

Pinehold Gardens Field Notes

Vol. 18 No. 4, Week 2

July 18, 2012

In This Box

- Fresh garlic
- Jade cucumber
- Provider green beans
- Zucchini or Yellow summer squash
- Bright Lights Swiss chard
- Plato romaine lettuce
- Green onions
- Cherry tomatoes in rotation

Next Week?

- Carrots
- Hoophouse grown tomatoes
- Basil, Cilantro
- Beans
- Head lettuce
- Kohlrabi

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Whew, it was a hot one yesterday for us and our worker-share crew. We had harvested some of the crops before Tuesday in anticipation of the heat, but many things had to be done yesterday for today's box.

David and I are the main workers at Pinehold, putting in many long hours. Ken, our friend, in his sixth year here, helps out two days a week.

The rest of our help is provided by worker shares — people who work 4 hours a week in exchange for a membership. Yesterday they picked lettuce, green onions, Swiss Chard and cherry tomatoes. They then moved on to hand transplant some fall crops and they finished their shift by weeding the upick paste tomato area.

While we are used to the heat, they are not. But they all hung in there. Thanks everyone.

FIELD NOTES

A total of 1.2 inches of rain fell Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. Any evidence of that is long gone. A nice shower fell this morning. Yip-pee. Soil moisture permitting we will continue to transplant our fall crops of broccoli, cabbage and kale and direct seed beets, carrots, rutabagas and turnips. In all of this, the main ingredient is soil moisture — not too much, not too little.

We keep wondering how our well is holding up, given the work out it's been getting. We had to replace the well pump last year so we know it is 180 feet deep and the most we've drawn down is about 30 feet. But that was before this year.

SAVE THE BOXES

To repeat in case you didn't get a chance to read last week's newsletter.

The waxed boxes in which we pack the vegetables are not recyclable and are expensive. Please take care of the box and do not rip the bottom flaps, making the box unusable. Also, please remember to bring your flattened box back each week to your drop site.

ROTATING BY DROPSITE

Some crops mature over a long time period, cherry tomatoes being one of them. So if a crop is listed as rotating by drop site only some sites will receive that crop

that week. After this week most sites will have received cherry tomatoes. We might also rotate a crop if the crop does not produce enough. That almost happened this week with the Zephyr summer squash as it is not setting fruit in the heat. Instead we are packing some green zucchini and some small Zephyrs.

HOW TO CONTACT US

We check email and voice mail a few times a day, and either way is a good way to touch base with us. We do not have a cell phone.

BOX NOTES

The garlic has been recently harvested. Garlic is usually cured before it is sold. Curing garlic dries the wrappers that surround the head and each clove. Uncured garlic's wrappers are more waxy. Fresh garlic is juicy and pungent. Please do not refrigerate it. It stores well at room temperature.

Provider beans is always the first green bean variety that we plant. It germinates well in cool, wet soil while most other varieties rot. It may not be as sweet or perfect as some of the newer varieties, but like the name suggests, it is a dependable bean with a classic green bean taste. The drought and the uneven level of moisture between irrigation cycles while the beans were developing has curled some of the beans.

Swiss chard, a member of the beet family, is similar to spinach in its uses as in it is often paired with eggs.

Simply sauteed with olive oil, fresh garlic and salt and pepper makes a nice side dish. Cook the stems first.

“HOW DO I STORE MY PRODUCE?”

Any leafy green such as lettuce, chard or kale needs to be placed in a plastic bag before it goes into the frig. Refreshing it in cold water first is also a good idea.

Carrots and beets should also be refrigerated in a plastic bag. Remove the greens first. Store the beet greens separately in a plastic bag.

Cucumbers prefer 43 degrees. In some refrigerators the crisper draw is fine. If your frig is too cold, just leave it out on the counter.

Onions garlic and tomatoes should not be refrigerated. Scallions or green onions can be refrigerated.

EGGS

Last year we were selling our friend Rose Skora, our owner Adoption Acres' eggs. Because she has lost quite a few hens in the heat and has just enough eggs to meet her own demand, we will not have her eggs to sell this year.

