

Pinehold Gardens *Field Notes*

Vol. 26, Issue 4

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In This Week's Box

From our hoopouses:

- Tomatoes: slicers & paste
- Eggplant for some dropsites
- Cucumber, Tasty Jade for some

From the drift free fields:

- Garlic scapes
- Cilantro
- Potatoes, Red Norland
- Lettuce head, Muir
- Swiss chard, Lyon
- Cucumber, General Lee, for some

HERBICIDE DRIFT UPDATE

I finished the damages calculations and sent them to our attorney last week Thursday. He sent us a draft of the demand letter that is to be sent to our neighbor along with his opinion on how to proceed with claims to our's and neighbor's insurance yesterday. Although things are moving along, we do not know how long this process will take. We intend to refund everyone, hopefully around 65% of the value of the CSA, before the end of the year, even if the claim has not been settled. We have a few long time members who have become friends who would help us out with lending us the money that we would need to do so. We are fortunate in so many ways.

Also fortunately, one of our worker shares has former work experience with taking soil samples and assessing contamination, so he is coordinating the sampling of our fields for contamination and will also be testing our well water for Atrazine. Thank you Clark.

I had a 45 minute discussion with two higher level staff members of DATCP about the confusing lab test results and their lack of guidance for farmers as I felt they were doing more to protect the consumer than to help the farmer and I told them that the were

the Department of AGRICULTURE, Trade and Consumer Protection. Questions I asked them that if the eight samples of onions that they took only came back positive for the greens, but not the bulb, why can't we sell and deliver the bulb? Also in their results letter to us about all of our vine crops (winter squash, cantaloupe, watermelon, zucchini, cucumbers) it stated that there is insufficient evidence to consider these produce items potentially adulterated because there was not an edible portion present at the time. I asked them to come back and test, but they had no plans to. I found out that they are a compliance lab. i.e. they only look for drift and not make a decision about the food safety of every single crop. So we started looking for a lab on our own as they also did not have a list of labs to use. Clark, our soil sample guy found one in Oregon. Each sample is \$241 and DATCP did not provide any standards or protocols to follow. It is pretty much a moot point now as the field is now covered in weeds and has not been irrigated lately.

And lastly everyone asks me how did we find it. I went out to look at the tomato trellising that Amanda, my niece, Pinehold farmer-in-training, had done and all of the tops of the tomatoes were bright yellow. I immediately thought



Rather than having a team of two or three trudge through the mud from the morning's rain back and forth, we opted for a socially distanced chain to remove the lettuce in today's box. Thanks to all for the teamwork.

that there was a nutrient deficiency, but thanks to Google I found out that it was chlorosis, a loss of chlorophyll in the leaves, caused by Glyphosate injury. I then walked to the other side of our property and saw yellow spots on all of the winter squash, burning of the bean leaves, and spots on the leaves of weeds scattered throughout the field. My gut feeling was that this was really bad news. That was two months ago. I appreciate anyone that is interested enough to take the time to read this.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

We now have an official reason for our extreme fatigue. We are older. We just received our Medicare cards as we both turn 65 in the coming months.

And please keep my 92-year-old mom

in your thoughts that she will continue to test negative for Covid-19 as there are now two residents in her small facility that tested positive. She is confined to her room so I can't even visit with her through the lobby window using an aide's cell phone. It has been over five months since I have been able to give her a hug or feed her.

FIELD NOTES

It had not rained one drop since our last newsletter two weeks ago when we reported eight inches in eight days. Then ironically, two hours before the Tuesday morning CSA harvest crew was to show up, it rained buckets — 1.3 inches in a couple of hours, along with some hail that damaged the chard.

We are pushing the envelope for fall planting but we are still seeding crops. Let just hope we don't get 7 inches of snow again on Halloween. Speaking of Halloween, our carving pumpkins are looking great and are turning orange already because of the warm days. I found out that squashes mature based on growing degree days, an accumulation of the average temperature above a certain temperature baseline. When you come and pick out your pumpkin during our pumpkin UPick you just have to promise us that you will NOT make roasted pumpkin seeds as they were in a herbicide drifted field.

HERBICIDE EDUCATION 101

We are on the Environmental Working Group's email list. You might know them from their Dirty Dozen or Clean Fifteen lists. One email that caught my attention was that Glyphosate (Roundup) was in hummus. I thought, how did that happen? I did not think that there were Roundup Ready garbanzo beans. Well it turns out Glyphosate is sprayed on the mature beans to get the foliage to dry down, i.e. kill it, just prior to harvest to make harvesting easier.

A similar thing is done with potatoes where the foliage is sprayed just prior to harvest to hasten the development of the skins before harvesting.

Caraway Dill Roasted Potatoes

From Member Jeff Siuta

This is a simple, flavorful way to prepare potatoes. I've discovered that they're really pretty darn good warmed up as leftovers – though there usually aren't any.

Ingredients:

- 1½ pounds small white potatoes, quartered (or cut into eighths, depending on the size)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1½ teaspoons whole caraway seed
- ¾ teaspoon sea salt
- ¾ teaspoon coarse ground black pepper or whole peppercorns
- ½ teaspoon whole dill seed

Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 425°F. Line a shallow baking pan with foil.
- Coarsely grind caraway seed, salt, pepper and dill seed in a food processor or clean coffee grinder (or a spice grinder... or with a mortar and pestle if you're ambitious).
- Place the potatoes in a bowl. Drizzle with the olive oil and toss to coat.
- Sprinkle with the spice mixture and toss again to coat the potatoes evenly.
- Pour the potatoes onto the foil-lined pan and roast in the oven for 30 minutes. They should be golden and crusty on the outside and soft and tender on the inside.

Makes about 6 servings.

