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Newsletter #5
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Contents

Basil
Beets: Orange and/or Red
Carrots
Cucumbers: Slicers and Pickling
Kohlrabi
Onions
Sunflower Greens

New Stuff: basil, cucumbers.
Choice Box: scarred pickling cucumbers.

The basil plants have not cared much for this hot, dry weather. They're only about 1 foot high and are desperately trying to flower and go to seed. We've picked them down significantly to give you reasonably-sized bunches. If the periodic rain continues, they should branch out and grow more leaves. We may be able to harvest again in 2-3 weeks.
Member Eric sent the following recipe (I've taken some liberties with the organization):

Basil & Kale Pesto

In a food processor, put:
2 c. washed & packed basil leaves
10-12 leaves (1 bunch with stems removed) of kale, blanched 2-3 minutes to bright green in boiling water
½ c. extra virgin olive oil
1/4 c. pine nuts (toast in pan if you like)
2-4 garlic cloves, minced
Sea Salt
-Process until you have a uniform, creamy consistency.
Transfer the mixture to a bowl and fold in:
½ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
2 Tbsp. Romano cheese, grated
3 Tbsp. softened butter
-If not using immediately, wait to fold in butter. When using over pasta, dilute the pesto with 1-2 Tbsp. of hot pasta water.
I made a version of this without nuts or butter, and the blanched kale added a very fresh flavor to it. If you don't have pine nuts, try almonds or walnuts.
Cucumbers are high in vitamin E (probably why they're so soothing on the eyes), and low in calories. Few vegetables are as satisfying on a hot summer day for replenishing liquids and filling you up.
This year, we're growing both slicing and pickling cucumbers out in the field. Pickling cucumbers come in a variety of shapes. Chuck has chosen a rounder cultivar. Its skin is a bit thicker than slicing cucumbers, but both skin and center are very tasty. I have the best luck storing cucumbers UNbagged in the vegetable drawer of my fridge. Even after cutting a chunk off, I simply put the remainder back into the drawer. The cut surface forms a skin, but doesn't go bad. They keep for about a week.

Honey Lemon Refrigerator Pickles

In a large, glass bowl, put:
6 cups cucumbers, thinly sliced
2 cups onions, thinly sliced
In a saucepan, put:
¾ cup honey
1 cup lemon juice
½ tsp. mustard seed
½ tsp. celery seed
½ tsp. ground turmeric
½ tsp. ground cloves
Bring to a boil and stir to dissolve honey. Pour hot liquid over cucumbers and onions, toss and let cool. Transfer pickles to 3 pint jars, cover tightly and refrigerate for at least 24 hours before serving. Reduce or increase amounts as desired. Remember, cooking is an experiment.
We have a few extra pickling cucumbers that have been overly scarred by the plants and insects. Cucumber plants have lots of small thorny protuberances. When the wind moves the leaves around they can rub against the fruit, causing an abrasion. The plant will try to heal this, forming a "scar". The inside tastes just fine, but we recommend peeling these before using.

Field Notes

Wednesday evening to Thursday morning of last week we received about ½" of rain. Monday night to Tuesday morning gave us another ¼". Hurrah! It's not a lot, but we'll take everything we can get.
Walking around the farm last week, we saw that some plants were doing fairly well. The Swiss chard seems to be happy with the amount of water it's been getting from drip tape. The first 2 beds are getting very large indeed, and the second beds are ready to be harvested. You'll see chard in your boxes next week.
The tomatoes are blooming profusely, so we should start to see the first, tiny, green fruit soon.
I was astonished to find small peppers on the bell and Italian pepper plants. Chuck thinks he's gotten his pepper-fertilizing technique down just right. Give

these 2-3 weeks to grow to a proper size—very immature peppers taste bitter.

The eggplants are small, but producing eggplants. We're growing the long, slender Japanese-style that has a thinner skin and sweeter taste, and the pear-shaped, European variety. This is a big improvement over last year when we had large, bushy plants but very few fruits—probably the result of over-fertilization.

Our first patch of sweet corn was so eaten up by a variety of insects that little was harvestable. Chuck planted an old-fashioned cultivar there, one he'd never tried before—and never will again.

The second patch of sweet corn, however, is ripening nicely. Chuck has surrounded the beds with an electric fence to keep out the raccoons, who have just started to sample the ears. This sweet corn should be ready next week.

The big news on the farm is that we're actually putting in an agricultural well. The drilling rig is in place, and they will start Wednesday. The plan is to go down about 300 feet—plenty of water that deep. The pump will actually be 180 ft. deep, roughly 25 feet deeper than the water level. Perhaps we'll be irrigating from it by Friday. I'll take some pictures for next week's newsletter.

Take Care,

TERRY & CHUCK