REQUEST FOR HELP

We still need some help harvesting garlic. Hours are Friday 10 am - 4 pm and Saturday 10 am - 2 pm. David digs up the garlic with an undercutter bar on the tractor, people pull the garlic out of the ground and others trim the roots and stems and pack them into crates.

Green Bean Salad with Smoked Mozzarella

1 lb. green beans, cut into 2-inch lengths
2 oz. (1/8 lb.) smoked mozzarella, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1/2 c. cherry tomatoes, quartered

Dressing:

1 small clove garlic, minced
1/2 t. Dijon mustard

1 1/2 T. balsamic vinegar
1 1/2 t. chopped fresh tarragon or 1/4 t. dried tarragon
5 T. (or a little more) olive oil
Salt and pepper

Cook beans in boiling salted water for about 2 1/2 min. Refresh them under cold water and drain. In a large bowl, combine beans with cheese and tomato. Whisk dressing ingredients until well combined. Toss with bean mixture and season with salt and pepper. Serves 3.

Yogurt Garlic Dip

1 small or 1/2 large cucumber, peeled, seeded, and grated
1 t. salt
1 1/2 c. plain whole milk yogurt
1 clove garlic, minced

2 t. lemon juice
1/4 c. chopped Swiss Chard, stems removed and reserved for another use, leaves chopped
2 T. chopped parsley

Place cucumber in small bowl with salt; set aside for 10 min. In separate bowl combine yogurt, garlic, lemon juice, Swiss chard and parsley, and set aside. Squeeze grated cucumber to discard excess water and blend into yogurt mix. Serve with cut up raw vegetables (daikon radish, romaine hearts, green onions, tomatoes, summer squash) or use as dip with roasted potatoes. Serves 5-6 .

Romaine Chop Salad with Basil Dressing

Dressing:

2 cloves garlic
1 t. Dijon mustard
1 t. honey
3 T. rice vinegar
1/4 c. extra-virgin olive oil
1/3 c. fresh basil

Salad:

1 Hard boiled egg
1/2 head romaine lettuce
1/2 cucumber, diced
1/2 red onion, finely chopped
Couple handfuls of cherry tomatoes, cut into halves
1/2 c. cooked chickpeas
1/3 c. crumbled blue cheese or feta

Blend garlic, mustard, honey, and vinegar. Slowly pour in olive oil. Add basil and pulse a few times to blend. Peel egg and cut into small pieces. Break apart lettuce leaves and wash in cold water. Stack leave on top of each other. Bisect stack with knife then begin chopping into 1-inch squares. Chop lettuce and put lettuce in salad bowl. Add cucumber, onion, tomato, egg, chickpeas, and cheese. Pour dressing over salad and toss well. Serve immediately.

Summer Squash and Swiss Chard Casserole

1 Medium onion chopped
1 T. fresh marjoram leaves
or 1 t. dried marjoram, chopped
2 t. fresh thyme leaves
or 1/2 t. dried thyme, chopped
2 T. unsalted butter
1 1/4 lbs. yellow summer squash (or

zucchini), cut into 1-inch chunks
1 1/2 t. packed light brown sugar
1/2 t. salt
1/8 t. freshly ground pepper
Small bunch Swiss chard,
stems separated and chopped, leaves chopped

Melt butter in a large heavy skillet over moderately high heat. Add onion mixture and cook, stirring often, until nicely browned, 10-12 min. Meanwhile coarsely chop squash. When the onion is nicely browned, mix in the squash, brown sugar, salt, and pepper. Reduce heat to moderately low, cover the squash, and cook until very soft and almost dry, 40-45 min. (As the squash cooks, give it an occasional stir to keep from sticking to skillet. If you keep heat low enough, this shouldn't happen. The goal is to evaporate the liquid. When squash has cooked 25-30 min. add chard stems for remaining cooking time. Preheat oven to 350F. Also lightly grease shallow 3-qt. casserole. When squash is nearly done, add chard leaves and toss to combine. Turn skillet mixture into prepared casserole, set uncovered on middle oven shelf, and bake until nicely browned on top, about 1 hr.