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Box #5
Odd Week
27 July 2022

Contents
Broccoli
Cabbage: Green – Couple Boxes Only
Fennel
Garlic
Kale: Green Curly
Kohlrabi – Family Boxes Only
Lettuce: Green Romaine
Onions: Sweet
Zucchini / Pattypan Squash

New Stuff: fennel
Choice Box: ??

Fennel is a popular vegetable in Europe for its unique taste and ability to pair well with many other flavors. Fennel has been used for hundreds of years as an aid to digestion. It's high in vitamin A, calcium, potassium and iron. The bulb and leaves have a mild, black-licorice flavor that is very good in salads, especially coleslaw, vegetable dishes and with fish. The frugal cook likes it because all of fennel is edible: bulb, stalks and leaves. To use, cut off the top of the root from the bulb, which is tough, and chop off the leafy stalks for use later. Wash the bulb under cold, running water to get out any dirt that may have sifted down between the layers. Place the bulb flat on your cutting board and slice it in half. Set the cut side down on your board and slice lengthwise.
Use the feathery leaves as a fresh herb. They lose some flavor each day, so go thru them as quick as you can. Or, add them to your next batch of pesto, or potato salad. You can dry fennel leaves on paper towels in your microwave. Store the dried, chopped leaves with your other herbs. If you make stock, the fibrous stalks are an excellent flavoring. One of our site managers cuts the stalks into 4" lengths and stores them in a jar of water in her fridge: it's one of her children's favorite snacks. Like sugar cane, they chew on the stalks to get all the tasty, tender bits, then spit out the fibrous part.
Making an infusion (think tea) is a way to use a small amount of something, and get good flavor out of it. Here's how you can do that with your fennel:

Fennel with Fish
Clean the fennel as described above, reserving some fronds to add later. In a 10" sauté pan, over medium heat, add:
2 Tbsp. butter
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1-2 fennel bulbs, cleaned and sliced thinly
- sauté just until the fennel begins to brown.
Add: **½ cup water, stock or dry white wine**
-add the stalks, cut into 4" lengths (so you can remove them later), cover the pan, turn the heat to low, and cook the fennel until it is completely soft, about 15 minutes. While the fennel cooks slowly and flavors the liquid, snip off the rest of the leaves and chop them up. When the fennel is done, push the pieces toward the sides. You should have a thin layer of fennel-infused liquid on the bottom of the pan. If you don't, add more water, stock or wine. Scrape the bottom of the pan to loosen any stuck-on bits (this is called "de-glazing"). Add enough fish to fill up the area inside the cooked ring of fennel, season with salt, freshly ground pepper, and half of the chopped fennel leaves if you intend to turn the fish over. If you're using thin fillets, like Tilapia, you won't need to turn them over, so sprinkle all of the chopped fennel over the top. Cover the pan again, and simmer slowly, just until the fish is no longer transparent in the middle, but is still moist. The length of time will depend on the thickness of the fish. The best rule I've found is the simplest: Measure the fish at its thickest point, and cook it 10 minutes per inch, regardless of the cooking method. The fennel bulb is tender and delicious, but the stalk will be too fibrous for eating, so remove the stalks before serving.

The broccoli patch is starting to produce quite a lot of lovely, green heads, some exceptionally large, weighing 2 lbs. or more. Sometimes, broccoli doesn't grow a nice, rounded head, but produces florets that vary in height. I haven't found any difference in flavor between them.

We have enough green cabbage to give it to all the Couple boxes, ensuring the Every-Other-Weekers will get some. We'll have cabbage again, but much later in the season.
Full Harvest Farm Coleslaw
Serves 6-8 as a side dish
Dressing:
½ cup mayonnaise
¼ cup apple cider vinegar
¼ cup dark brown sugar
2 Tbsp. brown mustard
1 tsp. dill seed
1 tsp. celery seed

2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. freshly-ground pepper
-Whisk the dressing ingredients together in a large bowl until combined. Whisk the dressing again before adding the vegetables to be sure the sugar granules are completely dissolved.
Stir in: ½ cup onion, minced
Vegetables:
8 cups shredded green and/or red cabbage, carrots, celeriac, kale, kohlrabi, fennel, radish, rutabaga, turnip, etc.
-Add to dressing and toss until all the vegetables are dressed. Allow to sit at room temperature for 30 minutes so the flavors meld. Serve. Better the next day.

The sweet onions in this week's box are a variety called "Ailsa Craig". They originated in Scotland, and were named, according to the internet, after a small, rocky island off the coast of Scotland. Personally, I think it far likelier they were named after the Marquis of Ailsa, whose gardener, David Murray, introduced the onion in 1887. Apparently, Ailsa Craigs can weigh up to 5 lbs. apiece. I doubt we'll harvest any that size, but it's a fun fact nonetheless. This onion does not store well over the long term, so put them in the refrigerator and use them up within a month.

Field Notes
Saturday's storm pelted us with 4" of rain. We lost power for 15 hours, but the few vegetables in our cooler don't seem to have suffered. The ground was so dry prior to the rain that we were not slogging thru mud on Monday, only soft ground: the soil absorbed most of that moisture.
Chuck and I went out and secured row cover (a light, polyester fabric) over the lettuce patch we're currently harvesting, and the chard, before the rain arrived. It didn't quite cover the north end of that bed. All that lettuce was shredded by heavy rain and hail, but the lettuce underneath row cover came thru unscathed.
The wind did some damage too: it blew down several pepper and basil plants. The basil will regrow, but we now have some gaps in our peppers. Not many, thank goodness.
The Great Garlic Harvest continues throughout the week. The field crew have pulled up, cleaned and laid out garlic to dry in the sun from 6 beds so far. 2 more beds to go. This warm, dry weather is perfect for drying garlic and the sun kills unwanted bacteria and mold spores on the outer skin.
Our cauliflower patch is also producing a surprising number of heads. Some grew faster than we realized, and we didn't have a chance to tie the leaves over the top to keep the head as white as possible. These heads are cream-colored instead of white, but perfectly edible. Cauliflower is one of those vegetables that you have to harvest when it's ready. Luckily, it stores well in our cooler. We expect to have enough to put it in every box next week.

One quick reminder: please unfold your wax box carefully. If the tabs or cutouts rip, we can not use that box again. A box that's been used a few times is easy to unfold. A brand new box is stiffer and not so easy. Still, please try your best to slide the short, bottom flaps out of the cutouts, using the pre-folded crease as the bending point, even if it takes 2 hands. I and the packing crew thank you.

And that's all the news that's fit to print.
Enjoy the beautiful weather this week.
Take Care,

Terry & Chuck