

Erehwon Farm

Newsletter Week 9–August 01, 2010

Farm Report

Hello from Erehwon!

Warm weather and adequate moisture are helping heat-loving crops but growing summer lettuce, carrots, broccoli, and other cool weather crops has been a challenge. Potatoes have done well, the tops are dying back, and tubers' skins are thickening; we will harvest them as we need them until we pull them all for winter storage. Some winter squash are reaching full size and the first should be ready in about two weeks. Tomatoes and peppers are just beginning to turn color and we should be harvesting in another week.

Last week we put our efforts into weeding, planting our new raised beds with late summer and fall crops; when the weather turns cool we plan to cover the beds and hope to harvest through late fall and possibly through the winter.

Farmer Tim was concerned with fixing equipment that had suddenly started to fall apart. The old truck, retired to the farm several years ago, finally stopped running and despite the best efforts of the farm crew, the decision was made to try and find a new home for the old workhorse. The JD x300 was out of commission with a belt problem and the big tractor had clicking noises coming from somewhere in the drive train.

In order to save time Farmer Tim decided to drive the big tractor up to Elburn for repairs at the



Freshly dug potatoes.

dealership. We watched as he gassed up, fastened his jaunty hat tightly, turned on his flashers, clicked his seat belt and headed down the driveway to the highway. He changed to high gear, revved up the engine, and headed west at top speed (25 mph!). As he moved up the hill, cars began to swerve around him but he stayed firmly in his lane. As vehicles passed, some drivers raised their fists and called out to him but with the wind in his ears he couldn't quite hear what they were saying. He was happy that he was receiving so much encouragement from the passing motorists. A half hour later he

pulled into the repair facility.

On Friday afternoon the service manager called and said the tractor was ready and that as a favor, his delivery driver would bring the tractor to the farm to save Farmer Tim a second harrowing trip on the highway. Soon a truck and trailer pulled up the driveway with the shiny green machine riding high. However, something didn't look quite right and the driver had a sheepish expression on his face. "I've brought your tractor back, or, at least most of it. A ways back the hood blew off, hit the roll bar, and broke into pieces. You can have them if you want." Farmer Tim, happy to see his tractor, thanked the man and said it was really his own fault for not getting the broken hood latch fixed. Soon he was happily tilling up some beds for the next round of planting.

At the Farm This Week

This week's produce:

Lettuce, cherry tomatoes (Juliets and brown berries), scallions, peppers, chard, kale, beans, new Russian banana potatoes, cucumbers, summer squash, onions, and maybe something else.

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

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\$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

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

National Farmers Market Week "ILLINOIS...Where Fresh Is"

August 1 - 7, 2010

New information and details on the website

www.illinoiswhereshis.com

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](#)

CHECK IT OUT!

Share Ways to Celebrate National Farmers Market Week in Illinois!!

- Make it a Special Day - Issue a Press Release!
- Invite your local legislators/mayor and present the Governor's Proclamation
- Promote your EBT/Link , WIC and Senior FM Nutrition Programs
- Have a Local Chef Demo, Enjoy some music!
- Have a health or local art Fair
- Sponsor a Farm Tour/ Farm Dinner

Learn about the new IL Dept of Agriculture website – "Illinois...Where Fresh Is" - www.illinoiswhereshis.com

- Find out our where to find fresh produce
- Find your nearest Farmers Market, what's in season?

- View the new "ILLINOIS...Where Fresh Is" commercial!
- Check out Information for Markets and the Forum section for Training info.

Follow Erehwon Farm on Facebook. Become a fan.



Potatoes

From World's Healthiest Foods

Health Benefits

Potatoes are a very popular food source. Unfortunately, most people eat potatoes in the form of greasy French fries or potato chips, and even baked potatoes are typically loaded down with fats such as butter, sour cream, melted cheese and bacon bits. Such treatment can make even baked potatoes a potential contributor to a heart attack. But take away the extra fat and deep frying, and a baked potato is an exceptionally healthful low calorie, high fiber food that offers significant protection against cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Our food ranking system qualified potatoes as a very good source of vitamin C, a good source of vitamin B6, copper, potassium, manganese, and dietary fiber.

