

Pinehold Gardens Field Notes

Vol. 18 No. 9, Week 7

August 22, 2012

In This Box

- Ace red beets
- Carmen peppers
- Fennel
- Collard greens
- Estiva tomatoes
- Bridger & Gladstone onions
- Summer squash and/or zucchini
- Eggplant, in rotation
- Melons, in rotation

Next Week?

- Potatoes
- Carrots
- Wax beans
- Lettuce
- Estiva tomatoes
- Onions
- Garlic
- Eggplant, in rotation

A DAY IN THE LIFE

I have worked at Next Act Theatre for the last 12 years. It's a part-time, off-season job that's becoming more part time each year. We were subscribers to Next Act since its beginning 23 years until we started saving to buy a farm. Then we were volunteer ushers and finally I became an employee. The theatre community in Milwaukee is a tight-knit group of people who stick together and help each other out in a mostly non competitive way, a lot like organic farming community. But Next Act is a very special place with Artistic Director David Ceasarini and Managing Director Charles Kakuk, partners in managing the theatre together for 21 of those 23 years. They are like

family to me. Charles was diagnosed and treated for oral cancer two years ago. Everything was going well until the cancer returned a month ago. He has had multiple surgeries and been in ICU at Froedert for the last two weeks. Many of you are subscribers and supporters of Next Act so I wanted to share this website link with you so you can follow his progress and send him well wishes. <http://www.caring-bridge.org/visit/charleskakuk>

FIELD NOTES

We continue to receive just enough rain so that we haven't had to irrigate our fall crops yet. We do wish they would hurry up and grow though.

The direct seeded crops got a late start with the hundred degree days through the third week of July and then the five inches of rain the last two weeks of July. I just checked David's diary and one month ago on July 23 it was 103 degrees. Last week it was 48 degrees at night, not great growing conditions. Crickets chirp day and night making it sound like fall. The upcoming few days look warm and sunny. As I always say, picky farmers, never happy. I am happy though that these scattered showers did not bring us the two inch hail that fell in Grafton on Saturday.

David is prepping land for a fall cover crop of rye. The addition of a grassy sod along with rye is greatly improving our soil texture, adding organic matter and reducing crusting. We just wish we had less of a weed seed bank.

AUGUST 26 FESTIVAL

We have the tent, porta potty, beverages, three cooking demonstrations and kids activities. All we need is you (and no rain please). We hope you can make it.

We ask that you bring a generous dish for our pot luck lunch and copies of your recipe to share.

Peter Sandroni, owner of the La Merenda restaurant on First and National, will be joining us at noon cooking one of his most popular seasonal menu items, Ceviche or Peruvian salsa that uses watermelon, cucumbers and tomatoes as a base.

Pinehold member Tammy Peacy will be demonstrating a Spicy Collard Green Sauce, a combination of collards, tomatoes and peppers, good for pouring onto just about everything.

Pinehold member and Master Canner Christina Ward returns to teach us how to can tomatoes and make salsa.

Continuing on with the tomato theme and if the predicted warmer weather arrives, we will begin our members only paste tomato upick at the Summer Festival. Each member family is allowed 10 pounds of paste tomatoes, enough for an 8 pint batch of canned salsa or about 7 pints of canned tomatoes. It looks like there might be enough for about 20 families. Notices for future upicks will be in the newsletter and on our website on the calendar page.

Kids activities will include birdhouse painting (one per family for the first 20 families

to sign up by email in advance), plant a salad garden to take home and weather permitting, potato harvesting.

We have some tables and chairs, but you could also bring along a lawn chair if you like.

BOX NOTES

Tammy Peacy is once again helping everyone enjoy one of the more uncommon vegetables, fennel, with the attached Fennel 101 information sheet.

Peter Sandroni sautés chopped fennel in butter and then simmers it in a mild mustard vinaigrette that is served over fish.

