



WEEKLY NOTE Week of May 30, 2016

Fresh from the Farm!

Waves was my word last week. *Transformation* is my word this week.

The pea beds we've had covered to protect from ground squirrels (have we mentioned we have a bit of a ground squirrel problem?) were uncovered, weeded, fenced as needed, and fenced again. We had covered them first with a mesh and then a solid (light permeable) row cover. The trick is to make sure to get the covers off before the peas grow through the mesh. While we were really fortunate to take the covers off when we did (the rains since Wed. would totally have prohibited this task), we had to perform some fine net surgery to release some of the plants that had, indeed, begun to reach through the mesh. It was a bit of a delicate



undertaking except two other impassioned pea eaters were on the crew and before we knew it, we were done and ready to put up the fence for the newly released peas to climb. Once the fence was up, we installed a perimeter fence protecting this scrumptious vines from deer. Oh, deer, yes, these are such scrumptious plants that we have yet another critter to fend off. Fingers crossed for enough yield for some delicious peas yet this season. We're trying.



The broccoli we reported on last week have begun to form heads. I'd give them about 2 weeks to be ready for harvest.

THIS WEEK

- Asparagus...**for sites that did not receive last week
- Lettuce**
- Spinach**
- Kale or Chard**
- Radish**
- Green Onion** (round leaves)
- Green garlic** (flat leaves)
- Rhubarb**
- Oregano** for Garner, Clear Lake, and Clarion. The rest of sites receive oregano next week



The 2nd of our two hoophouses which has been anticipating tomato planting did make its transformation this past week.



Drip tapes were laid out, T-posts and tomato trellising systems - another column in a month or so), worm castings set out (a boost we add at transplant), tomato varieties laid out to match the planting plan, and planting ensued. Tim did the lion share of the work and I helped with the last 1/3 of the planting. By the time we were done, the hoophouse had been transformed from empty plot to housing just under 350 tomato plants. This planting is later than many area producers due to our farming schedule. We want first tomatoes to be coming on for our Summer shares, starting in August.

All of this activity centers around our Bin Hill where the greens continue to thrive in the other hoophouse (the one on the left).

While peas are tended and tomatoes planted, the potatoes have been filling out their rows in amazing form, our radishes have put on enough size to be ready for this week with the third planting germinated, now stitching green down its rows.



Broccoli, peppers, and soon to come...squashes. Peas are just down the hill to the left.

Popcorn has germinated, the garlic is sizing up nicely, and the chickens are marching their way up and down the field.

The chickens are growing nicely. They are scheduled for butchering in about two weeks. When we realized just how soon we would be done with daily chicken chores, we said, "What are we going to do with all our extra time?" *That's a joke, mind you :)*

On our schedule this week is planting cabbage and the winter squashes . As the fields fill up with crop and the weeds take advantage of our inability to get into muddy fields, I can tell you there will be no lack of things to do with our "extra time" :) !

***Order chickens now if you have not!!
They'll be ready for delivery in
about 3 weeks.
Use our convenient online order
form on our website.***

Vegetable in the Spotlight

Radish - We raise French Breakfast and Cherry Belle radishes. This week's supply is primarily French Breakfast with a Cherry Belle here or there. French Breakfast are first as they have a tendency to become soft in the middle as the season progresses. Cherry Belle's are pretty consistently solid.

Radishes were first grown in China thousands of years ago, then in Egypt where ancient writings have shown they were cultivated before the building of the pyramids.

Nutritionally, radishes are as close to a calorie free food as it gets — just 16 calories in a 3.5 ounce serving — that's about 8 to 10 small radishes. Virtually free of fat and sodium, radishes also are a good source of Vitamin C, folate and potassium.

Sliced or julienned they add a bit of spice and crunch to salads and slaws. Try thin slices on top of a piece of buttered baguette for a French-style treat. Or why not consider serving radishes as a root vegetable side dish? Just a short sauté in high-quality olive oil is all they need. Finish off the dish with a splash of balsamic vinegar and a sprinkling of crunchy salt and pepper

Green garlic - We're delighted to bring you some fresh garlic, in the form of green garlic this week. Green garlic heralds the new crop and hints at the return of super fresh garlic bulbs that will sing and snap through your garlic press come August!

