

Pinehold Gardens Field Notes

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September 8, 2010

In This Box

- Estiva and Pink Beauty tomatoes
- Muskmelon
- New Orchid watermelon
- Adirondack Red and Blue potatoes
- Garlic
- Fennel
- Bright Lights Swiss chard
- Pepper medley

Next Week?

- Kale bouquet with mustard accents
- onions
- Zucchini
- Cucumbers
- Beets

A DAY IN THE LIFE

My back hurts. My foot hurts. I am getting old. Not in spirit, just the body, and maybe sometimes the mind. David and I will both turn 55 during the next month.

My back hurts because I spent the majority of the day bending over picking 480 peppers and 1,100 stems of chard. I remarked to our worker shares who were helping me that I cannot imagine what it is like to be a migrant farm laborer where day after day you are bending over and picking the same thing all day. I learned at a class at a farm conference that our bodies are not supposed to bend over at the waist. We are meant to bend at the hips. I have not figured out how to

do this while holding a pruners in one hand and moving pepper leaves out of the way with the other, trying to find a mature pepper and then cutting the stem without cutting my finger off.

My foot hurts because I wear mud clogs in the fields that have support insoles, but not the greatest support, while navigating over rough fields carrying large bunches of chard that kept acting like a sail and pulling me off balance when the winds gusted.

LAST CHANCE

Please consider joining us this Saturday at the Oconomowoc Lake Club for the Real Farms, Real Foods Farm Fresh Atlas fund raising

dinner. The elegant dinner menu includes La Merenda beet salad, chicken ballotine with elk pate, roasted French fingerling potatoes, warm apple and pear galette and more. To order tickets go to <http://www.farmfreshatlas.org/southeast/fundraiser.htm> or phone UW Extension Kenosha County 262-857-1945

FIELD NOTES

Change of wind, change of season. 47.9 degrees last Saturday morning as I packed up to go to the market. Sadly, but luckily the melon and tomato season has ended. The warm days and nights of summer gave us early maturing (for us) crops. I am usually complaining about the cool nights of September ruining the flavor of the tomatoes because its like putting them in a refrigerator. We and everyone we spoke with loved the flavor of the Estiva tomatoes. It was our first year growing them and we will keep growing them.

We broke an all time record for melon production for our farm. In the past we have delivered one, maybe two melons, with average taste. We hope everyone enjoyed them as much as we have.

Last year, the year of no summer weather, no 90 degree days, the opposite of this year, we were delivering tomatoes and melons during the last half of September.

The fall field of kale, broccoli, mustard and fall radishes and turnips looks

Chasing Summer

The constellation Orion appears now in the predawn sky, the sword-wielding specter of the night. He makes his appearance around the time the asters bloom, rising from the dark eastern sky, leading the sun south to another summer and chasing the night away, knowing full well day spells his doom.

His appearance provides me with assurance and steadiness in a season when we feel so lost and at a time of year more than any other when the future seems a place for which to prepare. He heralds that end of the long, carefree days and welcomes the long nights. And rest.

It is fall now. The hectic, frantic days of summer that make us crazy with the chasing after something ourselves. What is it we chase after in summer? A fullness, a satiety of experience, a sense of the endlessness of a moment. We may not recognize it, but

maybe summer is the search for the dream called childhood when summer was longer than it could possibly be.

What was it back then that made the days seem so long and the future so distant. The writer Verlyn Klinkenborg suggests we once realized something about summer but that something was lost. What is it that we knew then about summer or didn't know that made summer this time of timelessness.

Whatever it is, summer is a dream now. If there was an answer back then, if we knew back then what it was, we wouldn't have understood it. We couldn't have. That puzzle is left to us now to analyze and fret about. It was the dream the child has bequeathed us now in autumn. The dream will always be why we long for summer, chasing it from fall to spring in the hopes we will realize it.

