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Box #3
Newsletter #3
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Parsley Plant
Dill
Beets with Tops, Orange: **Couple Boxes**
Orange and/or Red: **Family Boxes**
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New Stuff: dill, beets, kale, sunflower greens.

Parsley prefers full sun to grow well. Keep it watered as it gets established (especially in this heat), and fertilize it a bit once or twice. After it establishes itself, it'll grow quickly into a low, bushy plant. Harvest the biggest stalks first.

Fresh dill is good in so many things: salads (potato or otherwise), dips, deviled eggs, fish, carrots, etc. Remove the largest stems and chop the rest up. Store it in a plastic bag in your fridge, or cut off the bottom of the stalks and sink it into an inch of water in a glass. Change the water daily.

From the ancestor to the descendent: beets are here. They're full of vitamins A & C as well as carotene. Since beets are descended from chard, the stems and leaves are also edible. Choose good looking stems and leaves, however. Altho red beets have been around for a long time, breeders have developed an orange variety, usually called "golden". This cultivar is a little sweeter and milder in flavor than a red beet. Insects and diseases don't seem to like the golden beet greens as much as red beet greens, so they usually look a lot better. They're certainly as tasty.

In my opinion, roasting is the best way to prepare red beets. The only reason not to roast is because it's too hot to turn the oven on. Which is likely.

Roasted Beets

In a medium bowl, put:

1 Tbsp. olive oil
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. freshly-ground pepper

Remove stems and leaves from the beets and reserve for another use. Cut off the root and scrub clean. Cut beets into largish chunks and put into bowl. Do NOT peel, as it provides better flavor. Toss with oil, salt & pepper until all beets are evenly coated. Put the oiled beets into a pan with sides, and bake in a 400 degree oven for 30-60 minutes, or until they're done enough for a fork or knife to go in and out easily. Serve hot, or cool, or cut up into salads. Roasted beets make a great snack. Sauté the stems and leaves with other vegetables, or put raw into salads.

This recipe popped up 2 years ago, becoming something of a food fad. It proved very popular with our members.

Kale Chips

Preheat oven to 350ºF.

Cut out the stems & center veins of a large bunch of kale. Chop the kale roughly into 1"-1½" pieces, wash and spin them as dry as you can. (You may have to do that step in batches.)

In a large bowl, stir together:

2 Tbsp. olive oil
Kosher salt or sea salt
freshly ground pepper

Toss the kale pieces in the mixture until all are coated. Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil or parchment paper. Spread the kale out on the baking sheet as evenly as possible. Bake for 10-15 minutes, or until the leaves are very crispy. They will shrink some. Remove from oven, cool for 10 minutes, and enjoy.

Sunflower greens are a "living" food, and especially good for you. We sprouted these in a warm, dark germination chamber, hence their yellow-green color. Before you enjoy these, you need to do a few things to finish them off.

First, place the container in a shallow plate—something that will catch water. Then, give them some water, about ¼ to ½ cup, and place them in a sunny location. Gently pull or brush off the split seed shell at the end of the cotyledons (those leaf-like things that appear first when a seed sprouts). Leave the plants in the window for a day or 3 so they can continue to grow and turn a nice green. For best flavor, harvest before true leaves emerge in the center of the plant. To harvest, snip the stems, just above the soil level. Rinse them off, and you're ready to eat. Many of our members put the greens on sandwiches or in salads. If you like, you can take a few plants outside and let them grow into sunflowers. Wait until they have their 2nd set of true leaves before you do so.

Field Notes

Dry, no rain and none in the forecast.

Because it's so dry, Chuck is having difficulty sprouting carrot and beet seeds. Carrots can take as

long as 10 days to germinate and push through the soil surface. Then you hope Mother Nature will do most of the watering. This year we have to bring water using drip tape. These are the carrots and beets we hope to harvest in September, October and November. Without sufficient moisture, there will be fewer to harvest. We are addressing the beet issue by growing beets in flats. Then we'll transplant them, giving the small plants a drink of water in the process.

Also due to the dry, we've experienced a 30% loss in winter squash plants. The ones we have left are coming around and are starting to put on some growth. This is something we only plant once because it takes so long to mature.

Zucchini are not producing well. Normally, we're swimming in zucchini by now. This year, the plants are small and succumbing to a disease we rarely see. Chuck's going to transplant more soon. We'll see what the future brings.

Today, Chuck dug up a 300 ft. bed with 2 rows of potatoes in it and got only 30 lbs. Normally, a bed that long yields close to 700 lbs. We were hoping to put new potatoes in your boxes this week. Not only are we having problems with Colorado potato beetles, there's a fungus infection in them as well. Add in the dry weather, and we have 3, major stresses on our potato crop. All these stresses impact the number of tubers a plant produces. Now we're not sure we'll have enough to put into any boxes. Disappointing doesn't begin to cover it.

On the positive side, kale and chard are growing well. A little water and a lot of hot weather don't seem to faze them. The beets that were planted in May are sizing up, and we'll probably be able to put more in your box next week. The next patch of kohlrabi is growing well, and will likely be in box #4 also. For those who know and like fennel (me too), you'll be happy to hear that it, too, seems undaunted by the weather.

Correction: Last week we listed 2 watchdog organizations that we support: the Cornucopia Institute and the Organic Consumers Association—not Union, as I incorrectly typed. The Organic Consumers Association e-newsletter is called "Organic Bytes". Definitely worth reading.

Most of you are unfolding your CSA boxes, and for that we thank you. It's easy to do and takes just a few seconds. Turn the box upside down and slide the shorter, side flaps out of the L-shaped holes by unfolding them along the pre-creased lines. As you do this, be careful **not to rip** the tabs on the side flaps. Open all the flaps out and the box will naturally collapse. Your site manager or an experienced member will be happy to show you how.

At the end of June, we had our annual visit by the inspector from Midwest Organic Services Association, the agency that certifies our farm as organic. All was in order, and we passed easily. Hurray!

Looks like another stretch of temperatures in the 90's, oh boy. Think I'll dig out the wading pool. There's nothing like well water to cool you down.

Take Care,

TERRY & CHUCK