

Pinehold Gardens Field Notes

Vol. 16 No. 7

September 1, 2010

In This Box

- Estiva and Big Beef tomatoes
- Muskmelons
- Jade green beans
- Red Bull onion
- Panisse lettuce
- Zucchini for everyone else
- Basil
- Winner kohlrabi
- Survivor carrots

Next Week?

- Melon medley
- Swiss Chard
- Tomatoes
- Potatoes
- Fennel
- Pepper medley
- Garlic

A DAY IN THE LIFE

We had a nice relaxing open house this past Sunday with members, family and neighbors joining us for lunch. Please remember that you can stop by any time, except Sundays. If you want to spend some time with us, our general open house hours are from 2 to 6 pm on Saturdays.

FIELD NOTES

The weather statistics are in for the month. It was the fourth hottest August on record, 15 days had dewpoints of 70 or above and a third of the days during the

June-August period had dewpoints of 70 or above. (Now picture me wearing jeans, a T shirt and a hooded sweatshirt with mosquito netting over my head).

As the summer weather leaves us, so will the summer crops. Next week will be the last melon delivery from our unbelievably bountiful beds of melons. Tomatoes also will be ending, just around the time we usually start delivering tomatoes. Our first planting of cucumbers has finally yielded its last fruit and the next planting is starting to form fruit. It's a little late in the season for

cucumbers, but the plants look good. The zucchinis are doing OK, but not as well as the summer squash crop that just loved all the rain.

Although kale and broccoli really love cool, wet weather, they are hanging in there and looking good.

Unfortunately we are 2.5 inches below normal in rainfall. It's been rough trying to keep the soil moist enough to germinate the fall crops and to keep everything growing. Our fall raspberry crop started bearing last week, about three weeks early, and it's just too hot, dry and humid for them.

Sunscalded, dehydrated and moldy berries are abundant. Maybe if we get some rain we'll be able to harvest more than the few pints we've taken to the market.

The weather has been slowing the production of diseases and mosquitoes so a little hot and dry is good for some things in the field.

Our working crew, i.e. worker share members, has changed a bit this time of the year, with our teacher members and early starters heading back to school and normal life. The late summer and fall crew is now working hard and diligently learning new skills, identifying what ripe means, hefting crates of fruits and vegetables over uneven, weedy ground and in all other ways, having a great time. (Right guys?) With the exception possibly of Mark, who despite having the worse case of hay fever we've ever

Short and Sort of Sweet

The cucumber maybe the summer's most undistinguished vegetable. It may also be the quintessential summer vegetable, and we will grieve its absence.

There is not much to recommend the cucumber. The plant is low growing with a small yellow flower, spiny vines and prickly leaves. It has no formal shape or growth pattern and tends to sprawl in every direction but the direction one would prefer. The fruits are plain also with little spines, that albeit are easily wiped off, that make them seem more like a cactus or a creature from the sea. (There actually is an animal called the sea cucumber.) They offer neither the voluptuousness of the tomato in its varied glory nor are a standard bearer of nutrition such as the green bean and the carrot. Cucumbers are mostly water with a miniscule amount of vitamins and minerals. They have a modicum of vitamin E, making it seemingly more useful to slather them on our skin than to eat them. The cucumber's purpose seems to be to add crunch to our lunch time salads. The phrase "cool as cucumber" has nothing to do with

panache and class.

But this a song of praise for the cumber, for it is summer right down to its juicy core. Its skin is bright shiny green, like lush grass, and pale milky green flesh looks a bit like the sky just before sunrise with all its portent of another sweltering day. It also can only be grown in the summer while many veggies can be grown out of season and other veggies can be canned, frozen and dried to preserve their flavor year round. Let me say here that a pickled cucumber is a pickle. Case closed.

The cucumber is so much a summer day. Picked fresh and eaten, it's flesh is refreshing and slightly sweet. There's no lingering taste; the first bite is all there is. Expectation and potential cannot describe its simple presence to our taste buds. And when summer ends so does the harvest. The fruits are the boys of summer on this farm (phallic symbolism notwithstanding here.) And with the summer ending and the crickets replacing bird song, so ends the season of the cucumber. A season too short, it seems, so it must be relished in the moment and while it lasts.

