

Pinehold Gardens Field Notes

Vol. 16 No. 5

August 18, 2010

In This Box

- Estiva tomatoes
- New Orchid watermelon
- Winner kohlrabi
- Bright Lights Swiss chard
- General Lee cucumbers
- Zucchini
- Chrysalis Red garlic

Next Week?

- Cantalope
- Carola potatoes
- Salsa bag
- Romaine lettuce
- Estiva Tomatoes
- Zucchini
- Onions
- Green beans?

A DAY IN THE LIFE

This Saturday afternoon marks our 22nd year volunteering at Irish Fest. Before farming, back when we did “normal” things on weekends like going to festivals, taking bike rides, going camping and hiking, we started volunteering at Irish Fest with the McManus and the McMullen families, our very best friends that I met while working at the UWM Bookstore. So although kids for them and leaving Shorewood for farming for us has changed our lives, it has not changed our history of friendship. And even though we meet only once a year, it as though

we never left Shorewood and for an afternoon our lives never changed.

FIELD NOTES

This is a viney year, that is, the vine crops have grown exceptionally well. The worker share crew was trying to come up with cucumbers recipes as we harvested another round of cucumbers from the patch that we declared last week as done producing. Fortunately a good viney year also means a good melon year. Last year with the cool summer and seemingly constant cool damp lake breezes we lost most of the foliage to mildews before the

tomatoes continue to produce an amazing amount of tomatoes. We have harvested 1,350 tomatoes for delivery alone.

Whew, we are almost done with the fall planting and the replantings. Only the very late cool season crops such as radishes, spinach and fall lettuce need to be planted. Believe or not we are back to irrigating.

Where are the potatoes? What we believe happened to almost all of our potatoes is that 90 percent of the potatoes that had formed under the plants rotted, but with all the rain the plants also sent out a second flush of new tubers. The week after the rain we dug up plants and found 1 or 2 potatoes and a stem full of marble sized potatoes. Yesterday I dug up a Carola plant and the marbles had grown up into small but nice sized potatoes. So it looks like we will be able to start harvesting potatoes again. The yield will be greatly reduced due to the rot. The stressed plants also have attracted the really bad bug, the Colorado potato beetle. Before July 22nd the plants were so healthy that we struggled to find a bug and the good bug (the ones that eat the larvae of the bad bugs) population was way up. Just like in humans, plants with weakened immune systems attract disease and in the plant's case, bugs.

A proper place

There's been a buzz about the dragon flies this past week — hungry Green Darters and their kin gobbling up mosquitoes, of which we seem to have plenty. Pinehold certainly has its share — mosquitoes and dragon flies that is. But I associate dragon flies more with lakes and ponds than I do with farms. A proper farm's bug predator is the barn swallow.

The swallow is not the mosquito slayer that the dragon fly is, but its presence is more keenly felt. I enter the field and swallows are flying tight circuits around the tractor. Flashes of iridescent blue and bronze, the swallows slice the air in pursuit of prey. I am in the center of a whirl, feeling grounded, weighted, unable to move, left only to wonder.

I would like you to consider treating yourself to a wonderful dinner Saturday, Sept. 11, of seasonal local food at a private club on a lake near Oconomowoc, a mere 30 minutes from downtown Milwaukee. I would like you to do this because you deserve it. It has been awfully hot and humid summer. The commuting to work has been a real challenge with all the construction. And what a great way to cap the Eat Local Challenge week. Besides that, how often do you get a chance to do good — raising money for the Farm Fresh Atlas — by being good to yourself. Give you and your taste buds a break. Contact us to find out how to reserve your spot at the table.

Recipes of the Week

KOHLRABI SLAW, Annie Wegner, Serves 10

½ cup rice wine vinegar	1 ½ lbs. kohlrabi, peeled and shredded
¼ cup granulated sugar	8 green onions, thinly sliced
2 teaspoons salt	¾ cup sliced almonds, toasted
1 teaspoon pepper	½ cup sesame seeds, toasted
1 cup vegetable oil	

In a medium mixing bowl, combine the rice wine vinegar, sugar, salt and pepper. Then drizzle in the oil, whisking as you go, until it is well-incorporated. Set aside. In a large bowl, combine the kohlrabi, onions, almonds, and sesame seeds. Drizzle with the dressing and toss until well-combined. Refrigerate until serving.

