

Pinehold Gardens Field Notes

Vol. 17 No. 5, Week 3

July 27, 2011

In This Box

- Red Norland potatoes
- Green beans
- Ace green peppers
- Orion fennel
- Cucumber
- Toscano kale
- Green onions
- Crisphead or butterhead lettuce

Next Week?

- Red beets
- Swiss chard
- Cooking onions
- Summer squash
- Garlic
- Kohlrabi
- Cucumbers

A DAY IN THE LIFE

My goal last week was to survive the week. We made it. We have never delivered in such heat. We broke up the deliveries into four parts with worker shares helping out. Thank you Karen and children for delivering and Rita for packing in the heat.

July continues to be busy.

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

The area around Bakersfield, Calif., is part of the agricultural area that provides most of this country's produce. It is also a desert, according to the New York Times. Water banking has become big business especially in these drought years. Water bankers, who sell the water at huge profit, are doing well as farmers buy at nearly any cost to keep trees and plants alive. The ground water zone, however, is not faring well. What was once a veritable mountain of water

easily accessible by municipal wells is now a valley.

FIELD NOTES

Just under an inch of rain fell last week in two nice soft rains showers. Everything is really happy and growing like mad, including the weeds. If we had a time lapse camera in the fields it would be a race to see if weeds or the melon vines were growing faster. We hope that the prediction of heavy rains for today is wrong. An inch would be OK, 3 inches, would not be OK as we still have 8,000 garlic heads to harvest, field work to do to start preparing for next year and fall planting.

Most of the crops are doing well. The only casualties from the hot weather were the arugula and salad mix plantings for restaurants and farmers market sales and about 700 heads of lettuce bolted.

The hot, dry weather created the perfect environment for onion thrips, microscopic insects that feed on the leaves of the onions. Less hardy leaves might result in smaller onions.

All the broccoli, kale, Brussels sprout and cabbage plants have been transplanted and some of the carrots have been seeded. We still have to direct seed turnips, rutabagas, winter radishes, more carrots, the fourth and last planting of beans and transplant at least two more plantings of beets. With that we will be done with the bulk of the planting for fall harvested crops.

BOX NOTES

The potatoes in your box were dug yesterday. The skins are very delicate so we did

not wash the potatoes before delivering them to you. There is nothing like a fresh, juicy potatoes after eating the last of the sprouting potatoes in our root cellar in April.

We harvested the early set of peppers from the bell peppers to encourage fruit set on the rest of the plant. So the peppers are a little more green tasting than a fully mature pepper.

Usually we wait until fall to plant kale, but with the cool spring we decided to plant a bed of kale. While not as sweet as fall harvested, it's nice to have a nutritious green in the summer.

We try to introduce a few unusual vegetables during the season. This season it's fennel. It can be grilled, braised, cooked with peppers for a nice Italian sausage sandwich, eaten raw or grated on salads.

EGG NEWS

Many people have been inquiring about getting eggs from our flock. Our flock is small, however and we have five customers that have been buying from us year around for quite a few years. Our hens lay just enough eggs for them with a few left over for us. By late September we hope our new hens will be laying. When they start to lay, their eggs will be available at the farm.

In the meantime we decided to help our friend, Rose Skora and her family sell their eggs from their new flock of chickens. Rose is the UW Extension Agriculture Educator for Racine and Kenosha Counties. Her new family of three adopted children bought a 10 acre farm last year. Her

eggs will be available at the farm for \$4.00 a dozen. We will keep them in the cooler with a cash box on the table by the check off list. They will also be available at our Saturday on farm market.

Rose's farm, Adoption Acres, is a new farm in Burlington that is run by her and her three children.

Adoption Acres is focusing on rare/heritage breeds of poultry and raising laying hens, meat chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys. The family also has sheep and two goats. All of the animals are on pasture and grass and are fed hay during the winter. Rose does supplement the poultry with a commercial feed. No hormones or antibiotics are used."

For more information, call Rose Skora at 262-806-7175 or adoptionacres@gmail.com.

Rose and her family also adopted our two handsome Delaware roosters, "the evil twins" last fall so Junior could enjoy a peaceful retirement here.

DON'T RIP THE FLAPS

Despite the drawing with detailed instructions that my Dad created to show everyone how to collapse the box, many came back with torn bottom flaps.

Use your thumbs to push the center of the flaps to the outside so that the crease rises and the tabs release. DO NOT grab the flaps and pull up. If in doubt, please return your box in an uncollapsed state.

Green Beans and Fennel

1/2 lb. green beans, washed, trimmed
and cut into 1-inch lengths
2 fennel bulbs, stalks trimmed,
discolored outer layers and cones discarded,
inner layers cut into 1/3-inch wide strips then
1-inch lengths (should be about same size as beans)

2 T. finely chopped dill
2 T. finely chopped fennel fronds
2 T. sour cream
1 t. honey
Salt and pepper, to taste

Bring a large saucepan of hot water to a boil. Add beans and cook until tender, about 5-6 min. Immediately drain and cool under running cold water. Drain and set aside. Cook the fennel in the same manner until tender, about 6-7 min. Meanwhile, mix together the dill, sour cream, and honey. When fennel is tender, add the cooked beans to the pot with the fennel and cook just long enough for the beans to heat. Drain well, toss with dill and sour cream mixture, season with salt and pepper as needed. Serves 3

Potatoes with Peppers and Green Onions

1 Tbsp. grapeseed oil
1 medium green bell pepper,
seeded and cut into thin strips
1 bunch green onions, thinly sliced
4 medium (or twice as many small) early

potatoes, washed and thinly sliced (leave the skins on!)
Salt and pepper, to taste
Pinch hot pepper flakes
2 bay leaves

Heat oil over medium heat in a large, heavy-bottomed skillet. Layer half the peppers then half the onions, and half the potatoes, seasoning each layer with salt, pepper, and a pinch of hot pepper flakes. Repeat. Stick the bay leaves among the vegetables. Reduce heat to medium low. Cover and cook about 25 min. or until potatoes are soft. Stir every 5 min. with a wide spatula. Serves 4

Simple Cucumber Fennel Salad

2 cups sliced cucumbers
1 cup sliced fennel with fronds
(torn into bite-size pieces)
Small head looseleaf lettuce, washed and torn

1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
Salt and Pepper, to taste

In a large bowl, combine the cucumbers, fennel, and lettuce. Add the oil and vinegar and seasoning, toss to combine. Add basil, if desired — See note.

Note: This salad is also very good with fresh basil. If you happen to have some in your garden or find some at the market, add 2 tablespoons chopped to this salad. Serves 4

Creamy Mustard Dressing

1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup plain yogurt
2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard

4 tsp. white wine vinegar
1 tsp. dried tarragon (or fresh chopped fennel fronds)
Salt and pepper, to taste

Stir together all ingredients and chill until ready to serve with a salad, with raw veggies, or on a sandwich. Makes just short of 1 cup.