



WEEKLY NOTE Week of August 8, 2016

Fresh from the Farm!

Final plug for our Field Day on Sunday, August 14, 2 - 4 pm. You should find a postcard in your box with complete details.

What are you curious about? What partnerships have helped you? We'll lift up the impact of curiosity and partnerships as two important factors in sustainable agriculture as we explore the farm and two on-farm research projects at One Step at a Time Gardens. **If you plan to come to the field day, please confirm with Lauren@practicalfarmers.org or (515) 232-5661. Bring your own eating ware and chair.**

The colors this time of year are wonderful - yellows, greens, red, orange, purple! Eye candy as well as delicious on the plate!

THIS WEEK

Sweet corn
 Tomatoes
 Green pepper
 Summer squash/Zucchini
 Cucumbers
 Walla walla & Highland Onion
 Red Norland Potatoes
 Red Cabbage
 Garlic

GO GOURMET

Eggplant (Asian & Globe varieties)
 Cherry tomatoes
 Chinese Cabbage



We've begun to enjoy those 15 apples that I so proudly announced several newsletters ago!! Nice tart flavor, soft flesh makes them ideal for apple saucing!



I'm on the melon watch - both cantaloupe (left) and watermelon (right) are coming along nicely! Remember last week's photo of a tiny melon? Well, look at this week's photo. We really do have melons at a range of sizes! They are expected to show up in the boxes late August/early Septemberish.





Becky is still smiling after carrot weeding. Monday's weather helped as did the fact that the weeds are not overwhelming. Carrots are coming along nicely.

After a couple of month's of entertaining public library programs across Iowa and beyond with her family's unicycle and juggling presentations, Christa B. Hanson rejoined the crew Monday. Read about their



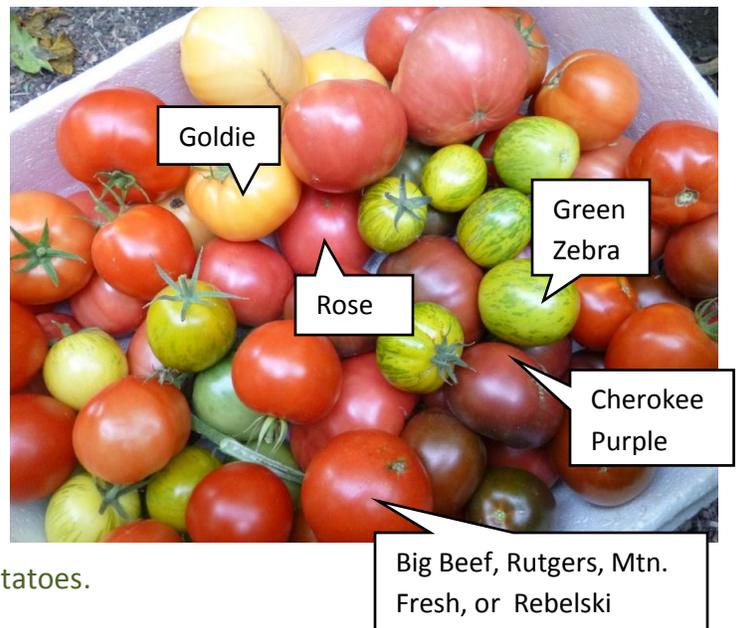
family at hansonshows.com.

Here Christa is demonstrating our harvest system for tomatoes that are part of Tim's PFI on-farm variety trial. Come Sunday and learn more about this project and the PFI Cooperator program.

Vegetable in the Spotlight

Tomatoes - Wouldn't this photo just make an awesome puzzle?! There are times when we harvest and just set back and ooo and ahhh at the beauty of these vegetables. It never ceases to amaze us - year after year we rediscover the wonder of shiny, gorgeous products! Tomatoes are one of those we delight in, especially as there are so many different colors. So it's time to revisit who's who!

While the photo to the right helps you to identify some, we raise about a dozen different heirloom varieties, some of which are not featured here. Two that remain green when they are ripe include Aunt Ruby's German Green and Green Cherokee. The latter of the two has become a new favorite tomato at the farm ...just so flavorful!. We recommend you run your own taste test and discover your own favorites. Members of the solanaceae family, or nightshade family, now makes up a good portion of the vegetables we deliver -Tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, potatoes.



The center of diversity of the Solanaceae is near the equator and thus species were undisturbed by the ice ages and have had time to accumulate adaptive genetic variation for extreme ecological niches. The Solanaceae are also the third most important plant taxon economically and the most valuable in terms of vegetable crops, and are the most variable of crops species in terms of agricultural utility, as it includes the tuber-bearing potato, a number of fruit-bearing vegetables (tomato, eggplant, peppers), ornamental plants (petunias, Nicotiana), plants with edible leaves (Solanum aethiopicum, S. macrocarpon) and medicinal plants (eg. Datura, Capsicum).