Recipes of the Week

KOHLRABI GRATIN, Annie Wegner

2-3 kohlrabi with leaves	2 Tbsp flour
1 Tbsp butter or olive oil	salt and pepper to taste
1 clove garlic or ½ garlic scape thinly sliced	2 ounces sharp cheddar or other strong cheese, grated
2 Tbsp sliced green or bulb onion	
2 cups vegetable stock	

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Remove greens from kohlrabi and set aside. Cut off roots and tops of kohlrabi and peel away outer layer. Slice into ¼" slices or cube into ½" pieces. Wash greens. Remove stems. Stack leaves together, roll up and slice into strips ½" to ¾" wide. In a large pan heat 4 qts. water to a boil. Add leaves. Test for tenderness and bitterness. Cook until leaves are on the verge of losing their bright green color. Remove and drain. In a large saute pan, heat butter or oil. Saute garlic and onion for 2 minutes. Remove, set aside. Add 1 ½ cups stock to pan, bring to a low boil. Add kohlrabi bulb pieces. Cook until tender crisp. Remove from pan. Remove 1 c. stock and into it stir flour. Add back to stock in saute pan. Salt and pepper to taste. Stir to prevent lumps. Add onion, kohlrabi, and kohlrabi leaves. Coat with sauce. Add ½ cup more stock if mixture is too dry. Adjust seasoning if necessary. Transfer to a greased 2-3 quart dish. Top with grated cheese. Bake until cheese is brown, approx. 15 to 20 minutes

ZUCCHINI WITH TOMATOES AND BASIL, contributed by Rita Collin, member

1 pound zucchini, sliced approx. ¼" thick	½ tsp ground black pepper
½ small onion, finely diced	pinch of sugar
1 cup coarsely chopped tomatoes	¼ to ½ cup shredded Parmesan or shredded cheese
3 Tbsp chopped fresh basil	water or olive oil for saute'
2 tsp lemon juice	
¼ tsp salt	

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Saute' the zucchini and diced onion in a little water or olive oil in a skillet until it is the zucchini is crisp-tender and the onions are transparent. Drain well. Add the tomatoes, basil, lemon juice, salt, pepper, and sugar and cook for 1 minute. Place the mixture in a casserole dish and top with the cheese. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until the cheese melts. (The person who gave me this recipe also adds some chopped bell pepper to the saute' and tops the casserole with seasoned bread crumbs tossed in some melted butter. It's very good this way, but we like it the simpler way better. Either way, ENJOY!)

ANNA'S BASIL SALAD DRESSING, Anna Kozlowski, our very first CSA member

1 cup olive oil	¼ cup honey
½ cup apple cider vinegar at room temperature	3 Tbsp. chopped fresh basil
	2 cloves of garlic, minced

Mix all ingredients, except the basil. Add basil right before serving.

GREEN BEANS WITH CORN, TOMATO-HERB VINAGRETTE, *Vegetables Every Day*

4 medium ears of corn	¼ minced fresh herbs (especially basil, tarragon, parsley and cilantro)
2 medium ripe tomatoes, cored and chopped	Salt and black pepper
2 Tbsp. olive oil	1 lb. green beans
1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar	

Remove kernels from the corn. Combine tomatoes, oil, vinegar, herbs, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Boil or steam beans, and add corn, cook until they are just tender. Drain and let dry and cool to room temperature. Toss with vinaigrette.

seen in the worse season for ragweed that we've ever seen, shows up each Tuesday, knowing full well what he is in for.

BOX NOTES

The survivor carrots are just that, survivors from the rains of July. Not pretty, but local carrots seem to be a rare commodity at farmers markets and Outpost this season. We had hoped for several deliveries of large bunches of carrots this summer. Maybe this fall, but getting them to germinate in the hot, dry weather has been a challenge. These few carrots are best used shredded in a salad or slaw, although they are perfectly fine raw — just not much of a meal. Put them in a plastic bag until used.

The onion may have soft tissue around the base of the neck that extends into the top of onion. Trim this away.

The basil plant is usually attractive as well as fragrant and tasty with dark green, veined leaves. Something, however, has found the basil as yummy as we think it is. We suspect the little gourmand is a small caterpillar or larva of some insect that's been dining on the plant. Please overlook the tattered leaves and enjoy their flavor.

The beautiful heads of lettuce in this box were actually supposed to be for next week. (Keep that in mind when you get next week's box.) We harvested and washed them last night after we determined that they were being attacked by the same fungus (we think) that has attacked the Romaine lettuce this season. Rather than risk losing more heads, we harvested and delivered. Made for a long day, but we hope you enjoy the result of our decision.