



Down on the Farm Notes: May 22, 2008

Hi everyone,

Well, we have been trying to keep cool with this insanely hot weather and today we have finally cooled off. In fact, as I sit and type this letter, I am still damp from picking greens this morning and I am cold. Spring in Nevada!

I do enjoy the clouds, though. The cloud cover stayed out just long enough today for us to get the chard picked. On our last trip in with the chard, the sun began to peek from the clouds. For about 5 minutes it cast the most beautiful glow on the chard. The water droplets were sparkling, bringing out the beautiful colors of the Bright Lights Chard. I have said this before—I wish so much that you could just come to the farm and grab it right off the table, fresh from the picking!!

This week in the box you have chard (and recipes!), lettuce (see note), spinach, green garlic, carrots, fresh mint and oregano and a big surprise of fresh cherries (also see note!).

Some of the chard is baby chard and some of you have bigger leaves. Either way it is tender enough to be sliced up and added raw to a salad. Lord willing, we will have

kale next week. I can't believe that we don't have radishes yet, but they are doing well if it doesn't freeze too hard the next few days. Enjoy the oregano. This along with basil is one of my favorite herbs. I love to use it in a roast or slipped under the skin when baking a chicken, and then we can't forget to add it to red sauce for spaghetti or pizza. Enjoy! Hopefully we will have another round of mint when the peas come in. Rick and I are both crossing our fingers on the peas. They froze in the hard frost we had about 3 weeks ago. They recovered a little and then cooked this past week when the temps peaked at 95. Poor peas. We should leave the pea-growing to the people down by the ocean, but we are persistent and stubborn. The good news is that Rick has eaten a handful of them and they are blooming like crazy. I just walked by mine this morning and the snow peas look good. I won't mention the others!!!! "The challenges of growing locally," sighs Rick!!!

FIRST NOTE: Please take your lettuce right away and place in a sink full of water. Gather the kids around (if you have kids) and have them enjoy playing with the "protein" that you find... (if you know what I mean). **WASH YOUR LETTUCE CAREFULLY!!** We have had a major attack

of moths out in the fields. Just to fill you in, I am surrounded by alfalfa fields, so we get all kinds of guests. They find the garden quite enjoyable. They also spread the word to all of their friends, neighbors, family, etc... Have you read the book, "The Hungry Caterpillar"? If you have, then you will understand. If you don't wash your lettuce right away....well...he won't leave you much! Sorry for the extra work...and the lettuce was so pretty otherwise. Also, if you are wondering about the lettuce with the brown spots, they are supposed to have them. This is an old variety called Flashy Troutback. The brown speckles are part of its beauty. Enjoy!

SECOND NOTE: We have gone back and forth on this and now we decided to ask you for your thoughts on our little dilemma. Last year we found a few small family farms that grew organic fruit. All the fruit last year was exceptionally good. BUT...the same frost that killed my silly radishes also froze some of the fruit and flowers that were just setting on the fruit trees in California. Although there are some exceptions like farms on hills facing the south or in a little pocket that didn't get the frost, for the most part a lot of the poor farmers were nailed with the frost. So our organic supplies are really limited now.

We have met a few small family farms that grow fruit conventionally in the Auburn and Placerville area. This past weekend we had the opportunity to purchase some

conventionally grown cherries. I know that in the past we were trying to keep to organically grown fruit, but so many of you have told us that you would rather have locally grown fruit and conventionally grown than to have no fruit at all. The cherries this week were so good that we decided that we would put them in the basket as a treat. We are so starved for fresh fruit here in Nevada. The cherries are from small family farms and we want to give you the opportunity if you want to enjoy some of this fresh fruit. This same farmer also has conventionally grown strawberries available. We will have organically grown strawberries available later on in June.

