

Pinehold Gardens Field Notes

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In This Box

- French Fingerling potatoes
- Red radishes
- Celery
- Ace bell peppers
- Chard or kale
- Garlic
- Copra onion
- Fairy winter squash
- Bronco green beans
- Dill

Next Week?

- Potatoes
- Winter squash
- Assorted peppers
- Swiss chard or kale
- Carrots
- Purple top turnips

A DAY IN THE LIFE

A number of people have asked me if we were going to the Farm Aid concert or if we get help from Farm Aid. First, we couldn't afford to go to the concert and I had never heard of anyone receiving aid. The questions made me curious so I went to the Farm Aid website and found out that the legal structure of its 501C3 status prohibits its from giving loans or grants directly to farmers. What is funded is other 501C3 organizations that promote local food or advise farmers on where they can go for financial help. There was a resource page listing grants that are available, most of which are funded by federal government.

While I didn't get a chance to read through the

whole website, the words "We never have and never will directly fund farmers" seem to be in conflict with the perception of what the Farm Aid Concert is all about.

Directing money right to the farmers seems the most efficient way of helping farmers. What we as your farmers need most is the support of our loyal CSA members who "loan" us our operating capital for the year by paying for the CSA share at the beginning of the year. We also need our farm market customers to come to the market even when it rains or when the lake is sending a freezing cold wind our way.

We have been fortunate to have received loans and donations from our members to build our pole shed and to help buy soil amendments.

We also have had positive experiences working with the USDA Rural Development office for help in the funding of our solar PV systems. A new NRCS EQUIPcost-share program also is helping hundreds of farmers pay for hoop houses for season extension across the country. And last there is the help from the UW-County Extension service which seems to only make the news when the budget is being discussed.

So it appears to us that the most help for local food and farming is coming from the public or the government directly. Of course this takes farmer initiative, but no one said the help would be easy.

CROP MOB REDUX

This Saturday afternoon

THE ONCE AND FUTURE FARMER

Regardless of whether or not you think organic farming practices produce healthier food or is better for the environment — although there is growing evidence for both — organic farming is a niche craft right now. Only about 1 percent of the agriculture land in this country is devoted to certified organic production. With world hunger an increasing problem, agriculture experts claim that organic agriculture is quaint but not sufficiently productive to feed the world. Well, there may be evidence that is not so as well.

The harvest index is the ratio between the size of the grain and the mass of the plant, expressed as a percentage. Agronomists think the maximum harvest index is 60 percent because a plant must devote at least 40 percent of its production to its infrastructure. Modern varieties of wheat and rice are at about 55 percent. In other words, science has pushed plants about as

far as they can. This is evident in recent news that Monsanto's stock is plummeting in part based on the less than impressive yield of its newest products.

And last week at the International Dairy Expo in Madison where farmers from around the world met to discover what's the latest technology and process that might give them an edge in industrial agriculture farmers got a surprise. In a competition for the best hay crop for animals, an organic farmer won the grand championship with a hay sample that was superior to hundred of others in three categories, including yield.

It seems technology by itself may not have the answer to world hunger and given the cost of the latest genetically modified seed, another reason Monsanto is reeling a bit, it seems a risky bet for poorer countries. The future may not be in the hands of chemists and geneticists when it comes to feeding the world. It may, in fact, be back in the hands of the careful farmer who cares for the land so that the land can care for us.

Recipes of the Week

BAKED RED PEPPER AND SWISS CHARD FRITTATA, Annie Wegner

2 red bell peppers	6-8 large eggs
3 Tbsp olive oil	salt and ground pepper
1 onion, peeled and thinly sliced	6 Tbsp bread crumbs, divided
1 cup chopped Swiss chard	½ cup shredded cheese

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Core, seed, and cut the peppers into thin strips. Heat a medium saute pan, add the oil. When hot, add the peppers and onion, saute until soft and lightly golden. Add Swiss chard and saute another minute. Let cool. Crack eggs into a bowl and beat lightly. Add pepper/onion mixture, salt and pepper to taste. Butter a round 10-inch baking dish and sprinkle with 4 Tbsp bread crumbs. Pour egg mixture into dish and sprinkle with cheese. Top the bread crumbs and bake for 20 minutes or until frittata is slightly puffy and firm. Serve hot or warm. Serves 4

