

Wholesome Harvest

News Letter 8/25/09



This Week on the Farm

Hello to all members.

It is always a sure sign that fall is here when you get those first heavy dews of late summer. This week we were drenched when starting to harvest each morning as the amount of dew on plant leaves was as heavy if it had just stopped raining. This week also seemed to be that week in the year when you really notice the day light hours shrinking. It is always amazing to me to watch how plants change with the season, especially as summer is ending. There growth patterns change even there color slightly changes if your watching them closely.



The past two weeks and the next two or three are by far the busiest weeks for us to handle on the farm. There are countless items to pick and pack, as well as planting a few items for fall harvest, and of course there is weeding to do. Along with that as fall approaches there is clean up to do as well. We have to start plowing some of the land where early season crops were planted and then plant a cover crop there as well. We also really have to focus on obtaining composting materials for the next year. This week we hauled over 30 truckloads of a variety of organic materials to the farm to begin the composting process for next year.

One of our main goals for next season is to get more nutrients into each crop that we grow. That is why we are spending a lot of time on composting this fall. The more nutrients we can add to our soil the more nutrients the plant can take in hence the more nutrients and micro nutrients we will all consume.



Rough year for Cantaloupe

Our Cantaloupe crop this year has turned out be very poor. We knew the plants were severely stunted from a cool spring. We had hoped that they would still come along this summer. Unfortunately we just never got enough heat hours to ripen them to a good size. They have been sitting there green and about the size of a baseball for weeks. Last week they started turning tan but stayed baseball size. We will do the best we can to distribute cantaloupes to you this year. They also are not nearly as flavorful as a normal year. We found that refrigeration before eating them helps add a bit of flavor.

Chris Zastrow

Frequently Asked Questions

This section is intended to address questions that are brought to our attention by our members. It is our hope to answer most of these questions in the newsletter helping us to better communicate to all members.

Why are some beans fat and some thin?

A couple weeks ago we had rain followed by a few days of actual summer heat. When this happens everything grows very rapidly and suddenly. It is near impossible to pick beans fast enough when you get this kind of conditions. We still decided to pick them and place them in the shares with some thin beans as well. They still are great to eat cooked and we figured it is better for you to enjoy them than to waste a large crop like that.

When does the season end?

We keep going as long as the weather permits. Once it freezes hard it puts a abrupt stop to the growing season. We should have between 7-10 weeks left of the growing season after this week.

Get to Know Your Produce



Green Shoulders?

Green shoulders are when the tops or shoulders of tomatoes are still green or orange when the rest of the tomato is red ripe. Green shoulders are very common in old or heirloom varieties of tomatoes. Most of the varieties we grow are older or heirloom varieties. We choose these because they have better flavor as well as vitality. The modern tomato is bred almost exclusively for the big farm to handle many times in packing and washing and shipping. It is also bred for appearance and shelf longevity in the store. We would rather deal with green shoulders than plant the perfect looking but poorer quality modern hybrids. If you get a tomato with green shoulders simply let them turn orange for a day or so and use it just like normal.

I made the stuffing a day ahead.

This Weeks Recipes

We thank are members who have submitted some of their favorite recipes. We do not have room for all recipes in the newsletter but we will work on pulling together a recipe file that we can share with the members at the end of the year. If you have a recipe you would like to share please e-mail a copy to us. Hope you enjoy.

Red cabbage recipe

1 large head red cabbage, washed and coarsely sliced
1 - 2 medium onions coarsely chopped
2 teaspoons salt
2 cups hot water
3 tablespoons sugar
2/3 cup cider vinegar
6 tablespoons butter or butter substitute

Directions:

Place all ingredients in the Crock-Pot in order listed. Cover and cook on low 8 to 10 hours (High: 3 hours). Stir well before serving. This is also delicious served cold, as a salad.

Cashew-Chicken Stuffed Pea Pods

Makes about 15 servings (3 pods each)

1 Cup minced cooked chicken breast
1/3 cup finely chopped cashews
2 teaspoon chopped fresh tarragon
Salt and pepper (optional)
1/4 cup mayonnaise
3-1/2 to 4 dozen pea pods, one red bell pepper, cut into tiny strips
1/4 cup sour cream
1/3 cup finely diced celery

In large bowl combine chicken, tarragon, mayonnaise, sour cream, celery and cashews. Add salt and pepper to taste if desired.

Blanch pea pods: Bring a pot of water to a boil.

Prepare a large bowl of ice water and set aside. Place pea pods in boiling water and set aside. Place pea pods in boiling water and blanch 15 to 25 seconds, until bright green. Using a slotted spoon, transfer pods in ice water to cool. Remove from ice water and pat dry with paper towels. With the sharp point of a paring knife, split each pea pod on the curved side, thus "opening up" the pea pod for stuffing.

Stuff cashew-chicken filling into each pea pod. Insert a red pepper strip for color.

NOTE: These can be made a few hours ahead of time. Cover and refrigerate.