

Earth Dance Farm



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Quote for the Week

You must learn to be still in the midst of activity and to be vibrantly alive in repose.

Mahatma Gandhi

This week:

Swiss chard

Leaf lettuce

Strawberries

Radishes

Shell peas

Kohlrabi

Basil

Cilantro

Kale

Romaine lettuce

Scallions

Garlic scapes

Raspberries (as available – some will get them each week)

Notes:

Wash vegetables before eating them.

Please be sure to return boxes and ice packs.

Adventures of a New Intern

In my first week on the job Farmer Norm told me to take down the battens that secured the plastic walls of the chicken coop so the hens would have more of a breeze in the summer. “Battens?” I asked, cocking my head to the side and squinting my eyes idiotically. “I’m... not familiar.” Farmer Norm looked at me with pity. “Yes Tom, battens. You’ll figure it out.” Little did Norm know that I would not, in fact, figure it out, and would instead start tearing down the red metal siding that formed the permanent structure of the coop. Fifteen minutes too late Farmer Norm walked by to check on my progress, only to find his new intern trying to make a good impression in earnest by destroying his chicken coop. I learned later that “batten” simply means “strip of wood.”

Sometimes, it’s good to feel stupid. And between tearing down chicken coops and accidentally harvesting beet

greens instead of chard, I’ve come to appreciate just how little I actually know. At my college in St. Paul, I do well in classes, get A’s on papers, and I have an impressive arsenal of multi-syllabic words in my vocabulary, like “hegemony,” “postmodern,” and “discourse.” Students compete in classes to see who can rattle out the longest, most awe-inspiring academic tongue twisters, the more confounding the better. But out here this skill is worthless. My college education won’t help me pull up the right weeds or tell the difference between leeks and scallions. Instead I must learn an entirely new lexicon with exotic phrases like “kohlrabi” and “scapes.” Instead of learning how to deconstruct a theory or defend a thesis, I must learn how to plant a bed of squash in fifteen minutes and how to hoe onions without mutilating irrigation tape.

These skills won’t get my name on a published paper, but they will do something much more important, and that’s put food on your table.

There is a unique knowledge in working the land, and it’s a kind that college has taught me nothing about. In school I use my brain only, but out in the field I have to use both mind and body. I need the stamina not to pass out under the blaring sun or a cold downpour while also keeping concentration in endlessly repetitive tasks like planting fifteen beds of squash or weed-whacking around a thousand garlic plants. I know that when this summer’s over I’ll have learned things that many college students have not, and that’s how to work hard both mentally *and* physically,

But right now I’m still learning, so I hope that both Farmer Norm and you will forgive me. Sorry about the chicken coop, Norm.

Tom

Notes from Farmer Norm:

I thought you may find it interesting to hear what we do down on the farm during the course of a normal work week. Tom, Ellie, and Katelyn are our 3 interns and Riley is local full time help from Spring Valley. We begin at 7 on Monday weeding the gardens by hand or by hoe, or planting, or moving irrigation line. There are bugs to pinch, tomatoes to trellis, thistles to chop in the pastures, and hay to put up. We also use a weed whip to clean up in the rows of raspberries and grapes. There is never a shortage of work and priorities must constantly be assessed. Tuesdays and Wednesdays are primarily harvest days once the delivery

season begins. Adriana, our daughter, and 2 of her friends from school help out on these days to bring in the produce from the fields, wash it, package it, and get it into the cooler. On Wednesdays around 4 the crops come out of the cooler, into the boxes, and back into the cooler again. If the weather is hot, we begin these harvest days at 6 to beat the heat. It is best to bring produce in with as little “field heat” as possible and cool it down quickly. Thursday mornings the van is loaded for delivery after receiving the ice pack. Thursday and Friday is back in the fields to keep the weeds and bugs at bay and to

irrigate if necessary. I spend a fair amount of my time on the tractor mowing, cultivating, tilling or tine weeding. From my perspective the season is going smoothly and is flying by.

