

Pinehold Gardens *Field Notes*

Vol. 16 Week 2

July 28, 2010

A DAY IN THE LIFE

We had a great first delivery week. Plenty of produce was picked, washed, weighed and prepped by Tuesday at noon. The newsletter was finished by Wednesday morning and the email database almost error free. Rita Collen, long-time worker share but new at packing boxes, teamed up with me to pack 150 boxes in under three hours. David and I split up deliveries with Rita taking the Racine boxes to her home, our Racine drop site. Ken Knetzger our lead worker and friend stayed for a supper of fresh salads and grilled brats and veggie sausage. We toasted the start of the CSA season.

The next day rain was predicted so we were in the field by 7:30 a.m. transplanting some of the fall crops of broccoli and kale. We stopped when the drizzle turned to rain and the tractor and transplanter tires clogged up with mud. Although 2.3 inches fell and the area known as "Lake Pinehold" had standing water in it, by 1 p.m. I was harvesting salad mix and arugula for my weekly standing order with La Merenda and Lake Pinehold was draining quickly. Around 6 or 7 pm as I was picking cucumbers David told me that there was a tornado in Oconomowoc. I hate severe weather. I came inside, turned on the TV and watched the storms approach. Soon I was in our root cellar, my storm cellar, along with Claire, Sam and Morley. After a couple of hours of steady rain, but no hail or wind, we had a short burst of straight line winds and rain that took out our power, and destroyed many very old willows in the area. In the gardens, it shredded the lettuce and Swiss chard. This was happening in Oak Creek as the TV news was fixated on the Cadillac in the sink hole.

By morning, after a sleepless night wondering whether our septic field tiles would once again back up into our basement, we woke to a total rainfall for

the day of 6.1 inches and only seepage water in the basement. On Friday we waded through water picking what we could for market although some areas were impossible to reach. Friday night another 1.1 inches of rain fell.

At Saturday's market our friends and regular customers asked how things were. We answered things could be worse, that the basement wasn't flooded and that it takes time for things to die so we really didn't know.

On Saturday afternoon I was sitting on a milk crate picking beans with David and I looked up at the tomatoes a few rows behind him. Half of the plants were wilted and dying. (This is where all of our long-time customers pause and wait for the other shoe to drop.) Well, things are looking bad.

FIELD NOTES

I consult the NOAA website for weather statistics. As most of you know July is now the wettest July on record with 10.28 inches, the normal being 2.74. The June-July combo is a record. It's only the second month to break 10 inches for the month; the first being June of 2008. The Wednesday storm is the second highest daily rainfall event. Our total for these last two wet months is just over 18 inches.

The Root River where our water eventually drains peaked at its second highest level; the first being June 2008, again. Our fields, like most farm fields, have clay drain tiles buried in a diagonal pattern about every 50 feet or so that join into one main tile that drains into a culvert on our neighbor's property. The culvert had been filling up with sediment so last year it was dredged so that the field tile drain was a good three feet above water level. The culvert drains into a marsh which

drains into the Root River. I checked the drainage pipe on Saturday afternoon. It was under feet of water with surface water pouring into the culvert as well. Our neighbor's hay field had turned into a lake, which has only happened once before in our 20 years here. Yes, June 2008. The marsh was not draining. Lake Pinehold was not draining.

Pinehold Gardens was drowning.

Subsoiling, making raised beds, and adding organic matter will not save the farm in extreme times. It will not prevent soil from becoming saturated. It will not help fields drain when there is nowhere for the water to go. And extreme times is the new norm, which began the fall of 2007.

The total count is not in yet. The death of earth worms and billions of beneficial bacteria and fungi, help to create a swampy stench around here. About 80 percent of the tomatoes (about 600 plants), the next three weeks of head lettuce, 50-75 percent of the next two bean plantings and all of the carrots are gone. Some potatoes are gone, others look wilted, but we won't know for some time what survived. We have over a mile

In This Box

- Fresh garlic
- Zephr summer squash
- Cilantro
- Strike green beans
- General Lee cucumbers
- New York Early onions
- Green romaine
- Garlic scapes
- Carrots
- Hakurei salad turnips

Next Week?

- Fresh garlic
- Basil
- Potatoes
- Green onions
- Cucumbers
- Summer squash
- A tomato or two?

