

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for July 28th

2 'Miniature White' cucumbers
1 green 'Marketmore' cucumber
1 big bunch basil
1 Little Gem baby romaine
1 head red oakleaf lettuce
1 bunch green chard
1 bunch cilantro
1 head garlic
1# green beans

Large box additions

1 lovely heirloom tomato
1 bunch carrots

Next week's produce (we think): carrots – lettuce – sweet onions – zucchini – potatoes – purslane – dill – parsley – cucumbers

Local Roots Farm News

Hi Everyone! Jason here, taking over newsletter writing duties for the week.

Rain! We got a nice little visit from the rainclouds this weekend, more than enough to dampen the dust, but definitely not enough for us to slow our irrigation efforts. We are feeling good about the state of most things on the farm right now – we have laid miles of drip tape in our big fall plantings, so now we can just turn each zone on once a week or so to maintain the moisture in the soil. We are definitely still running into new challenges, but are no longer in the damage control stage of things.

The new adversary we are facing is incredible weed pressure. We've used vastly more overhead (sprinkler) irrigation this year than ever before, which wets the whole bed surface and prompts all the dormant weed seeds to germinate. Drip tape has many advantages, but a big one for us is that it leaves dry the areas in between our rows of crops, so in a typical summer our July plantings remain pretty weed-free. Not so this year, so we are now putting a lot of time into hoeing and hand-weeding our all-important fall crops. We knew we'd be getting ourselves into this situation when we resorted to sprinkling all our direct-seeded crops, but the alternative was that they simply would not germinate. The super intense sun and heat we've had for most of the last month just baked the surface of the soil so much that carrot and beets needed nearly constant watering.

So how about some non weather-related farm news? On Saturday, August 15th we will hold our CSA potluck here on the farm starting at 4:00. As you may recall, we postponed our normal Solstice potluck because we were overwhelmed with irrigation needs. Well, now we are more or less over the hump and can start thinking about things besides water... for a few hours a day at least. Please bring yourselves, your friends, your kids, and something to eat or drink. We will be picnic-potlucking in the shade of our covered farm pad. More details to follow in a separate email, but please mark your calendars! We'd love to see all of you here.

Here's to a calm, peaceful, and relatively temperate late summer!
~Jason, Siri, and the LRF crew

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Basil – This is a crop that needs no introduction. We have struggled with it in the past few years due to a mildew that makes it yucky. We have found a variety that's less susceptible, and the super dry weather has definitely helped too. This week, we are giving you enough basil AND garlic, so make pesto! Combine it with garlic, some nuts, oil, and cheese and, voila*, pesto. (*voila = blending them all together following the recipe in last week's newsletter)

Garlic – We have struggled with many crops this year, but garlic is not one of them. This is the second year in a row that we have grown some shockingly large heads of garlic. That, despite the fact that during the flood we had in January, half the mulch washed away and much of the field was under water for such a long time we were seriously worried all the bulbs would rot. Rot they did not, we managed to get mulch back in the beds where it wasn't, and the bulbs grew large and happy. Now we have heaps of garlic drying in our barn. We grow two varieties, Italian Red and German Hardy White. (We are looking for a Japanese variety to complete our Axis powers garlic trifecta!) Unfortunately, when we planted them last year, we failed to adequately separate the varieties and we didn't know which variety went into which bed. "We'll be able to tell the difference when we harvest them," we thought. "One is red the other white." But not so. We can't tell them apart! So this year, we have unidentified variety garlic. At least they are delicious. They are hard-neck garlic, which means there are fewer, larger cloves that are easy to peel. Remember, these cloves are huge, for recipes that call for 1 clove of garlic, try using 1/2 or 1/3 of a clove.

Green Beans – A whole pound of green beans is a pretty amazing feat considering the fact that we have 250 CSA members. That means we had to pick a heck of a lot of beans. Thankfully, this planting of beans is one of the nicest we've ever grown. It has gotten lots of water, and beans love the hot weather. The next few successions aren't quite so lush, but we should have enough to give beans a few more times this year.

Recipe – Simple Braised Beans with Garlic

- cut or break off the ends of the beans and put in a saute pan that has a lid.
- mince 1 clove (despite the advice I gave above, I mean an entire clove here) of garlic and add to the beans.
- add salt, one glug of olive oil and two glugs of water. Cover and steam/saute until the beans are soft, stirring occasionally.
- When the beans are soft, uncover, turn up the heat, and cook off the water/brown the beans.

Both our kids love beans cooked this way!