Potatoes also contain a variety of phytonutrients that have antioxidant activity. Among these important health-promoting compounds are carotenoids, flavonoids, and caffeic acid, as well as unique tuber storage proteins, such as patatin, which exhibit activity against free radicals.

Potatoes' Phytochemicals Rival Those in Broccoli

Potatoes' reputation as a high-carb, white starch has removed them from the meals of many a weight-conscious eater, but this stereotype is due for a significant overhaul. A new analytical method developed by Agricultural Research Service plant geneticist Roy Navarre has identified 60 different kinds of phytochemicals and vitamins in the skins and flesh of 100 wild and commercially grown potatoes. Analysis of Red and Norkotah potatoes revealed that these spuds' phenolic content rivals that of broccoli, spinach and Brussels sprouts, and includes flavonoids with protective activity against cardiovascular disease, respiratory problems and certain cancers. Navarre's team also identified potatoes with high levels of vitamin C, folic acid, quercetin and kukoamines. These last compounds, which have blood pressure lowering potential, have only been found in one other plant, *Lycium chinense* (a.k.a., wolfberry/gogi berry). How much kukoamine is needed for a blood pressure lowering effect in humans must be assessed before it can be determined whether an average portion of potatoes delivers enough to impact cardiovascular health. Still, potatoes' phytochemical profiles show it's time to shed their starch-only image; spuds-baked, steamed or healthy sautéed but not fried-deserve a place in your healthy way of eating. "Phytochemical Profilers Investigate Potato Benefits," Agricultural Research, September 2007

Blood-Pressure Lowering Potential

UK scientists at the Institute for Food Research have identified blood pressure-lowering compounds called kukoamines in potatoes. Previously only found in *Lycium chinense*, an exotic herbal plant whose bark is used to make an infusion in Chinese herbal medicine, kukoamines were found in potatoes using a new type of research called metabolomics.

Until now, when analyzing a plant's composition, scientists had to know what they were seeking and could typically look for 30 or so known compounds. Now, metabolomic techniques enable researchers to find the unexpected by analyzing the 100s or even 1000s of small molecules produced by an organism.

"Potatoes have been cultivated for thousands of years, and we thought traditional crops were pretty well understood," said IFR food scientist Dr Fred Mellon, "but this surprise finding shows that even the most familiar of foods might conceal a hoard of health-promoting chemicals." Another good reason to center your diet around the World's Healthiest Foods!

In addition to potatoes, researchers looked at tomatoes since they belong to the same plant family-*Solanaceae*-as *Lycium chinense*. Metabolomic assays also detected kukoamine compounds in tomatoes.

The IFR scientists found higher levels of kukoamines and related compounds than some of the other compounds in potatoes that have a long history of scientific investigation. However, because they were previously only noted in *Lycium chinense*, kukoamines have been little studied. Researchers are now determining their stability during cooking and dose response (how much of these compounds are needed to impact health).

Vitamin B6-Building Your Cells

If only for its high concentration of vitamin B6-a cup of baked potato contains 21.0% of the daily value for this important nutrient-the potato earns high marks as a health-promoting food.

Vitamin B6 is involved in more than 100 enzymatic reactions. Enzymes are proteins that help chemical reactions take place, so vitamin B6 is active virtually everywhere in the body. Many of the building blocks of protein, *amino acids*, require B6 for their synthesis, as do the *nucleic acids* used in the creation of our DNA. Because amino and nucleic acids are such critical parts of new cell formation, vitamin B6 is essential for the formation of virtually all new cells in the body. *Heme* (the protein center of our red blood cells) and *phospholipids* (cell membrane components that enable messaging

between cells) also depend on vitamin B6 for their creation.

