



Down on the Farm Notes: June 12, 2008

Hi everyone!

Hope everyone had a great week. I just got off the phone after my daily chat with farmer Rick. He told me he met some of you at the new Somerset farmers' market. He was so excited to see all of the young families together. Very refreshing! Thanks for all of the nice comments, too.

Rick has all of the winter squash planted now. He told me it is germinating well. I can't quite picture winter squash yet ...before we even have our first taste of tomato or cucumber, but this means good things coming for quite awhile. Hopefully, Cliff has peas coming on soon. Also, Rick is just dancing over his tomatoes. They are setting beautifully. We are all looking forward to them, especially after this last tomato ordeal.

This week we have some yummy surprises. We have the usual lettuce, spinach, arugula, carrots, baby onions, and a surprise herb. Enjoy the recipes! The special treat is fresh raspberries, Olallieberries, and some of you will receive the first picking of fresh Seascape strawberries. Half of you will receive strawberries this week, and half of you next week. Brenda put in new plants

to try to accommodate for more people, but these plants won't bear until later this summer; meanwhile, we will take turns. Enjoy them. You won't find this sweet of a berry in a grocery store. This variety is strictly a small gardener's variety. These berries don't get gigantic, and they have too much old-fashioned sugar quality which won't allow them to ship. If any of you are interested in ever incorporating strawberry plants into your landscape, look for these Seascapes. They are ever bearing which means they will produce fruit several times a year.

After graduation this past week, we dashed up to Coos Bay, Oregon, to take our daughter up to soccer try outs and to enroll in school. We timed it just right to be able to enjoy a farmers' market. I don't typically care to spend time envying other people, but I just couldn't help it. Coos Bay is right on the coast; therefore, they rarely see the sun. It has a temperate climate, cool but not harsh cold. So, needless to say, they had knockout beautiful snow and sugar snap peas, gorgeous arugula (which loves steady cool weather) and incredible greens and almost every vendor had their first picking

of Seascape strawberries. It was fun to be able to just stroll along and enjoy a market. I did hear many groans from the growers, though, about the exceptionally cool weather this spring. Their tomatoes and peppers are waiting for the warmer weather. One person had fresh green zucchini and you could tell they grew in the cold because they were misshaped and funky looking. I guess, you can't have perfect conditions everywhere at all times, so we learn to get what we get and be thankful for it. And speaking of thankful, we are thankful for you. We truly appreciate your support.

A heads up on the fruit shares. We WERE planning on skipping it for this year, but too many of you spoke up and wanted local fruit. We continue to meet many wonderful small family farms and it is so nice to be able to purchase fruit from them, and support them. Some of the fruit will be organically grown, some certified organic, and some conventionally grown. Some of the small farmers try to keep their spraying to one time, right when the flower is setting. So we just wanted you to know there will be organic and conventional. If you are interested in purchasing a fruit share, email Pauline. We have the information and an order form listed on the website, too. We will begin later in July when the peaches are coming on strong. Farmer Tim is hoping for a bumper crop of blackberries again. If you find yourself in Auburn, you MUST stop by and see his

place when the berries are in full season (late July mid August). The colors are so gorgeous, not to mention the fragrance and the flavor while walking through the bramble of vines!!!

We also have another added feature that our web designer has created for us. She apologizes for not finding a way to create a better way for us to communicate, but she asks for your patience—she'll figure it out! Anyway, you now have access to a special forum where you can share comments and ideas. Go to: groups.google.com/group/gbbcsa/web/welcome?hl=en and create an account for yourself. You can get there through the website, too. She'll work on creating something less cumbersome for the future, but you have a place to share with us and each other for now!

We are still freezing hard in the mornings. Hopefully in another week or 2, I will be able to finish planting my warm weather crops. I encourage and challenge all of you to try planting 2 tomato plants this year. They can go right in with the flowers in your yard. The best way to ensure safe food is to grow it right in your backyard. Besides, there is nothing more gratifying than going out your back door and picking a fresh tomato, take it right into the house, slice it and eat it. Yum!!!

To all of you who have kids home from school, hope you enjoy your first week of summer vacation!!!

Recipes

Arugula Pesto

1/4c. pine nuts
Arugula
1/2c. grated Asiago or Parmesan cheese
1/2c. olive oil
1 clove garlic, smashed
salt and pepper to taste

Toast the pine nuts in a skillet until lightly browned. Be careful, they are easy to burn. Transfer to a dish and let cool. Combine the arugula, cheese, oil, garlic, and pine nuts in a blender or food processor; process until thoroughly combined and smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Polenta Squares

Cook polenta (4c. water to 1c. polenta and salt). Smooth cooked polenta into a 9x13 baking dish. Let cool. Cut into squares when polenta has firmed up. Brush with olive oil and bake in oven until polenta is crispy.(we like it crispy...you can keep it soft.)

From here you can add a slice of fresh tomato (if they were in season) and a curl of fresh parmesan or a slice of mozzarella. Let it melt. Then top the polenta with chopped up fresh arugula. Best eaten in the kitchen when standing around waiting for the rest of dinner to finish!!

Sweet Maple and Balsamic Vinegar Dressing

1c. olive oil
3 tbl. maple syrup
2 tbl. balsamic vinegar
2 tbl. fresh herbs
1 tbl. freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 tsp. dry mustard
1 clove garlic minced, or green garlic
freshly ground pepper

Combine all ingredients in a jar. Put the lid on and shake jar vigorously until dressing has thickened. Add salt and pepper to taste. Store dressing in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. Serve on steamed or grilled vegetables and salads.

A Shareholder on Homemade Salad Dressings.

We make our own salad dressing in the bottom of the salad bowl. Each time it's a little different. Since we stay away from dairy products, we use raw sesame tahini for a creamy texture. Then we add oil, vinegar, and something salty. The salty item could be tamari, miso or unmeboshi plum paste or sea salt. Spices are always nice. We use whatever we feel like that day. Sometimes it's basil, oregano, or fennel from the little herb garden in our front yard. Or we might use dried herbs. Then, for a little tang, we add spicy mustard or fresh garlic

or both. If we feel like a smoky flavor, we use a drop or two of toasted sesame oil. We put the greens on top and don't toss it all together until just before we eat it. Even the kids get into the act.