New crops in the boxes this week are romaine lettuce, kohlrabi, and the scallions. This is the last of the shelling peas (snow peas will follow) and garlic scapes. Many crops like basil and cilantro will reappear from time to time throughout the season. Beets, carrots, summer squash, cabbage and broccoli are all just waiting in the wings. We received a much-needed inch of rain today, so the crops are looking great. Come down sometime and check things out.

It was wet picking strawberries today so you may need to consume them quickly.

Member Work Day:

Friday, August 14th
Sign up by sending an email. There will be activities for children. Bon fire at the end of the day.

"Camp on the Farm" weekend July 10 -12 FULL

Fall Gathering:

Saturday October 3rd
2:00pm until.....

Cooking tips...

Pesto ideas:

The basic pesto recipe is made with basil. I made a double batch over the weekend and it is almost gone. We add it to pasta, spread it on bread, drizzle over fish...the sky is the limit. Pesto can also be made with other herbs. I'm including a recipe for cilantro pesto too.

2 loosely packed cups fresh basil leaves, rinsed and dried
Salt
½ clove or more garlic
2 tbsp pine nuts or walnuts
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
½ cup freshly grated Parmesan or Romano cheese

Combine the basil with a pinch of salt, the garlic, the nuts and

about half the oil in a food processor or blender. Process, stopping to scrape down the sides of the container if necessary and adding the rest of the oil gradually.

Add more oil if you prefer a thinner mixture. Store in the refrigerator for a week or two or in the freezer for several months. Stir in the Parmesan by hand just before serving.

Lighter Cilantro Pesto

2 cups loosely packed fresh cilantro leaves
Salt 1 clove garlic
3 tbsp peanut or neutral oil,

like grapeseed or corn.
1 tbsp freshly squeezed lime juice

Combine the cilantro with a pinch of salt, the garlic, and the oil in a food processor or blender. Process, stopping to scrape down the sides of the container if necessary.

Add the lime juice and blend for a second; add a little water if necessary to thin the mixture, then puree. Taste and adjust the seasoning, then serve or cover and refrigerate for up to a couple of days.

Drizzle over vegetables.

Recipes

Pasta with Kale and Beans

3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
4 large garlic cloves, minced
¼ tsp crushed red pepper flakes
1 can (15 oz) cannellini beans or 1 ½ cup cooked
1 lb kale, stems discarded and leaves shredded (about 12 cups)
½ cup vegetable or chicken broth
1 lb bowties, penne or other short pasta
1 ½ cups freshly grated Parmesan
Salt and pepper

Begin heating a large pot of salted water for the pasta

Heat the oil over med-low heat in a large saucepan. Saute the garlic and hot pepper flakes, if using, in the oil until the garlic is fragrant, about 3 minutes. Stir in the beans, kale, and broth. Cover and simmer until the kale is partially wilted and almost tender, 5 – 8 minutes.

When the water boils, cook the pasta until al dente. Reserve 1 cup of the pasta cooking water and drain the pasta. Return the

pasta to the pot, add the kale mixture, and toss well. Add as much of the reserved water as needed to moisten the pasta. Add 1 cup of the Parmesan, season with salt and pepper, and toss well.

Serve immediately, passing more Parmesan at the table.

(The Garden-Fresh Vegetable Cookbook)

Roasted Kohlrabi

4 med-large Kohlrabi
3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 425° F. Lightly oil a large shallow roasting or half sheet pan.

To prepare the kohlrabies, trim the root ends and the stems that sprout from the bulbs. Peel the bulbs and cut into matchsticks. Transfer to a large bowl, add the oil, and toss to coat. Arrange in a single layer in the pan.

Roast for about 15 minutes,

until the kohlrabi is tender and lightly browned. Watch carefully so that it does not burn.

Transfer the kohlrabi to a serving plate or bowl. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste and serve hot.

We sometimes sprinkle with parmesan cheese.

(The Roasted Vegetable)