

Pinehold Gardens Field Notes

Vol. 18 No. 6, Week 4

August 1, 2012

In This Box

- Touchstone Gold beets
- Champion collards
- Estiva tomatoes
- Bridger onions
- Zucchini or Yellow summer squash
- Armenian garlic
- Spretnak lettuce
- Green peppers
- Melons, eggplant in rotation

Next Week?

- Green beans
- Carrots
- Sweet onion
- Estiva tomatoes
- Swiss chard
- Potatoes
- Melons
- Basil

A DAY IN THE LIFE

It's August already. In June I said I was tired of the sun. In July I was tired of the heat. But I am not tired of summer, and it is passing too fast.

We continue to work hard as we need to keep on our fall harvest planting schedule. Many of our worker shares have taken a week off to go up north or camping. Each time they talk about the cabin on the lake or the hike they took, I am reminded that one of the downsides of vegetable farming is no time off in summer. I miss floating on an air mattress, reading a book, taking a nap in the sun.

FIELD NOTES

Rain continues to fall here at the Emerald Island of Pinehold Gardens. We have green grass, morning dews,

lots of mosquitoes hatching and luckily a record number of mosquito eating bats. We also have splitting water-melons, cantaloupes, beets and carrots from the crops taking on too much moisture after having a limited water supply during the drought.

But one crop, the winter squashes are extremely happy with the vines growing about a foot a week and setting a whole new crop of fruit, which is very unusual. The summer squash and zucchini are also very happy that it rained.

The fields finally dried out enough by Monday to take the tractor on them and prepare the soil for more fall planting. Unfortunately the rain that all the weathermen said they didn't expect to make it to Milwaukee County woke us up at 1:15 am yesterday morning with a boom and a rattle of 0.8 inches of rain, hail and minor crop damaging winds. Our rain total since July 13 is just over 5 inches. We hope the fields dry out by this Friday before the next rain comes in on Saturday.

EAT YOUR GREENS

One of our new worker shares and former owner of a restaurant in Kenosha, Tammy Peacy, has volunteered to help us with our effort to get everyone to eat more healthy greens. Attached is a guide to collard greens that she put together.

BOX NOTES

We have tried planting kale in the spring for a summer harvest, but the bug pressure

and the heat produce flea beetle eaten and tough, almost bitter leaves. Kale is a northern crop. It is meant to be grown in the fall and into the winter. So, I thought, collard greens are a Southern crop. It's hot in the south. Let's try planting collards in the spring. They grew well producing tender leaves with very little bug damage. A sample bunch is in your box today. Make sure to check out Tammy's guide to collard greens.

Onions are one of the crops that need lots of water to thrive as they have a shallow root system. They also need a weed free field as their thin leaves don't compete well for sunlight with weeds. We had neither of these conditions this year. Their leaves are also very susceptible to damage from a tiny insect, the thrip, which thrives in dry conditions. So there are small, but tasty cooking onions in your box today, an early variety called Bridger. We are hoping that the later maturing onions will continue to grow with these recent rains.

Many plants set an early flush of fruit. In past years each pepper plant would have one pepper on the bottom of the plant that I would remove to encourage more fruiting. This year there were so many peppers on each plant that I let them be. In your box are a couple of early harvested ones and they taste like early green peppers — a bit stronger than a normal green pepper. I always wonder how we got so used to eating an immature fruit as all peppers will eventually mature to red. It

would be like it was common place to eat green tomatoes.

Forty-eight of our 200 eggplant plants did set one early fruit that I did not remove. There are 47 boxes that get loaded onto the truck so the people that pick up in Bay View, Cudahy and Shorewood will receive an eggplant today. It will be quite a while before the main crop comes in as they are just starting to flower.

In this box is the last head of lettuce for about a month. One of our goals this year was to provide more staples like carrots, beans and lettuce. I choose lettuce varieties by reading catalog descriptions and looking for the words "bolt and tip burn resistant," and "tolerant of heat." Tolerant and resistant does not mean invincible. We lost around a thousand heads during the two periods of 100-degree days.

Gold beets is a crop that is being seen more frequently at markets. A new variety with a better germination rate has made this possible. Gold beets are a little milder and less earthy than red ones. We call them beginner beets.

We grow multiple varieties of many of the crops we grow. One of the main reasons we do this is for an extended harvest season as different varieties have different maturity dates. Halona, the cantaloup variety that starts off our melon season did not like the heat and rain so we lost many. The chickens are very happy with the leftovers though. If there is a melon in your box, know that it's not the best we can offer, just the first.