Recipes of the Week

VEGETABLE CURRY, Annie Wegner

1 ¼ lbs. potatoes, cut into ½-inch cubes	2 tsp ground coriander
2 fennel bulbs, coarsely sliced	1 Tbsp. mild or medium curry powder
½ lb. mushrooms, halved	2 cups vegetable stock
1 large onion, sliced	1 lb tomatoes
3 carrots, sliced	1 green bell pepper, seeded and sliced
6 Tbsp butter	1 Tbsp cornstarch
2 garlic cloves, crushed	¾ cup coconut milk
4 tsp finely chopped fresh gingerroot	2-3 Tbsp. ground almonds
¼ tsp pepper flakes	½ bunch Swiss chard, cut into thin strips.
1 Tbsp paprika	fully cooked rice, to serve

Heat the butter in a large pan. Add the onion, potatoes, fennel, and cook over low heat, stirring frequently for 3 minutes. Add the garlic, gingerroot, pepper flakes, paprika, coriander, and curry powder and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add stock, tomatoes, mushrooms, and season with salt. Cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes, or until tender. Add bell peppers and carrots, cover, and cook for additional 5 minutes. Place cornstarch and coconut milk in a bowl, mix into a smooth paste, and stir into the vegetable mixture. Add the ground almonds, chard, and simmer, stirring constantly for 2 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning. Transfer to serving plates and serve immediately with rice. Serves 4

GRILLED FENNEL AND TOMATOES, Annie Wegner

2 bulbs fennel	1 slice bread
2 large tomatoes, quartered	3 Tbsp butter
3 Tbsp olive oil	½ cup finely shredded Parmesan cheese

Trim fennel fronds. Cut fennel lengthwise into ¼-½-inch wedges. Brush vegetables with oil. Lightly sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place fennel on a hot grill in center of grill rack. Cover and grill 10-12 minutes or until fennel has grill marks and outer edges begin to caramelize, turning occasionally. During last 5-6 minutes of grilling, place tomatoes on rack directly over coals. Grill just until tomatoes soften, turning once. Transfer to platter. Meanwhile, tear bread and place in blender. Cover and pulse with on-off turns for coarse crumbs. In skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add crumbs, cook and stir 3-4 minutes just until crumbs are browned. Remove from heat. Stir in cheese. Spoon over vegetables. Serves 4-6

CHARD FRITTATA, Annie Wegner

Olive oil	6 cups coarsely chopped chard
2 cloves garlic minced	2 large eggs
¼ tsp salt, black pepper to taste	8 large egg whites
2 Tbsp white wine vinegar	2 Tbsp grated Romano or Parmesan cheese

Heat 2 Tbsp oil in a large pan and saute onions until soft, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute. more. Add the salt, pepper, vinegar, and chard and braise, covered for 5 minutes. Beat the eggs and egg whites with a whisk. Remove the sauteed chard from the pan with a slotted spoon and stir into the eggs. Dry the pan, return it to the heat, and spread a bit of olive oil in it. Pour the egg-and-chard mixture into the pan and cook without stirring, covering to encourage the eggs to set. When the eggs appear firm, about 10 minutes, slide a spatula under the frittata to make sure it is free from the pan. Holding a baking sheet firmly over the pan, invert the whole works to reveal the nicely browned bottom of the frittata. Return the pan to the heat and slide the upended frittata into it. Sprinkle the grated cheese over the top, put on the lid, and cook for about 3 minutes. Divide the frittata into wedges and serve.

MELONSICLES, Makes 4 Fruitsicles, Annie Wegner

2 c. melon chunks
1/4 c. water

Combine all ingredients in a blender, pour into popsicle holders, and freeze for at least 2 hours. You can also use ice-cube trays to make iced fruit cubes for children to suck.

beautiful. David walks up there whenever he gets depressed looking at our weedy summer fields. There is just never enough time. The theory is harvest a crop, plow in the crop residue, plant a cover crop. But the melons produced for over a month and the weeds kept growing and growing while we were concentrating on planting fall crops and harvesting the summer crops.

BOX NOTES

Eat your chard! 1,100 stems picked, sorted by color onto a table, carefully bunched, washed, put in the cooler and the next day placed in your box. Twelve man hours of labor. Eat your chard! It is high in vitamins A, E, and C and iron and calcium. Chard also contains no oxalic acid, and element present in spinach that tends to bind minerals and render them unavailable during digestion.

The potatoes are red and blue inside and out. I think that they are best roasted or sauteed because they hold their color. Definitely do not try to make mashed potatoes out of the blue ones unless you want gray mashed potatoes.

Fennel can be baked, steamed or sauteed or eaten raw. You can use the feathery leaves of the fennel as a fresh herb for seasoning. Try it in place of dill. Fennel is excellent on baked or broiled fish with butter and lemon. I freeze fennel fronds as is.

The longer, pointy pepper is an Italian frying pepper. We sautee it in a pan and then add it to a grilled or pan fried cheese and tomato sandwich.