Member Melissa Klein sent this link to a kale chip recipe and many people have suggested that collards would work great instead of kale.

<http://allrecipes.com/recipe/baked-kale-chips/detail.aspx>. Melissa usually uses sea salt instead of seasoned salt and uses less of it (1/4 to 1/2 tsp to taste) and mixes it, the olive oil and kale in a bowl thoroughly to coat the kale before spreading on the baking sheet. You have to watch them closely so that they don't burn.

Classic eggplant dishes include Parmesan, ratatouille, and Baba Ganouj. Find Ken Knetzger's variation on Baba Ganouj on the News & Muse page of our website.

The Carmen peppers are a sweet Italian frying pepper. The hoophouse grown Estiva tomatoes are getting smaller and less plentiful, but the tomatoes planted outdoors are beginning to blush.

Fennel 101

by Tammy Peacy, Pinehold Member

Fennel appears in Italian, Greek, Middle Eastern and Indian cuisine and has been around for a very long time. According to Greek mythology, Prometheus smuggled fire to humans in a hollow fennel stalk. Ancient Romans thought this aromatic and flavorful herb improved eyesight and warriors consumed it for strength. Emperor Charlemagne had it grown in imperial gardens because of its healing properties. Puritans chewed fennel seeds to combat hunger while fasting.

Here's what we know about fennel today: It is very low in Cholesterol, a good source of Niacin, Calcium, Iron, Magnesium, Phosphorus and Copper, and a very good source of Dietary Fiber, Vitamin C, Folate, Potassium and Manganese (from the USDA).

So, now that it's in this week's box, what can you do with it?

- First, all parts are edible. (And no, it doesn't taste like black jelly beans.) To prepare, remove the stalk at the top of the bulb and cut away the very bottom. Quarter the bulb and cut out the tough core. Slice, chop, dice, or mince according to recipe.
- Store fennel, with stalks and fronds attached, covered, for up to ten days in the refrigerator. Fennel can be blanched and frozen, though much flavor is lost in the process.
- Raw fennel bulb is refreshing, slightly sweet and crisp. Thinly sliced fennel with a drizzle of olive oil, a splash of lemon juice and a sprinkle of salt makes a good start to a meal. Or use it with avocado and orange slices on a bed of lettuces. Grate raw fennel with cabbage and carrots for coleslaw.
- Cooked fennel is tender and sweet. Fennel bulb can be sautéed, roasted, braised, used in soups and stews. Add to root vegetable dishes. Sauté slices and chopped leaves with butter and serve over grilled salmon. Wrap sautéed fennel, feta, sliced kalamata olives and spinach, drizzled with olive oil and balsamic vinegar, in a whole wheat tortilla.
- The leaves, or fronds, can be chopped and used in dips and sauces, or prepared in fish or meat dishes, especially lamb or pork. Use the stripped stalks in stocks or eat raw.

A few non-food uses for fennel:

- Fennel is a natural flea repellent. Stuff your pet's bed with dried fennel (all parts). Sprinkle pets with powdered fennel and rub it in. Keep away from eyes and ears.
- Fennel has anti-inflammatory properties. Steep half a cup of roughly chopped fennel leaves and the juice of half a lemon in one and a half cups of boiling water for fifteen minutes. Strain into clean jar. Use as a facial toner. Keep refrigerated.

Summer Festival

August 26

Pinehold Gardens

Join in the fun from 11 am to 4 pm

Schedule of Events

11 am

- Welcome, wander, visit

Noon

- Pot luck lunch

- Chef Peter Sandroni, owner of La Merenda restaurant, offers a cooking demonstration

1:30 pm

- Master Canner Christina Ward shows how to can salsa and more. Participants can take home a jar of salsa.
- Tammy Peacy demonstrates how to make a Spicy Collard Green Sauce
- For the kids, there's bird house painting (take a bird house home — one per family), starting a lettuce garden and harvesting potatoes

Food

- Potluck Lunch
- Bring a generous dish to pass
- Bring copies of recipes to share
- Provided: Local beer, and Root Beer, Lemonade and Iced Tea

Help us reduce expense and waste by bringing your own plates and glasses. A washing station will be provided.

