

Pinehold Gardens *Field Notes*

Vol. 26, Issue 7

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In This Week's Box

From our hoopouses:

- Tomatoes: slicers
- Basil

From the drift free fields:

- Garlic
- Collard greens
- Radishes and Hakurei salad turnips
- Lettuce or Lyon Swiss chard

From Simons Gardens

- Corn
- Kohlrabi

In Next Week's Box?

From our hoopouses:

- Tomatoes: slicers

From the drift free fields:

- Kale
- Beans, green and yellow
- Potatoes
- Lettuce, romaine

HERBICIDE DRIFT UPDATE

Over 100 pages of documentation proving our existence as farmers who have earned 100 percent of their income from farming over the past 14 years and part-time for 12 years before that. And to the best of my abilities, the backup documentation going back to 2011, of how we earn our living through the "unconventional" method of CSA members, Market Share members and Worker Share members, was mailed on Monday to our attorney as well as the estimated loss of income for this year and next. The constant tightness of stress in my shoulders was immediately released. I went for a long bike ride. Although it will continue to be a depressing long painful haul I felt good that I had done all that I can do right now. The next challenge will be to figure out how to pay our legal fees which are not recoverable as part of our claim. The bill for \$2,500 for services through August 31 just arrived.

Last week we spent another hour

long conference call with three really nice employees of DATCP, the Department of Trade, Agriculture and Consumer Protection and we found out why there are no labs to test produce for safety. There is no funding and therefore no staff to do any field inspections of any crops that are grown for resale, therefore there is no demand or need for labs. The only reason we were inspected and therefore had samples taken of plant tissue from our fields was that we experienced drift and drift or overspray is illegal in Wisconsin and there are rules and regulations for that.

Now let's say you are a cannery, manufacturer, packager, or wholesaler or maybe even a direct buyer of produce for a store or a restaurant, the onus is on you to make sure that the grower, whether in Wisconsin, the U.S. or in another country did not use a non-approved herbicide or pesticide on the crop that they are selling to you.

OK, you say, I will just buy certified organic food. I was disturbed to find out that a farm can be certified as organic when the three year transition period is over and their certifier just takes the farmer's word for their practices over the past three years. Herbicide drift, unreported, or say the use of Roundup to clean up a weedy field, could easily make it through the organic certification process. I thought an inspector came out to inspect the farm every year for those three years.

In this month's issue of Growing for Market, a trade publication we subscribe to, they addressed the erosion of the organic standards and they pro-



Pre-Covid times. Don't we miss it all.

vided the following link to The Real Organic project tinyurl.com/y2mntlc3.

As we always say, know your farmer, know your food or plant a garden!

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Just like almost everyone in 2020 we are trying to retrieve some semblance of normalcy after Covid interruptions and herbicide drift. And at this time of year we are usually harvesting thousands of peppers for the CSA and restaurants and also thousands of winter squashes before a frost hits, but we don't have that. Still the CSA and market routine helps. So do Sundays off, bike rides, a nap now and then, sitting on outside in the sun for a moment, cooking some dinners, combing the fleas out of the flea-hotel-cat Cooper, washing the muddy kitchen floor, canning some tomatoes, sleeping through the night without really weird nightmares, etc.

BOX NOTES

About 200 heads of lettuce were washed away during early August's rain events. The Lyon chard is really, tasty, even for me, a non fresh veggie person

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as it does resemble spinach.

Jordan Simon continues to help us fill out our boxes. This week it is corn and kohlrabi. In the future it will be winter squash. He is also growing some potatoes and beets for us with our seed as we did not have enough land available on our farm.

FIELD NOTES

Cloudy, damp, humid weather is not favorable to growing conditions but it is unfortunately very favorable for disease development. Saturated, muddy fields. Ugh. The “new” September normal. Well at least we are not in the midst of the West Coast fires. Adaptive Seeds, a new seed company in Oregon, owned by a young couple, had to evacuate their home and business. I have been trying to support them with more of our seed purchases over the past three years. A lot of seed production happens in Oregon, but that will never make the news.