Jeff's Notes:

I like to take the time to arrange the potatoes skin side down on the roasting pan before placing them in the oven. This ensures that the potatoes crisp up evenly and minimizes the possibility of them sticking to the foil as they cook.



BOX NOTES

Every year we try to include a salsa bag in our boxes. But this year we could not include our onions or hot peppers with today's tomato salsa bag. Hopefully the garlic scapes can fill a dual purpose, garlic and onion flavor, and we did plant cilantro after the drift incident. I almost went to Outpost to buy 180 Jalapeño peppers.

We did our best to wash the lettuce and chard but it was pounded by rain and splashing mud just before harvest. The chard is a mild, spinach-like in taste, and quick cooking.

Remember those potatoes that we

talked about in a pre-season newsletter? The sprouting ones that we rescued from La Merenda restaurant when it shut down due to Covid? We took off the sprouts, waited for them to sprout again, and planted them in early June. It was a long journey for them, but they are finally in your box.

The beautiful hoophouse slicing tomatoes have also been on a long journey as they were planted on May 2nd, survived four nights of below freezing temperatures in mid May and since then, multiple flooding events.

All Purpose Tomato Topping

From Member Jeff Siuta

August is the time of year when tomatoes of all varieties start accumulating on my countertop. This recipe is great for using whatever tomatoes are the ripest; I like to use a combination of colors and varieties of tomatoes when making it. The process of cooking it down intensifies the tomato flavor, and the higher sugar content of mid-summer tomatoes helps it to thicken a bit, as well. It keeps quite well for a few days in the fridge, and it's really versatile. (See some variations below.) It makes about 2 cups or so, but it can be doubled or tripled. I haven't tried canning or freezing it. If you try it, please let me know how it turned out.

Ingredients:

- 1½ to 2 cups very ripe tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and coarsely chopped
- 3 green onions, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Sea salt and coarsely ground black pepper, to taste

Instructions:

- Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat until the oil is shimmering.
- Add the tomatoes and bell pepper to the skillet. Be aware that there will be a good deal of sizzle and steam as they hit the hot oil. Sprinkle with some salt and pepper and cook for 4-5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- Toss in the green onions and cook for at least 2 more minutes. Continue stirring occasionally until most of the liquid released by the tomatoes has cooked off.
- Remove from heat. Taste and adjust seasonings, and let cool to room temperature before serving.
- This is now ready to serve. Use it as a topping for fish or chicken. Spread it on crackers with some cheese. Use it in a taco. It's a great topping for crostini or pizza.

Some variations:

- o Italian: Add a clove or two of chopped garlic to the oil as it's heating; add fresh basil and fresh oregano during the cool-down time. (Quick pasta sauce: add a quarter cup or so of Italian red wine when you add the scallions; take the skillet off the heat before all of the liquid evaporates.)
- o French: Add fresh tarragon and fresh thyme during the cool-down time (good with eggs).
- o Southwest: Add some chopped jalapeño with the bell pepper, and chili powder during the cool-down time. Top with fresh cilantro just before serving.
- o All American: Cook two slices of bacon in place of the olive oil; remove the crisp bacon from the pan, then cook the tomatoes and pepper, as above; after the topping has cooled, crumble the reserved bacon and add it to the topping.
- o Sichuan: Add crushed Sichuan chili pepper with the bell pepper, and ground Sichuan peppercorns during the cool-down time (use a light touch – both of these add-ins can be extremely spicy!).

Jeff's Farfalle with Chard

From Member Jeff Siuta

Ingredients:

- 12 ounces farfalle (bowtie) pasta
- 1 large red onion, sliced along the axis into ¼ inch slices
- 6 medium garlic cloves, peeled and cut into slivers or 6 garlic scapes angle cut about ¼ inch thick
- Extra virgin olive oil
- 1 pint grape or small cherry tomatoes
- 12 ounces chard, rinsed thoroughly, stems removed and sliced ¼ inch thick, leaves cut into 1½ inch pieces
- ¼ cup fresh Italian (flat-leaf) parsley, chopped
- 1 cup shredded Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (or domestic Parmesan cheese – I recommend either Stella or Belgioso brands)
- 8 ounces whole milk ricotta cheese, at room temperature
- ¼ cup basil, cut into thin ribbons
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Directions:

- Cook farfalle pasta according to package directions (about 8-10 minutes) until al dente.
- While the pasta is cooking, heat about 2-3 tablespoons of olive oil in a large stir-fry pan. Add the onions, chard stems and garlic. Season with salt and pepper, and sauté until they are softened and the onion is beginning to become translucent (about 5-7 minutes).
- When the pasta is cooked, drain it and immediately add it to the stir-fry pan with the onions and garlic. Toss to combine them. Add an additional drizzle of olive oil, if needed, to coat the pasta evenly. Season lightly with salt and pepper.
- Add the tomatoes (whole) and toss to combine.
- Stir in the chard leaves in batches of about one third at a time. Add ¾ cup of the Parmigiana-Reggiano cheese, along with the parsley, and stir to combine. The chard should just start to wilt without cooking so much as to start to lose its color.
- Scatter tablespoons of the ricotta cheese onto the mixture in the stir-fry pan. Add kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste. Give them about one minute to heat through, then give the entire mixture a very light tossing (the goal is to keep the clusters of ricotta mostly together, but to add just a bit of creaminess to the mixture).
- Turn the mixture into a serving bowl and garnish with the remaining ¼ cup of Parmigiana-Reggiano cheese and the basil.

This recipe makes about 6 generous servings.

Jeff's Notes:

- *This recipe works well with spinach or other tender greens, but isn't really suited to more robust greens such as kale.*
- *Other pasta shapes work well with this recipe. If using whole wheat or other similar pastas, allow extra time for the pasta to cook.*