Vitamin B6-Brain Cell and Nervous System Activity

Vitamin B6 plays numerous roles in our nervous system, many of which involve neurological (brain cell) activity. B6 is necessary for the creation of *amines*, a type of messaging molecule or neurotransmitter that the nervous system relies on to transmit messages from one nerve to the next. Some of the amine-derived neurotransmitters that require vitamin B6 for their production are *serotonin*, a lack of which is linked to depression; *melatonin*, the hormone needed for a good night's sleep; *epinephrine* and *norepinephrine*, hormones that help us respond to stress; and *GABA*, which is needed for normal brain function.

Vitamin B6-Cardiovascular Protection

Vitamin B6 plays another critically important role in *methylation*, a chemical process in which methyl groups are transferred from one molecule to another. Many essential chemical events in the body are made possible by methylation, for example, genes can be switched on and turned off in this way. This is particularly important in cancer prevention since one of the genes that can be switched on and off is the tumor suppressor gene, p53. Another way that methylation helps prevent cancer is by attaching methyl groups to toxic substances to make them less toxic and encourage their elimination from the body.

Methylation is also important to cardiovascular health. Methylation changes a potentially dangerous molecule called *homocysteine* into other, benign substances. Since homocysteine can directly damage blood vessel walls greatly increasing the progression of atherosclerosis, high homocysteine levels are associated with a significantly increased risk for heart attack and stroke. Eating foods rich in vitamin B6 can help keep homocysteine levels low. In addition, diets high in vitamin B6-rich foods are associated with overall lower rates of heart disease, even when homocysteine levels are normal, most likely because of all the other beneficial activities of this energetic B vitamin.

A single baked potato will also provide you with 11.7% of the daily value for fiber, but remember the fiber in potatoes is mostly in their skin. If you want the cholesterol-lowering, colon cancer preventing, and bowel supportive effects of fiber, be sure to eat the potato's flavorful skin as well as its creamy center.

Vitamin B6-Athletic Performance

Vitamin B6 is also necessary for the breakdown of glycogen, the form in which sugar is stored in our muscle cells and liver, so this vitamin is a key player in athletic performance and endurance.

Garlic Potato Pie

1 lb of scrubbed boiling potatoes.
6 cloves fresh garlic, sliced finely.
1 cup of milk.
¼ cup of breadcrumbs.
3 tablespoons of grated Parmesan cheese.
3 tablespoons of butter.
Preparation Instructions:

Preheat your oven to 380°F (180°C).

Slice potatoes thinly. Butter a 9-inch pie plate.

Arrange a layer of potatoes, garlic slices, parmesan and slices of butter. Repeat using the rest of the ingredients (other than the milk), saving some of the cheese and the butter.

Heat the milk and pour over top of the potatoes. Top with bread crumbs and remaining cheese and butter.

Bake for 1 hour, until the potatoes are tender and top has turned golden brown.

Potato Latkes

1 pound potatoes
½ cup finely chopped onion
1 large egg, lightly beaten
½ teaspoon salt
½ to ¾ cup olive oil

Preheat oven to 250°F.

Peel potatoes and coarsely grate by hand, transferring to a large bowl of cold water as grated. Soak potatoes 1 to 2 minutes after last batch is added to water, then drain well in a colander.

Spread grated potatoes and onion on a kitchen towel and roll up jelly-roll style. Twist towel tightly to wring out as much liquid as possible. Transfer potato mixture to a bowl and stir in egg and salt.

Heat ¼ cup oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking. Working in batches of 4 latkes, spoon 2 tablespoons potato mixture per latke into skillet, spreading into 3-inch rounds with a fork. Reduce heat to moderate and cook until undersides are browned, about 5 minutes. Turn latkes over and cook until undersides are browned, about 5 minutes more. Transfer to paper towels to drain and season with salt. Add more oil to skillet as needed. Keep latkes warm on a wire rack set in a shallow baking pan in oven.