Bring along a lawn chair if you would like.

Go to www.Pineholdgardens.com for a map and easy directions to our farm.

Buttermilk Beet Muffins

1/2 c. roasted beet purée (made from 1 medium beet)	1 1/4 c. white whole-wheat flour or all-purpose flour
1/4 c. (1/2 stick) butter, melted	1/4 t. baking soda
1/3 c. buttermilk	1 t. baking powder
1 egg	1/4 t. fine sea salt
1 t. vanilla extract	
1/2 c. packed light brown sugar	Preheat oven to 350 degrees

In 10-inch skillet, heat 1 T. oil over medium-high heat. Add onions and peppers; cook, stirring, until onions start. Wash and wrap beet in foil (I usually do several at a time and use the leftovers in a salad). Roast in preheated oven 45 to 75 minutes, depending upon size and number of beets. Cook until you can pierce easily with a knife. Let beets cool completely. Rub off beet skin, cut one beet into chunks and purée until smooth in a food processor.

In a large bowl, place the 1/2 cup beet purée, melted butter, buttermilk, egg, vanilla and brown sugar. Whisk mixture until smooth and combined. In a separate medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt. Add dry ingredients to wet, and stir until just incorporated.

Line a 12-cup standard muffin pan with muffin papers. Fill cups almost to the brim for tall, domed muffins, or three-fourths full for smaller muffins with a flatter top. Recipe will yield 8 to 12 muffins depending upon how the cup is filled. Bake in preheated oven 15 to 20 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into center of a muffin comes out clean.

Collard Green, Pasta, and Chickpea Soup

1 T. extra virgin olive oil	1 T. grated lemon zind
3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced	1 15-oz. can chickpeas, drained (can also use dried beans, soak and cook before using)
2 thinly sliced green onions	1 T. chopped fresh oregano (or 1/2 t. dried oregano)
A few collard green, stems removed and chopped separately from leaves	1 T. lemon juice
4 c. vegetable broth or chicken stock	1/2 t. freshly ground black pepper
2 c. water	1/8 t. salt (or to taste)
3/4 c. uncooked orzo (rice-shaped pasta) or other small pasta like elbow macaroni, etc.	1/3 c. grated Parmesan cheese

Heat large saucepan over high heat. Add oil to pan; swirl to coat. Add garlic, onions, and collard stems; saute 30 seconds stirring constantly. Add broth and water; bring to boil. Add orzo, lemon rind, chickpeas, and chopped collard leaves. Cover and cook 10 min. or until pasta is done. Stir in oregano, lemon juice, and seasonings. Adjust seasoning as needed. Ladle into soup bowls and top each serving with Parmesan. Serves 4.

Braised Fennel and Potatoes

1 large fennel bulb, with fronds	1 t. salt
1 large onion, halved lengthwise, then cut lengthwise 1/4-inch thick slices (2 c.)	3 T. olive oil
1/4 t. ground pepper	1 lb. smallish potatoes, washed and cut in half
	1/2 c. water

Chop enough fennel fronds to measure about 2 T., then cut off and discard stalks from bulb (See Note*). Quarter bulb lengthwise and core, then cut lengthwise into 1/4-inch thick slices. Cook fennel, onion, pepper, and 1/2 t. salt in oil in 12-inch skillet over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until onion is softened, about 5 min. Add potatoes and remaining 1/2 t. salt to fennel mixture and cook, uncovered, stirring frequently, 3 min. Add water and cook, covered, stirring once, until potatoes are tender, 10-12 min. more. Stir in fennel fronds before serving.

Serves 4 to 6.

*Can use fennel stalks for making vegetable stock or for juicing