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Plant #2: Basil needs full to part sun to do well, and enough water (don't let them wilt). This herb grows 1 1/2 to 2 ft tall and will branch into a small bush taking up about a foot of space. It has a very fragrant leaf, which is wonderful in both cooked and raw dishes. Harvest the older, larger leaves first: this forces the plant to produce more, newer leaves. When the hop like flowers appear, pinch them off as often as possible--by preventing the plant from flowering and forming seeds, you will extend the useful life of the edible leaves. At some point later in the summer, the leaves will start to turn bitter. Start tasting them around August. You'll know right away when they're no longer usable. You can let the plant go to flower at this point and just enjoy it for its appearance.

With the first bunch of basil comes our pesto recipe. Feel free to experiment.

Basil Pesto

makes approx. 2 cups pesto

In the bowl of a food processor, put:

2 cups, packed, fresh basil leaves, washed and spun/dried
4 medium cloves garlic, chopped coarsely
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. freshly-ground pepper
1/4 cup almonds, walnuts, pine nuts, etc.
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Process all ingredients just until uniform in size. Add more salt, pepper, etc. to suit your taste. You can also freeze this pesto, altho the flavor and texture are better if you leave out the cheese. Pesto is a pretty potent sauce on pasta, so use sparingly. Start with about 1 Tbsp. per serving, taste, then increase the amount, if desired. Pesto can be frozen easily. I buy a package of the ½ cup containers and put the finished paste in those. To thaw, take a container out of the freezer the night before and put it into your refrigerator. Do NOT try to thaw it in the microwave: it'll turn black. Basil oxidizes easily (turns black and doesn't taste nearly as good), so always cover it when you're not actually spooning some out. If you can, pour a thin film of olive oil over the top of the paste to protect it from the air.

"Pesto" simply means "paste". You can make pesto with other herbs besides basil. People often substitute parsley when they're a bit short on basil for this recipe, some folks prefer the combination. I've made delicious herb pestos using tarragon, thyme, parsley, fennel, sage, lovage, oregano, rosemary, cilantro, marjoram, Summer savory and sorrel. Use one quarter to half as much of the stronger herbs: sage, rosemary and lovage. If you do not use any basil, the black color will not occur. If you use some basil, that pesto will turn color, but will appear to do so more slowly.

Altho cucumbers are 95% water, they are also surprisingly high in vitamin E. Instead of throwing the end away, try rubbing it on your face—it's supposed to be an excellent skin conditioner. That's why you see those cucumber slices on people's eyes in pictures. This requires us to pick every other day because cucumbers grow so fast.

The garlic harvest is starting. Fresh garlic is juicy and milder in flavor compared to its drier self. You still have to peel the outer covering off, but the clove will likely squirt when you smash it. Store fresh garlic just like you do the dried: in a dim, dry, cool (if possible) spot in your kitchen—NOT on the windowsill. It'll slowly dry by itself, increasing in flavor as it does so. Remove the stem/leaves, unless you plan to collect several for braiding.

If you're from this part of the state, you probably know and love kohlrabi. It has a juicy, mild flavor, excellent when eaten raw, altho many people have voiced a preference for it cooked, in a cream sauce. Trim off the leaves and peel it with a paring knife. Start by cutting off the bottom: you'll see a ring of small, white "hairs". Run the paring knife just inside the hairs, underneath the kohlrabi's skin and work your way around it like you would peel an apple. With the skin removed, cut it any way you like. I favor julienned pieces in a salad. It's great added to coleslaw.

Sugar snap peas are a marvel of pea breeding—so sweet you can eat the whole thing, pod and all. The trick with sugar snap peas is to pick them when the peas fill the pod and the pod is still smooth and

green—this is when their flavor is best. They are great eaten raw, or lightly steamed, or in a stir-fry, or . . . . Our block of old standard Sugar Ann's is producing lots of big sugar snaps, so you will get them again next week. Store them in the frig when you're not actively munching. They're even more pleasant to eat when you pull off the "string" first: grab the stem and pull towards the end.

Field Notes

Monday we finally got some rain—much needed, I can tell you. We didn't get a lot, around an inch, so the mud dried up pretty quickly, but all the plants are happy—especially the weeds!

The hot and cold temperature changes are pushing the plants in weird ways. Our early kohlrabi don't appear to be taking it well, getting a little tough before their time. We've planted more beds to ensure a fairly steady supply of kohlrabi, and are trying different cultivars, even one of the "giant" ones. Let us know how you like them.

The first broccoli is producing small heads with uneven beads. A "bead" is a flower bud. Ideally, you want all of them to be the same size: small. When some beads are small and others are large, the plant is stressed and not growing evenly. You can harvest it this way, and the broccoli will taste just fine, but you work to make those plants happier: more water, fertilizer, etc. In this case, more water is the first remedy. We looked carefully to see if there was enough to give you some, but we just don't have the volume quite yet. Soon, tho.

I'm keeping my eye on the cabbage plants, as Chuck is a big fan of coleslaw. The last time I poked them, they were still too soft and small. A few more weeks, probably.

We find ourselves in need of a Worker Share for Tuesday afternoon and/or evening. In exchange for a Family-sized box, a Worker Share helps wash, sort and weigh the vegetables that go into your boxes Wednesday morning. They work mostly in the barn, altho we may, occasionally, need some help out in the field. For more information, please go to our website: http://www.fullharvestfarm.com. An application is available there also. If you know anyone who is interested, please have them call the farm at: 262 673-6760.

We also have a number of healthy rhubarb plants for sale from the patch we inherited when we bought the farm. It was terribly overgrown and needed thinning, so this spring, spade in hand, I got down to work. 52 pots later, I was sure I had a little gold mine, intending to sell them at the West Bend Farmer's Market. Jung's gets $10/plant, and I planned to sell mine for only $4. Well, I sold only 8 or 9. These are certified organic plants in 1- or 2-gallon pots that produce delicious rhubarb. I don't know what the original cultivar was, but the stem is red at the base and turns green towards the leaf, with great rhubarb flavor. They need a sunny spot and a few years to get established before harvest can begin.

If you'd like to order, please email me with your full name, pickup site, and how many you'd like. I'll deliver them the Wednesday after your order (they need to get into the ground).

We still have plenty of "From Asparagus to Zucchini" cookbooks available. The cost is $20. To order, please email the farm, giving us your full name, pickup site and the number of books you'd like. We'll deliver the Wednesday after we receive your check.

Enjoy these next few, cool days. The weekend looks to be hot and sticky: beach weather.

Take care,

Terry & Chuck