

Pinehold Gardens *Field Notes*

Vol. 21 Week 6

August 12, 2015

In This Box

- Romance carrots
- Bright Lights Swiss chard
- Salsa bag (paste tomatoes, Jalapeno pepper, cilantro)
- Ailsa Craig onions
- Ace bell pepper
- Estiva, Arabason and Beorange slicing tomatoes
- Lovelock head lettuce
- Cucumber

Next Week?

- Romano beans
- Muir head lettuce
- Potatoes
- Tomatoes
- Garlic and onion
- Fennel
- Kohlrabi

A DAY IN THE LIFE

“Passionate journey of love and chaos.” I read the 6-Word Memoirs on the inside of the cap of my summer lunchtime drink of choice, Honest Tea, and I saved that cap as those six words pretty much describe how I feel about farming right now. I love the outdoors, growing food and working and being with people who have similar interests. Chaos is an understatement. The CSA is the largest piece of our farm puzzle, but we also now have a dozen restaurant accounts and finally, after four years, our Saturday on-farm stand sales are approaching farmers market levels. We just keep moving from deadline to deadline, unfortunately too often in triage mode, but when the timing of our harvest works out, like when the cilantro matures at the same time as our paste tomatoes, life is good. You know, the little things in life sometimes make all the difference.

FIELD NOTES

Monday’s rain was a pleasant surprise. It was such a surprise that we were in the field and got soaked. About 0.80 inches fell, and unlike the people in Bay View, thank goodness, no hail came along with it. It made for muddy picking in the morning for today’s box, but by the afternoon the soil already began drying out. David had been keeping up with irrigation and with the cool foggy nights and cooler and shorter days less water



Earth and sky and lots of green at Pinehold, a lushness enhanced by the recent rain.

is evaporating from the field so for the first time in exactly two months, I am going to say that we are just fine as far as water goes.

Like spring time, this late summer period is a last spurt of growth time. The seeded crops for our fall harvest have all germinated and the transplanted crops are growing rapidly. Also growing rapidly are the weeds. It was so dry that it was almost impossible to pull out the weeds. If anyone has any available moments this Thursday, Friday or Saturday mornings to weed, we would very much appreciate the help.

BOX NOTES

Where have the cucumbers been? For the past few years we have overwhelmed our CSA members with beautiful cucumbers from our hoophouse. This year the striped cucumber beetle arrived in almost plague-like numbers overwhelming the winter squash and cucumber plants. We spent over 100 hours battling the bugs by hand by brushing them into bowls of soapy water. We appear to have won the winter squash battle, but the bugs transmitted cucumber wilt and angular leaf spot to the cucumber plants so they never thrived. In today’s box there are cucumbers of many shapes and sizes, the last ones from the hoophouse and the ones struggling to grow with very little water outside.

The slicing tomatoes that have been in the boxes are being harvested from one of hoop-houses. The paste tomatoes for today’s salsa bag were started in our smaller movable hoophouse in April along with carrots, beets and eggplant. In May, when we thought the weather had warmed up, we moved the hoophouse to a new piece of ground exposing the previously pampered plants to the outdoors. While the tomatoes struggled through freezing cold winds and nights, they survived, bringing us the earliest and largest salsa bag we have had in years.

TOMATO U-PICK

The paste tomatoes for our u-pick are being grown outdoors. Keep your fingers crossed that these damp nights won’t create the ideal conditions for blight to take hold. If all goes well, the u-pick will be in early September.

We had hoped we didn’t have to stress out about blight on our paste tomatoes by sheltering them in another hoophouse but we needed to buy a tractor instead.

Sold Out
The People’s Sunday Supper

Pico de Gallo

from *Vegetarian Cooking For Everyone*

This is a standard tomato salsa recipe. Of course salsa just means sauce so don't be afraid to be more creative. We are providing paste tomatoes so they are less juicy and more meaty for a chunkier salsa. And the jalapeno pepper is a mild chili with a little heat and lots of green chili flavor.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2 Large ripe tomatoes, diced | ¼ cup onion, finely chopped |
| 2 Garlic cloves, finely chopped | 2 Tbl. finely chopped cilantro |
| 1 Jalapeno pepper, seeded and diced | Salt to taste |
| | Juice of 1 lime |

Combine all the ingredients and taste for salt. Let stand at least 20 minutes for flavors to blend.

Sweet Peppers

Sweet pepper season is just beginning and it's a good thing because they are



useful, nutritious and delicious. The sweet peppers we start with are "green" peppers. That is to say they are unripe peppers. All peppers will eventually turn red when they ripen and the flavor changes dramatically as they do. **Store:** In sealed plastic bag in the frig or seed and chop and place on a cookie sheet and freeze them. When frozen place in a freezer bag to use in soups and chillies. **Preparing:** All peppers should have their core of seeds removed.

Use: Raw, or cooked, grilled and roasted, stuffed and deep fried, peppers can do it all.

Slice, Mince, Chop: Our recipes usually require that vegetables are pared down in some way with a sharp knife. The problem is recipes rarely define the difference between roughly chopped and chopped for instance or thinly and thickly sliced. What follows is a rough primer on the basic of cutting.

Roughly chopped: pieces that are uneven and usually bite-size or bigger.

Chopped: An every day cut, if you will, with pieces from ¼-inch to ½ -inch roughly square pieces.

Diced: This is one of showier cuts where the vegetables are into consistent cubes. They can be larger or smaller depending on presentation.

Minced: This is bits of vegetables and a rule of thumb is cutting them as small as you can, usually reserved for items that you want to disappear in the dish, texture-wise. Think ginger.

Sliced: This includes thin cross cuts, thin *julienne* stick cuts and *chiffonade* cuts used primarily with leafy vegetables where the leaf is rolled up and sliced. Thickness can depend on presentation and cooking time.

Tomato Salads

We are in tomato season now — an oh too short time of the year. So we suggest celebrate this fruit with a salad all its own. This is a free-for-all time. Add what you like to the salad but do let the tomatoes do the talking.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Tomatoes, sliced into about ¼ inch slices, drain juice if you wish | Fresh basil chopped finely |
| Slices of fresh mozzarella cheese — one slice for every two three slices of tomato is good — or more | Fresh black pepper |
| | Drizzle of olive oil |

Variations on this include using some balsamic vinegar or red wine vinegar with the olive oil. Add chunks of avocado and maybe slices of onion. Also chopped garlic is good and maybe some chopped parsley.

The tomatoes can even be served on a bed of leaf lettuce.

For a different taste, roast the tomatoes a little along with some roasted eggplant.