

Pinehold Gardens *Field Notes*

Vol. 25, Week 2

July 17, 2019

In This Week's Box

- Head lettuce, butterhead
- Scallions
- Carrots
- Bright Lights Swiss chard
- Fennel

Next Weeks Box? (weekly members)

- Garlic
- Lettuce
- Potatoes
- Summer squash or cucumbers
- Radishes

A DAY IN THE LIFE

We have been working 12- to 14-hour days for the past two weeks trying to do more than a month's work of work in that time. Lately we have been coming inside after dark, taking a shower, skipping supper and going to bed.

The wet, cold spring and early summer has had a trickle down effect. The CSA pays for most of our farm and household expenses. Our market stand and restaurant sales cover the rest and, more importantly, pay for our employees. We stopped attending the Drexel Town Square Farmers Market after two weeks, have not yet opened our On Farm Stand and have sold only a couple of items to restaurants. All produce that was planted with plans of being sold to support those other costs is going to the CSA, which has always been our number one priority. So we have only been able to bring in our three part-time employees on an occasional basis, leaving much of the work to us, especially David. We are very fortunate to have an experienced hard working worker share crew for harvest days. The loss of sales has also eliminated any equipment and most supply purchases.

FIELD NOTES

Ironically we finished transplanting the last of our summer crops (melons and tomatillos) six weeks behind schedule the day after we transplanted all of our fall crops right on schedule.

And also ironically we could really use some rain before the high temperatures return tomorrow. We have planted over 10,000 plants in the last two weeks and have direct seeded beans, carrots and beets. The young plants have not developed a deep root system so they are struggling and need constant irrigation, which is a challenge since we can only irrigate a portion of the field at one time.

BOX NOTES

You might be wondering how we have any produce to put in your boxes if we were not able to plant from early May until late June. We have two hoopouses that we mainly use for

growing summer tomatoes and cucumbers. The chard had been growing in an outside row of the tomato house and the beets, carrots and scallions were planted in our movable house which we moved off of those crops a month ago so we could plant cucumbers and other summer crops in it.

EVERY OTHER WEEK

There will NOT be a box next week for the 23 people that signed up for the Every Other Week share option.

STORAGE NOTES

Carrots - Remove the greens or the carrots will dehydrate. The greens can be used to make pesto or as a garnish.

Swiss Chard - The variety this week is Bright Lights, similar to last week's variety, but with stems that require more cooking. Many people mistook the Baresse chard for pac choi, as it was a whole plant instead of a bunch.



More than 6,100 cauliflower, broccoli, kale and cabbage transplants later, this crew of three young, energetic farmers and one senior citizen farmer paid little heed to the scorching temperatures and dessicating winds to plant this season fall crops right on schedule. Big thanks to Heather, Ali and Ken.

Food Tips: Fennel

from members Mary and Jeff Siuta



Fennel is sometimes seen as Florence fennel or sweet anise. It has an anise flavor, though some think that it's a bit like licorice, as well.

Generally, fennel has three parts:

- A bulb
- Tough stalks growing out of the top of the bulb
- Feathery fronds at the tops of the stalks

The bulb and the fronds are the most typically eaten parts of the plant; the stalks can be used in your stock pot when making vegetable stock (all of the solids in stock get strained out).

The bulb can be eaten raw or cooked. The fronds are quite delicate, and best eaten raw as a garnish or as a component in cold dishes.

The bulb has a tough core that needs to be removed. The easiest way to do this is usually to cut off and reserve them for other uses. Then cut the bulb in half, and using a sharp paring knife make a v-shaped cut to remove the core.

The bulb can be sliced as desired. However, slicing the bulbs/sections across from side to side actually produces more flavor.

It's best to slice fennel just before you need it. It has a tendency to brown and to lose flavor if it's cut and then refrigerated for later use.

Fennel can be used in both savory and sweet preparations. It pairs well with fish and chicken. It also works well in raw salads with fruit. Tarragon, basil and mint pair well with fennel.

— Members Mary and Jeff Siuta

Carrot, Fennel, Apple Slaw

From Member Jeff Siuta, adapted from Martha Stewart

- 1/2 cup plain nonfat yogurt
- 2 Tbs. white wine vinegar
- 1/2 tsp. celery seeds
- 1/4 tsp. coarse salt
- 1 Tbs. freshly chopped tarragon
- 1 lb. carrots, scrubbed or peeled and cut into 3-by-1/4-inch matchsticks
- 1 fennel bulb, cut into 3-by-1/4-inch matchsticks
- 1 Granny Smith apple, unpeeled, cores and cut into 1/2-inch wedges

Place the yogurt, white wine vinegar, celery seeds, salt and tarragon in a small bowl, and whisk to combine; set aside. Place the carrot and fennel matchsticks and apple wedges in a medium bowl. Add the reserved yogurt.

Jeff's notes: This makes a very attractive salad course when individually plated. It works best if you plate the slaw already dressed (it keeps the fennel and apples from browning).

I like to garnish the salad with some of the feathery fronds from the fennel tops, particularly the more delicate, feathery ones from the top center of the bulb.

Fresh tarragon here is a must; dried tarragon imparts flavor, but not the punch of flavor of the fresh herb.

Fennel, Jicama, Apple Salad

From Member Jeff Siuta

Vinaigrette:

- 1/2 cup apple juice
- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 Tbs. whole grain Dijon mustard
- 1 Tbs. brown sugar
- Salt and Freshly ground pepper, to taste

Salad:

- 1 bulb fresh fennel, julienned and fronds reserved
- 1 Crispin (Mutsu) or Fuji apple, julienned
- 1 jicama peeled and julienned
- Fronds for garnish

Jeff's Notes: Consider substituting julienned kohlrabi or carrot. Keep the surplus dressing in the fridge for other salads.

