribers who wish to do some canning, pickling, or freezing can order as much as 20 pounds by sending an email to Beth. We should have cherry tomatoes and beans for subscribers who have the energy to get out in the field and harvest.

At the Farm This Week

This week's produce:

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

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 our rows—see recipes

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

Quinn signs laws promoting local food

Legislation to help schools, Link card users buy from area farmers

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](#)

July 17, 2010|By Ted Gregory, Tribune reporter

At the state's longest-running farmers market on Saturday, Gov. Pat Quinn authorized legislation aimed at making it easier for schools and low-income consumers to obtain locally-grown food.

The Farm-to-School database will create an electronic database on the state Department of Agriculture Web site that allows schools and local farmers to connect on the purchase of fresh produce. The Farmers' Market Technology Improvement Act makes it easier for sellers at the markets to accept Link cards, state-issued debit cards for food stamp recipients.

"These are two bills that are going to help us eat better and help our farmers who produce quality food nearby, from Illinois, get access to important markets," Quinn said at the Oak Park Farmers' Market, which started more than 30 years ago. Illinois has about 283 farmers markets across the state, Quinn said.

Kathy Lewis, who was perusing meat offered at a booth run by Heartland Meats of Mendota, said she'd like to view the database to connect with nearby farmers interested in providing fresh produce. Lewis, an Oak Park

resident who used to work at the Oak Park Farmers' Market information booth, also said accepting Link cards probably would be popular.

"People used to come by and ask all the time if they could use their Link cards," Lewis said.

John Sondgeroth, owner of Heartland Meats, was less certain the new bill would make a difference.

"I think it would be great if the schools would follow through with it," Sondgeroth said. "But I don't think they have the funds. When they're cutting teachers, I don't know how much money they're going to have to spend on fresh food."

The Farm-to-School database goes into effect Jan. 1. The Link card law takes effect immediately.

The Illinois Local Food, Farms and Jobs Council will work with the Department of Agriculture to create the database. John Braun, coordinator of the council, said both laws amount to "public health bills" that can create jobs, revitalize urban and rural areas and contribute to homeland security by reducing oil dependence inherent in shipping food.

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Grandma Beth's Cookbook

Purslane

Not only does purslane have leaves rich in Omega-3 fatty acid, but it also has stems high in vitamin C. Omega-3 fatty acids are instrumental in regulating our metabolism. Purslane contains a very high concentration of alpha-linolenic acid -- several times the concentration in spinach. In terms of nutrition, it's a good source of Thiamin, Niacin, Vitamin B6 and Folate, and a very good source of Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Riboflavin, Calcium, Iron, Magnesium, Phosphorus, Potassium, Copper and Manganese.

Purslane Potato Salad

Salt

3 medium Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and sliced 1/3 inch thick
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1 pound plum tomatoes, chopped
1/4 pound purslane or arugula, torn
1 large cucumber—peeled, halved, seeded and cut into half-moons
1 medium red onion, thinly sliced
1 jalapeño, seeded and minced
1/2 cup chopped parsley
1/2 cup chopped mint

Bring a medium saucepan of salted water to a boil. Add the potatoes and cook until tender, about 12 minutes. Drain and let cool.

In a small bowl, combine the olive oil and vinegar and season with salt. Break the potato slices into quarters and spread on the bottom of a large, shallow bowl. Season with salt and drizzle with 3 tablespoons of the dressing. Layer the tomatoes over the potatoes, followed by the purslane, cucumber, onion, jalapeño, parsley and mint. Just before serving, pour the remaining dressing over the salad and toss well.

Cucumber/Purslane/Yogurt Salad

5 large Cucumber, peeled, seeded and cut into quarter-round slices
1/4 pound Purslane, large stems removed, washed and drained well
2 tablespoons each, Fresh chopped mint, cilantro and chervil
4 cups Whole milk yogurt

1/4 cup Virgin olive oil
3 cloves Garlic, pureed with the blade of a knife
2 teaspoon ground Coriander
sea salt and ground Black Pepper

Place the cucumber, purslane and herbs into a large bowl. In another bowl, stir together the yogurt, olive oil and garlic, coriander and season to taste with salt. Add the yogurt mixture to the vegetables and mix well. Add a pinch of ground black pepper. Taste the dressed cucumber-purslane salad for seasoning, adding a little more salt if needed. Serve chilled.