So now we need to hear from you. Should we pursue conventionally grown fruit (from small family farms) and make it available to you through the basket, or do you want to keep it strictly organic / organically grown? I know there are allergy issues as well as other issues and we are sensitive to all of this. We will always let you know if something in your box has been raised conventionally...which most of the time is rare because we believe in growing responsibly and organically. But so many of you have voiced the desire for fresh fruit...which leaves us wondering what to do. Please take a moment to send a comment to our "Seedlings" section on the web site and let us know what you, our treasured customers, prefer and we will share your ideas. We need your thoughts to help us out on this. Thank you!

Also, just a little hint...if you can please not fight with the boxes. I am saying this jokingly because I know you wonder about the engineer who designs some of these boxes. If you just apply a little pressure from the short flaps on the side, this will allow the little hooky ends to release. If you have to fight with it...maybe just leave it whole and we will break it down. The tabs are being ripped and it tears the box apart pretty fast. Thank you for your attention to this little matter.

Remember to WASH YOUR LETTUCE WELL, and remember, too, that the cherries are conventionally grown. Have a great Memorial Day weekend. Drive safe and enjoy your family and friends.

Recipes

Salad Greens with Chinese Salad Dressing

1/3c. sesame or olive oil,
1 tsp. finely minced green garlic
1-2 tsp. grated fresh ginger
2 tbl. fresh lemon juice
1 tsp. toasted sesame seeds
1 tbl. chopped green onions or chives
dash of cayenne (optional)
salad greens/spinach mixed

Mix all ingredients. Toss with greens at the last minute. This dressing is also good with bok choy, snow peas, or cucumbers.

Chard Pie

1 1/2c. chopped onions
1 tbl. minced green garlic
2 tbl. olive oil, 1 bunch chard

6-8 eggs
2c. milk or half and half
1 tsp salt, 2 8" deep-dish pie shells
2c. grated cheddar or Swiss cheese
2c. chopped ham, cooked bacon, diced tomatoes, chopped basil, whatever veggies or meat you want to add to it (all optional)

Sauté onions with green garlic in olive oil. Add chopped greens and cook until they wilt. Turn off heat.

Beat eggs, milk, and salt in a bowl. Spread chard mixture in bottom of pie shells. Add cheese. Pour egg mixture over top. Add one or more of the optional ingredients if desired. Sprinkle with 1-2 tbl. fresh or dried dill weed (optional). Bake at 400 until the pies are no longer jiggly in the center, 30-40 minutes.

Note: Thought this would be a nice recipe to have over the Memorial Day weekend if you plan to have company!

Strawberry Spinach Salad Dressing

2 tbl. olive oil
1 tbl. wine or raspberry vinegar
1 minced green garlic or green onion
1 1/2tsp. sugar
1 1/2tsp. Worcestershire sauce (optional)
1 tsp. poppy seeds
1/4tsp. salt

**Sometimes I like to also add sliced red onion to make it pretty.

In a large bowl, combine 1c. fresh sliced strawberries with spinach. Mix dressing ingredients in a jar. Shake well and drizzle over salad right before serving. Toss gently.

Optional. In a large skillet, cook and stir 1/4c. slivered almonds and 2 tbl. sugar over low heat until sugar is dissolved and almonds are coated. Spread on foil to cool. Sprinkle over finished salad. OR just skip the sugar and sprinkle toasted almonds over salad.

Honey Glazed Carrots with Fresh Mint

Carrots
2 tbl. butter
1 1/2tbl. Honey
1/2c. water
Salt and pepper
1-2 tbl. chopped fresh mint

Cut carrots into evenly sized rounds or sticks. Combine carrots, 2 tbl. butter, 1 1/2tbl. honey, and 1/2c. water in skillet. Bring to simmer and cook until carrots are just tender and most of the liquid has reduced to a glaze, about 10 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Sprinkle 1-2 tbl. chopped fresh mint on the carrots, toss well, and serve.

Note. The carrots have been so good fresh. This recipe is for those of you that don't care for crunching on a raw carrot.

Happy cooking!