TOMATOES WITH CUCUMBERS *Fresh from the Garden* contributed by Sharon Brud

½ cup vegetable oil (I use olive)	¼ tsp freshly ground pepper
½ cup wine vinegar (I use red)	½ tsp dried basil, crushed
1 ½ tsp of salt (or to taste)	½ tsp dill seed (or can substitute dill weed)

Combine all of the ingredients and pour over chopped or diced tomatoes and cucumbers. Chill for at least 2 hours. Makes three quarter cup of dressing.

COLD CUCUMBER SOUP WITH CUMIN SOUP, Contributed by Barb Vass

2 medium cucumbers	3 garlic cloves, peeled & crushed
2 ¾ cups plain whole-milk yogurt	1-2 tsp cumin seeds
¾ cup carbonated mineral water	½ tsp coarse salt

Peel cucumbers & cut in half lengthwise. Remove seeds with a teaspoon. Dice cucumbers, then blend in a food processor. Stir the yogurt and mineral water together in a bowl. Add the crushed garlic. Fold in the cucumbers. Roast the cumin seeds in a pan without any oil, until aromatic. Crush lightly with a mortar & pestle together with the coarse salt and stir into the yogurt cucumber mix. Season the soup with salt & pepper to taste, cover and chill in the fridge for 4 hours. To serve, beat the cucumber soup with a hand mixer until frothy, pour into glasses, garnish with grated cucumber and lemon slices (optional).

MELISSA'S SPINACH CASSEROLE, *The Passionate Vegetarian*, contributed by Beth Bender

2 large eggs	½ to 1 cup shredded mozzarella
½ cup flour	½ tsp salt
1 ½ cups lowfat cottage cheese	1 10 ounce package frozen chopped spinach thawed and drained very well.
½ to 1 cup shredded cheddar	

Combine all ingredients stirring well. Spray a casserole dish with nonstick spray and pour mixture into the dish. Bake uncovered for one hour at 375. For a more tender dish bake it in a bain-marie (larger dish of hot water). Note from Beth: I have never used frozen spinach, always a bunch of kale or swiss chard chopped and steamed, but is the steaming necessary?

"APPLE" COBBLER, contributed by Brenda Skelton

Filling:	Crust:
8 cups peeled, roughly chopped zucchini or summer squash	4 cups flour (can substitute 1-2 cups for oatmeal, if desired)
¾ cup lemon juice	2 cups brown sugar
1 cup white sugar (can experiment and substitute honey)	1 ½ cup butter, chilled
1 tsp cinnamon, ½ tsp nutmeg	1 tsp cinnamon for topping

In a large saucepan, cook squash and lemon juice until squash is tender, 15 to 20 minutes after it starts to bubble. Stir in sugar (or honey), cinnamon and nutmeg. Cook one minute more. Remove from heat and set aside. Preheat oven to 375 F degrees. Grease a 10x15 inch baking dish. Combine flour and brown sugar. Cut in butter with a pastry fork until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir ½ cup of the flour/butter mixture into the bottom of prepared pan. Spread cooked squash mixture over top of crust and sprinkle with remaining flour/butter mixture over top. Press down slightly. Top with a dash of cinnamon. Bake 35-40 minutes until golden.

SUMMER FESTIVAL

Remember that on Sunday, August 29, we will be hosting our annual festival from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Bring the kids so they can visit with Peaches the Pig, Junior, Big Guy, Rocky, the Evil Twins and their flock. There will be a scavenger hunt. Homemade raspberry ice cream is also on the menu. And, who knows what else. A farm tour starts the day followed by a bountiful pot luck lunch. Remember to bring a copy of your recipe.

BOX NOTES

The watermelon is the same watermelon variety we tried last year whose patented seeds cost \$827.40 per pound as compared to the standard small red melon at \$25.75. Fortunately we only needed to purchase 2 oz of seed.

Use Swiss chard in any recipe that calls for spinach. The stems are also delicious, but need to be cooked before you cook the greens.

Kohlrabi needs to be peeled first. Remove the leaves (which are edible and similar to collards) and slice off the bottom. Remove the tough skin with a knife. Many people enjoy kohlrabi raw. I love it in a slaw. I've made just a kohlrabi and carrot slaw using the dressing from last week's newsletter. A simple way to cook it is to sautee grated kohlrabi with butter and top with parmesan cheese.

Members have sent us favorite recipes for this week's newsletter. Enjoy!

GARLIC LOVERS

Garlic will be in your box about every other week. We will bring extra garlic to your site in a bag with your name on it if you would like more garlic. Please email us.