Grilled Zucchini Salad with Purslane and Tomato

1 t finely grated fresh lemon zest
3 T fresh [lemon juice](#)
1 T finely chopped shallot
1/4 t Dijon mustard
1/2 t salt
1/3 c extra-virgin olive oil plus additional for brushing zucchini
1/4 t black pepper
3 T chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
4 zucchini (1 3/4 to 2 lb total), halved lengthwise
12 oz purslane, thick stems removed (4 c)
10 oz pear or cherry tomatoes, halved lengthwise

Prepare grill for cooking. If using a charcoal grill, open vents on bottom of grill. Make dressing: Whisk together zest, lemon juice, shallot, mustard, and salt in a small bowl. Add oil in a slow stream, whisking until dressing is emulsified. Whisk in pepper and parsley. Grill zucchini: Lightly brush zucchini all over with oil. When fire is hot (you can hold your hand 5 inches above rack for 1 to 2 seconds), grill zucchini, cut sides down first, on lightly oiled grill rack, uncovered, turning once, until zucchini are just tender, 8 to 12 minutes total. Transfer to a cutting board and cool slightly, then cut diagonally into 1/2-inch-thick slices. Toss zucchini with purslane, tomatoes, and dressing in a large bowl. Serve immediately.

Ice Cream Pail Pickles

4 cups sugar
2 cups white vinegar
2 tablespoons pickling salt
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon celery seeds

1 teaspoon mustard seeds
3 sliced cucumbers, approx 3/16 inch thick
2 sliced red onions, approx 3/16 inch thick (Red onions for color but others are fine.)

Fill ice cream pail 3/4 full of sliced cucumbers and onions. Mix ingredients together and then pour into ice cream pail. Mix everything together, stir a couple times a day for 2 days.

Store in the fridge. Lasts a month or more.

Refrigerator Dill Pickles

1-1/4 cups water, boiled and cooled
1-1/4 cups white vinegar, 5% acidity

For each quart jar add:

1 tablespoon kosher salt
2 tablespoons dill seeds
1/4 teaspoon celery seeds
1 teaspoon mustard seeds
1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1 bay leaves
2 garlic cloves, minced
3-6 cucumbers (depending on size)

Add salt and spices to each jar. Add cucumbers sliced, whole (ends trimmed) or spears, packing them in tightly. Fill jar to within 1/2 inch of the top. Add pickling liquid to cover the cucumbers. Put a lid and ring on the jar and shake for a few seconds to distribute the salt and spices evenly. Refrigerate for 7 days, shaking the jar for a few seconds every day. These will last for about 6 months.

Squash Creole with Tomatoes and Peppers

1 1/2 to 2 pounds sliced zucchini or other summer squash
8 ounces sliced mushrooms
1 large green bell pepper, cut into thin strips
1 clove garlic, minced
2 teaspoons dried leaf basil, crumbled
1 tablespoon melted butter
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1/2 teaspoon sugar or equivalent sugar substitute
1/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
2 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

Combine zucchini, mushrooms, green pepper, garlic, basil, butter, salt, pepper, sugar, and Worcestershire sauce in a large skillet; cook for 5 minutes over medium heat. Add tomatoes and cook for 5 minutes more, or until tender.

Baked Stuffed Summer Squash

This is fun to do with the patty pan squash, too.

4 to 6 medium yellow squash or zucchini
4 ounces fresh sausage
1 medium onion, chopped
salt and pepper, to taste
2 slices fresh bread, crumbled
seasoned salt, to taste

Boil squash whole until just tender; remove and carefully split lengthwise. Using a spoon, scoop out pulp, taking care not to break shells. Set pulp aside. Place squash shells in a baking dish.

In skillet over medium-high heat, cook sausage with onion. Add salt and pepper to taste; remove from heat. Add squash pulp, bread crumbs, and seasoned salt. Add a little water if the mixture is too dry.

Stuff squash shells with the sausage mixture; bake at 375° until browned.

Pork Chops with Squash and Tomatoes

1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon seasoned salt
1 teaspoon chili powder
1/8 teaspoon pepper
4 pork chops, about 3/4-inch thick
1/2 cup raw rice
2 cans (14.5 ounces each) diced tomatoes
1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper
1/2 cup chopped onion
1/4 cup sliced ripe olives
1 tablespoon sugar
2 cups thinly sliced zucchini or summer squash
1/2 to 1 cup shredded Mozzarella cheese

Mix salt, seasoned salt, chili powder, and pepper. Trim pork chops of fat. Heat oil in skillet; brown pork chops, seasoning with 1 teaspoon of the seasoning mixture. Drain off fat. Add rice, tomatoes, green pepper, onion, olives, and sugar. Arrange sliced zucchini around edge of skillet and sprinkle with remaining seasoning mixture. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for 45 to 55 minutes, or until pork is cooked through. Top with the cheese and cover, cooking a few minutes longer, until cheese is melted.