Recipes of the Week

CUCUMBER YOGURT SOUP, Annie Wegner, Serves 6

1-2 garlic scapes or garlic, chopped	1 ½ tsp minced fresh mint
3 cucumbers, peeled, seeded, and cut into large chunks	½ tsp salt
¼ cup water	½ tsp freshly ground pepper
1 cucumber, peeled, seeded, and minced	3 green onions, minced, or 2 Tbsp. minced fresh chives
3 cups plain yogurt (2 lbs.)	scallions, fresh mint, chives, or dill as garnish
1 ½ Tbsp minced fresh dill	

Mince the scapes in the blender or food processor. Drop in the 3 cukes, pour in the water, and puree. Whisk together the pureed ingredients, minced cucumber, yogurt, herbs, seasonings, and scallions. Serve cold with sliced scallions, mint, chives, or dill as garnish.

AMERICAN FRENCH DRESSING, Annie Wegner, Makes 2 cups

2 Tbsp. grated onion	1 clove garlic, minced finely
1 cup vegetable oil	¼ tsp Worcestershire sauce
½ cup cider vinegar	¼ tsp paprika
¾ cup ketchup	dash of hot pepper sauce
2 Tbsp sugar or honey	½ tsp white pepper

Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Whip until well blended. Refrigerate until needed

SUMMER VEGETABLES AND HERB DRESSING, Annie Wegner, Serves 8

½ cup rice vinegar or white wine vinegar	beans, beets, onions, etc.
½ cup olive oil	3 cups combination of quartered salad
3 Tbsp finely chopped fresh basil	turnips, sliced cucumbers, green onions,
½ tsp. salt	sliced summer squash, etc.
½ tsp ground black pepper	4 cups salad greens
4 cups fresh vegetables, such as a combination of trimmed fresh green	Additional basil for garnish

For dressing: in screw-top jar combine vinegar, olive oil, finely chopped basil, salt, and pepper. Cover and shake well; set aside. In a large skillet, bring 1 inch lightly salted water to boiling. Add first group of vegetables. Return to boiling, reduce heat, and cook 3-4 minutes or until vegetables are crisp-tender. Use a slotted spoon to transfer to a large bowl of water (ice bath) to stop the cooking. Drain veggies after a few minutes. On a large platter arrange salad greens and vegetables. Sprinkle with herbs, pass dressing.

CARROT SLAW, Annie Wegner, Serves 6

6 medium carrots, grated	½ cup diced apple (optional)
¾ cup diced celery	½ cup mayonnaise
½ cup diced onion	Salt and black pepper to taste
½ cup raisins	

This is an old-time favorite, kids will love it Toss the carrots with celery, onion, raisins, apple. Mix in the mayo and season well with salt and pepper. Chill thoroughly.

QUINOA-ZUCCHINI CAKES WITH SUMMER HERBS, Mother Earth News

Quinoa:	Handful of fresh, savory herbs, basil, parsley, cilantro, etc. chopped
1 cup quinoa, soaked in water, 5 minutes	Salt and pepper to taste
2 cups stock	Cakes:
Handful of mushrooms, chopped	2 eggs,
1 small tomato or pepper, chopped	¼ cup bread crumbs
1 cup zucchini, shredded	Cooking oil
¼ cup sunflower seeds or slivered almonds	

Quinoa: Drain and rinse the quinoa. Add all the ingredients to a pot and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat to low and cook 15 minutes. Cakes: Stir the eggs and bread crumbs into the quinoa. Make cakes about 2 inches across and ¼ inch thick and refrigerate for 15 minutes. In a saucepan heat a thin layer of oil over medium high heat. Pan fry a couple minutes per side until the outside is crispy and light golden brown. Serves 6-8.

of potatoes planted.

The vine crops of melons, squash and cucumbers are still surviving. Same with the beets and turnips. Most of the peppers look like they will recover. The impact on the garlic and onions remains to be seen.

While June of 2008 holds the records, this is worse for us farmers because of the timing. In 2008 we started over the third week of June and had not transplanted most of our tomatoes and peppers. This year, by the time we get back into the fields it will be the end of July. The days are getting shorter. The nights cooler. Plus mid July is when we plant our fall crops.

The loss includes more than just the food. Continually facing these extremes has made it difficult to make Pinehold the place we want it to be — the place we want it to look and feel like. Loss of crops is one thing; loss of soul is quite another.

For the fourth year, we will do our best to continue. I will try and get some before and after pictures on the website. We thought we had this figured out, by moving the CSA start to late July, after severe weather season. Mother Nature had other plans.

BOX NOTES

Everything was washed as best we could. Please eat the carrots ASAP as they will not keep long. The turnips are salad turnips. They add zip to a salad and are great stir fried. The greens are edible. The garlic is fresh, juicy and wonderful. We love cilantro. The smell inspired us to have bean burritos for supper tonight.