Fruity Kohlrabi

By Jeff Siuta

Ingredients:

- 2 apples – a slightly tart variety works well
- 2 small pears
- 4 tablespoons lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 kohlrabi (totaling about 1 pound), peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes
- 8 radishes, cut in half lengthwise
- 12 large green or red grapes, cut in half and seeded, if necessary
- A pinch of chili powder
- ½ cup water
- 2 handfuls of baby spinach
- Kosher salt and pepper, to taste
- Freshly cooked rice, to serve (optional)

Directions:

Cut the apples into eighths and core but do not peel them, reserving one half of one apple for later in the recipe. Peel the pears, and cut them like the apples, also reserving one half of one pear for later. Sprinkle apples and pears with lemon juice.

Heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the kohlrabi and radishes, and saute for about 2 minutes. Add the pieces of apple and pear and half of the grapes. Mix, then add salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle with the chili powder.

Add the water, then reduce the heat, cover, and let cook for about 15 minutes. The kohlrabi should be tender, but still slightly crunchy. Stir in the baby spinach and remove mixture to serving bowl. Grate the remaining halves of apple and pear over the mixture and top with the rest of the grapes. Drizzle with just a bit of olive oil. Serve over rice, if desired.

Makes about 4 servings.

Jeff's Notes:

This recipe works well with small, tender leaves of chard or kale in place of the baby spinach.

Smashed Potato and Kohlrabi

By Jeff Siuta

Ingredients:

- 1 or 2 kohlrabi, top and root ends cut off, tough skin peeled off, remaining center cut into 1-inch cubes
- Potatoes, twice the amount of the diced kohlrabi, scrubbed and cut into 1-inch cubes (or, use whole salad potatoes of about the same size as the cubes)
- 2-3 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened, or more to taste
- ¼ cup or so of heavy cream, half-and-half or milk
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1-2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill leaves, fresh chives, or fresh tarragon leaves (optional)

Directions:

Fill a pot large enough to fit the kohlrabi and potatoes with cold water.

Place cubed kohlrabi into the pot, along with a small handful of salt. Bring to a boil and cook for 10-12 minutes, until the kohlrabi is just starting to soften a bit when pierced with a fork.

Add the potatoes to the kohlrabi in the pot, bring back up to a boil, and cook for another 10-12 minutes, until the potatoes can be pierced with a fork but are not falling-apart mushy.

Drain the potatoes and kohlrabi in a colander.

Working in batches, transfer the potatoes and kohlrabi to a flat surface. Using a potato masher, rolling pin, bottom of a drinking glass or the palm of your hand, gently smash them so that they are broken into smaller pieces, but not made into mush. Transfer the smashed vegetables into a bowl.

Add the butter, cream, salt and pepper. Gently toss the vegetables until the ingredients are all combined. If using herbs, add them and toss a bit more to incorporate them.

Makes 4-6 servings, depending upon the size and amount of vegetables used.

Food Tips: Kohlrabi

by Jeff Siuta

Kohlrabi is a brassica, meaning that it's a relative of cabbage, broccoli and Brussels sprouts. It's name derives from the German language, and it translates roughly to “cabbage-turnip.”

Kohlrabi can vary from pale green to purple on the outside, but generally has pale green flesh on the inside. The young leaves can be eaten like turnip greens, and the bulb – which has a mild broccoli-like flavor – can be eaten cooked or raw.

Kohlrabi can be kept in the refrigerator for several weeks, but remove the leaves first.

When peeling kohlrabi, start by cutting off the top and bottom ends. Set the bulb flat on a cutting board, and use a sharp paring knife to slice off the peel in strips from top to bottom, working your way around the bulb.

Wedges of kohlrabi are a great addition to roasted vegetable dishes. Grated raw kohlrabi adds interest to coleslaw. Very thin slices of kohlrabi are a good addition to a crudité plate with vegetable dip.