Tammy Peacy, a new Pinehold Member, is a strong proponent of good, fresh food. She is also a champion of knowing what one eats and where it comes from. An erstwhile restaurateur, Tammy also knows something about what to do with fresh food. Now working on a cookbook while working at Pinehold, Tammy would like to share some of her knowledge with her fellow members. Expect to read more by Tammy about what you eat in the coming weeks.

Intro to Collards 101

Tips on the preparation of collards and how to put them to use (and give them the respect they deserve).

This is why you want to eat greens, in particular this week, collard greens: they're a good source of Protein, Thiamin, Niacin and Potassium, and a very good source of Dietary Fiber, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Vitamin K, Riboflavin, Vitamin B6, Folate, Calcium and Manganese. (Source: USDA.)

So, not you've got them, what do you do with them?

- Wash leaves and shake dry.
- If the stem is more than 1/8 of an inch wide, remove. (If you decide to include the stems in your recipe, chop and cook a few minutes longer than the leaves.)
- An easy way to chop collards: Stack the leaves (stems removed) and roll them up into a little log. Cut into ½ to one inch sections. For smaller pieces slice the roll lengthwise first.
- Collards can be boiled, steamed, stir-fried, sautéed or braised.
- How do you know when the collards are done? Depends on how you like them. Generally, when the stems are easily pierced with a knife or skewer, the collards are done.

Places to put your collards:

- Use in soups and stews.
- Chop and sprinkle on pizzas, add to quesadillas, or mix into eggroll fillings.
- For large leaves, stuff as you would grape leaves or cabbage.
- Use cooked collards in place of spinach. Add to omelets, quiche or frittata. Replace half the spinach with collards in spanakopita.
- Add to potato au gratin or take out the potato all together and make a collard gratin with goat cheese

Classic Collards

(Classic Collards is provided by Pinehold member Carrie Savrnoch)

4 slices bacon chopped up	1 bunch (5 leaves) collard greens rough chop, about inch size pieces
1 small onion (or half a normal size one) diced small.	small pinch crushed red peppers
1 clove garlic smashed and diced	Salt to taste
1 - 2 T. honey	
1 t. mustard	

Sautee bacon on medium heat for a couple minutes until there is some fat in the pan, throw in onions and garlic, stir occasionally for a couple minutes. Add greens. turn heat to medium low, (if the bacon didnt provide enough fat to cook the greens down until they are tender add a TBSP of water.) Once everything is cooked down and tender, add mustard, honey (start with one tablespoon and add more if you like it sweeter) and crushed red peppers. Continue to cook until everything is glazed (a couple minutes) taste before salting

Greens and Onion Biscuits

1 c. all-purpose flour	2 T. cold butter, cut into bits
1/2 c. yellow cornmeal	1/3 c. onion, finely minced
1/2 t. baking soda	1/2 c. collards or chard, stems removed and reserved for another use, leaves chopped
Pinch salt	1/2 c. cottage cheese
1/2 t. freshly ground pepper	5 T. milk
1 t. sugar	

Preheat oven to 425F. Grease a baking sheet. In a large bowl, combine dry ingredients. Cut in butter until mixture is crumbly. Stir in remaining ingredients until soft dough forms. Knead dough gently on a floured surface and roll into a 10x16-inch rectangle. Cut into rounds with a 2-inch cutter and place on prepared sheet. Bake 12-15 min., or until golden-brown. Split and fill with your favorite spread or cold meat and mustard. Makes about 20 biscuits

Minted Summer Garden Salad with Cumin Vinaigrette

2 T. grapeseed oil	Dressing:
2 large tomatoes, cut into 6 wedges, then each wedge cut in half, crosswise	1 t. ground cumin
1 small zucchini, thinly sliced	1 clove garlic, minced
3-4 green onions, sliced	1/4 c. lemon juice
1/4 c. black olives, pitted and halved	Pinch sugar
1 T. chopped fresh parsley	3 T. olive oil
1 T. chopped fresh mint	

Combine vegetables in a large bowl. Mix dressing ingredients until thoroughly combined. Toss with vegetables; marinate, covered, in refrigerator about 2 hours before serving. Serves 4

Zucchini/Summer Squash Fritters

2 c. shredded zucchini or summer squash	3 T. finely chopped fresh mint
1/2 c. shredded onion	1 whole egg
3 T. grated Parmesan	1 egg white
1/2 c. fresh breadcrumbs, lightly toasted	Salt and freshly ground pepper
1/2 c. finely chopped fresh parsley	1 T. grapeseed oil

In a medium-size bowl, combin all ingredients except olive oil. Shape into 2-inch patties. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Saute as many patties as fit comfortably into the skillet at a time; do not crowd them. Cook until nicely browned. Turn and brown second side, about 4 min. altogether. Remove to a heated platter and keep warm until remaining fritters are cooked. Serve immediately.