Red Cabbage - a member of the brassica family, including radish, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, which dominated our spring share. These dense heads will store well. Keep cold, near 32 degrees.



Top tips

Choose the best red cabbage by selecting one that feels heavy, is bright and has crisp leaves. Avoid any that have puffy leaves or outer layers removed.

Red cabbages are **easy to prepare**. Strip off the outer leaves, wash, then slice into quarters, cut out the hard central core on each, then chop or shred.

Lock in the colour by adding a touch of vinegar when cooking red cabbage in water. This stops the lovely deep purple hue from running.

Don't be too heavy-handed with red cabbage. A lot of its frumpy reputation comes from it being over-pickled or boiled for an eon. Although it's a sturdy vegetable it's not invincible...

Go **raw**. Lock in nutrients by eating your cabbage uncooked in salads. Just make sure you slice it very finely. Recipes that include apples, vinegar, sausage or bacon are popular with red cabbage. Cooked, it's a nice item for a cooler day. Raw, it's a great feature for our still warm summer days. Because it stores so well, you may well be able to enjoy it for either kind of weather.

Cooking...Out of the Box



We Spent some more time with Jess last weekend who introduced us to a Zucchini Ravioli dish she and her partner, Katrina recently enjoyed. I found a great example at <http://www.sumptuouspoonfuls.com/zucchini-ravioli/>

Now, that looks great and not too complicated. Next to the steps involved...



Zucchini Ravioli

- 3 small/medium zucchini (about 8 inches long) - *slice thinly lengthwise*

For the filling:

- 1 15-oz container of part-skim ricotta cheese
- 2 - 4 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
- About 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil leaves
- A small sprig of fresh rosemary leaves, chopped fine
- 1 heaping cup shredded Parmesan, Romano or Asiago cheese (or a mix of them)

For the "zoodles":

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F. Spray a baking sheet with cooking spray.
2. In a small mixing bowl, mix your filling ingredients.
3. Take your vegetable peeler and slice vertically down the zucchini to make nice thin "zoodles". Set two of these zoodles across each other (at a 90 degree angle) and put a nice fat pat of the ricotta mixture in the middle where they intersect.
4. Roll the zoodles around the cheese and place seam side down on the prepared baking sheet. Repeat until you either run out of zoodles or out of cheese. Sprinkle lightly with Red Robin Seasoning (or salt) and freshly ground pepper. Bake at 350 F. for about 20 minutes, then top with your favorite sauce and a bit of shredded Parmesan (if you like) and enjoy!

Summer Pasta Salad - recipe by Emily Oleson , daughter of our Belmond members Chris & Dean Adcock, featured in the [Belmond Independent](#).

2/3 C. sugar

1/2 C. balsamic vinegar

1/2 oil

1/4 t. black pepper

1/2 t. salt

bring ingredients to a boil in small saucepan until sugar is dissolved. Set aside to cool. While cooling, make the salad.

Pasta

Shredded cheese

diced cherry tomatoes, green pepper, cucumber, onion.

mix salad ingredients, then add the cooled dressing. Chill.

Soil & Soul - I see You

I think of you all, our farm members, often as I work around the farm - thinking of what photos and stories will help capture the farm connection. Last week I was reintroduced to a phrase of the African Zulu language that caught my attention .

The host of a public TV travel show described his encounter with the African greeting of *Sawubona*. It's an African Zulu greeting that means "I see you." It has a long oral history and it means more than our traditional "hello." I say "reintroduced", because you may remember this phrase from the popular movie Avatar.

Sawubona says, "I see your personality. I see your humanity. I see your dignity and respect." In the African village context, where everyone knows one another, it's an exceedingly powerful representation of understanding.

Last Thursday I was rolling that story around in my head - mulling over the stark contrast this phrase has to the rancorous discourse our media delivers to us daily. I was remembering that there are so many other stories that provide much more uplift - the intimate, and sometimes appearing mundane, stories right in our midst of our lives that the media passes by. And I was thinking of how few of you, our farm members, I actually do see, but whose stories extend the real impact of this community supported farm experience. I often make deliveries before members arrive to pick up.

We all live "full" lives with what feels like only fleeting time to catch up with each other. I do occasionally learn your stories - like new babies, soon to arrive exchange student from Palestine, daughters featuring recipes in the local paper, members that are taking leadership in North Iowa's local food work and so much more that I'm not aware of. I know through our membership, we have folks making an amazing impact on our communities. Even though I may not physically cross paths with you often, I am looking, I see you.



Weekly deliveries Mid May to early July and August to September

Tuesdays – Mason City, Garner, Clear Lake

Wednesday - Belmond, Clarion, Farm

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