RISOTTO WITH SWISS CHARD AND WINTER HERBS, Annie Wegner

1 bunch Swiss chard, about 1 lb., washed	1 Tbsp each chopped sage and rosemary
salt to taste	3 Tbsp chopped Italian parsley
3 Tbsp olive oil	6 cups chicken or vegetable stock
2 Tbsp unsalted butter, divided	2 cups arborio rice
1 small onion, finely diced	ground pepper
2 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped	grated parmesan cheese, optional

Strip leaves from Swiss chard stalks. Chop stalks and leaves separately. Heat 1 Tbsp oil in large saute pan, add chopped stalks. Saute a minute or two then add leaves and saute another few minutes. Season to taste. In deep heavy-bottomed saucepan, combine remaining oil and 1 Tbsp. butter, turn to low. When butter melts, add onion, garlic, herbs. Cook over low heat about 10 minutes., or until onion is tender and translucent. Bring stock to boil in saucepan. Turn off heat and leave on burner, covered. Add rice to onion mixture and stir until rice is coated with oil, about 2-3 minutes. Add cooked chard and stir. Add enough stock to cover rice, and let cook, stirring often, until broth is absorbed. Add more stock, just enough to cover rice, and stir until absorbed. Continue adding stock and stirring until rice is al dente and risotto is creamy and liquid. Add salt if needed. Off heat, stir in remaining butter and pepper. Serve with shredded cheese if desired. Kale can be substituted for the Swiss chard in the risotto minus the stems. The greens should be sauteed for a few minutes first. Serves 4

HOUSE POTATO SALAD *The Little Book of Beans Beans & Barley* 1998

4 cups salad potatoes scrubbed clean and cut approximately 1 inch cubes	¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
1-2 Tbsp dry (white) vermouth	Dressing:
¼ cup radishes, thinly sliced	½ cup mayonnaise
¼ cup scallions or onions, thinly sliced	½ tsp celery seed
1 hard boiled egg, sliced (optional)	½ tsp dill weed, fresh is best
	½ tsp salt, ¼ tsp pepper

Steam the potatoes until tender, approximately 20 minutes. Check earlier when using every fresh potatoes. Place them on a tray or cookie sheet. Splash the vermouth over the potatoes, then let them cool. Drain any excess. Combine the remaining ingredients in a separate bowl, then combine all. Makes about 6 servings

COUNTRY SALAD, Annie Wegner, Serves 4

½ lb. fingerling potatoes, scrubbed	1 cup cooked chickpeas, drained
½ lb. green beans	3 Tbsp chopped Italian parsley leaves
½ small onion	2 Tbsp chopped basil leaves (optional)
½ cup red radishes, sliced	6 Tbsp olive oil
1 cup cooked cannellini beans (or other white beans), drained	3 Tbsp red wine vinegar
	salt and pepper, to taste

Boil potatoes in water to cover by 2 inches until tender but firm. Drain and, when cool, cut into bite-size pieces. Plunge the green beans into salted boiling water and cook until tender, but crisp. Drain and run under cold water. Chop onion. Place prepared ingredients on a large platter. Add white beans, chickpeas, and herbs. Drizzle with olive oil and vinegar and season with salt and pepper to taste. Toss gently, let rest about 5 minutes before serving.

we will be hosting another crop mob afternoon as 20 or more Marquette students descend on Pinehold to tackle some labor-intensive jobs that only many hands and young backs can make light work of. The 4 hour intensive attack on the work will begin after 1 p.m. If you would like to help out, you can in two ways.

First, we would love to have members help the students and maybe exchange some of ideas about local farming with these students, some of whom may never have had the chance to see real food grown in the fields.

The second way you could help is to drop off a little plate of goodies to help us fuel the crop mob. It's work, of course, but we want to make sure everyone has a little fun and taste of homemade, local food.

Advance notice that you will participate isn't necessary but it would be appreciated. The weather looks perfect for a good day outdoors. If we can get everything done, then we, the farmers, might actually get a Sunday off. The first day off in a long time.

BOX NOTES

It was a one, two punch of frost and freeze Sunday and Monday mornings. The most sensitive crops were picked or row covered for today's and future boxes.

The celery is stronger in both taste and texture than the blanched California type. Great for soup and stock. It can be frozen.

The squash is more of a pumpkin type for soups, pies and quick breads. It will benefit from curing on your counter awhile.