Your green garlic has had the top leaves trimmed and, stored in a plastic bag, will last at least two weeks in your refrigerator. But why store it when it's so great to cook with? Garlic is an essential seasoning ingredient - whether you are making garlic bread, lasagna, stews, soups, or just about anything else that calls for garlic.

Neither the woody stalk of this hardneck variety of garlic nor the papers between the cloves have formed and you can dice up the green garlic, starting at the base, white portion, up toward the green stalk - letting the feel of the knife tell you when far enough is enough.

We expect to be sending along the next supply of garlic - in the form of garlic scapes - starting next week. As the garlic plants grow through the season, they will put up a flower stalk called a scape. To encourage the bulb to size up, we snap and pull the scapes which offer another, delicious supply of garlic. On our way to the green garlic, we noted the plants are just starting to send up scapes.

Fresh from the herb garden - OREGANO

A selection of herbs will be provided throughout the season. This week **Oregano** is ready. The other herbs we plan to include through deliveries include **Parsley, Summer Savory, Basil, and Cilantro**. If using fresh herbs is new to you, check out this helpful website: http://ger-nis.com/images/brochures/GerNis_handling_herbs.pdf

Flavor: Oregano has a pungent aroma with subtle hints of pine and has a spicy, mint and citrus taste.

Usage: This classic Italian herb is used to flavor sauces and breads and pizza. Oregano is also underused as it is an excellent partner to vegetables of all kinds and is a great “supporting” herb when accompanied with marjoram, parsley and basil combination

Fresh to Dry ratios - 1 teaspoon of dried herb to 2-3 teaspoons of fresh.

- Fresh - This is delicious chopped into a fresh salad, added to a frittata, etc.
- Frozen - chopped it up finely and packed it into a small ice cube tray we have. Once frozen, I popped out the oregano cubes and have saved them in a bag in the freezer.
- Dry it - spread the herb out on a cookie sheet and cook it slowly at a low temperature until crisp, but not burned.



Cooking...Out of the Box

Your box may have kale or chard - either can be used with this recipe.

Lemon Parmesan Kale Salad - recommended by Belmond member, Marie Boyd

(found at <http://www.gimmesomeoven.com/lemon-parmesan-kale-salad/?crlt.pid=camp.jKvAELGsFvOs>)

Ingredients:

- 3 cups chopped fresh kale
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp. dried thyme
- pinch of salt and freshly-ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup freshly-grated Parmesan
- 1/4 cup toasted bread crumbs (optional)

Directions:

In a large bowl, whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, thyme, salt and pepper. Add kale and Parmesan (and bread crumbs, if using), and toss until the kale is evenly coated. Massage the dressing into the kale with your fingers for an extra minute or two until the kale is soft and dark green. Serve immediately.

Soil & Soul - Art and agriculture

There's a rich connection between art and agriculture- both creative expression, both contribute to community well being, both contribute to

rural community development.

Through local farmers markets, we've had the good pleasure to get acquainted with the North Central Iowa Artisans. First at the

downtown Mason City farmers market pilot several years ago. Another time I invited their products to serve as table decoration at a local food lunch and learn event. In our own house, our basement sports three beautiful floor tiles, created by Chris Rozendaal and JoAnne Willemsen that lift up the wonderful wetland ecosystem of our farm. Stop by and check out our floor sometime!



This group of creative folk organizes a fabulous Studio Tour each September. We encourage you to put this event on your fall schedule and are packing Studio Tour fliers in the boxes at our sites receiving EOW deliveries - so this week that will be Garner, Clear Lake and Clarion (just like the asparagus). Next week members picking up in Mason City, farm, and Belmond will find the flier in their box. Mark your calendar now - the weekend of Sept. 23-25! Celebrate the creatives in our community!

Weekly deliveries Mid May to early July and August to September

Tuesdays – Mason City, Garner, Clear Lake

Wednesday - Clarion, Belmond, Farm

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