



Big Leaf Farm Newsletter Week #12

August 16– August 22, 2009
Farm News

It's hard to believe that it is already mid August, and recent days have felt distinctly fall-like here at the farm. Our resident swallows left for the year weeks ago, and now flocks of migrating violet green and barn swallows can be seen swooping over our fields. Sara was out mowing with the tractor the other day and the swallows quickly recognized that she was kicking insects out of the grass, and were swooping in close as she made her turns at the end of the field. Ducks and geese are forming larger groups and flocks can be seen flying together across our skies early and late in the day. The sun is much lower in the sky, and now we take our evening walks in the growing dusk. Our pumpkins are emerging large and orange in the squash patch.

These are all signs that fall is around the corner. Don't get me wrong – we still have many weeks left of summer produce, although new crops, such as winter squash, leafy greens, and storage potatoes will start showing up in your shares soon. Fall is a very nice season here in Oregon for growing vegetables. The days are still relatively warm so plants still grow nicely, but many of the pests that have plagued us this summer, such as fleas beetles, will disappear soon. We have a chance to catch our breath now that most crops have been planted for the year.

We're holding our summer open house/potluck this Sunday to celebrate the height of the summer season while it's still here. As previously announced we will be holding a short work party before the potluck at 12:00., but our potatoes aren't ready to harvest yet.

Instead we'll pull storage onions and move them into the greenhouse where they can finish curing before we put them into storage for the winter. We'll be starting around 10:30. If you have a digging fork, please bring it, as it will be helpful to have a few extra. If we have a good turnout to the work party we can also plant some collard starts.



If you just want to come to the potluck that's fine. We'll be starting at noon. Please bring a dish to share, plates and silverware to use, and a chair if you have one. We'll supply the drinks – iced tea, lemonade, and ice water. Blackberry season is upon us., so if you wish to pick some to take home you are more than welcome to have the run of the farm. If you plan on picking you might bring long pants and shirt to ward off the spines.

Our address is 29644 SE Weitz Lane, but it can be tricky to find our place using an electronic map or navigation

system, so here are some brief directions: From I-205, follow 224/212 east through Clackamas. 212 branches left after several miles; follow 224 to the right at the market/nursery on the right. Pass through Carver, then Barton to Eagle Creek, where you will see a flashing yellow light (the first one you'll see since I-205) at the gas station. Weitz Lane is the first cross road after the flashing yellow light. Turn to the right here, go down past the first house on the left, and turn onto the gravel drive just before the second house on the left (mailboxes on the right). Follow this drive down to a T and take a left onto the farm. Follow the driveway past the house and chicken coop and park in the grass near the barns. You can see our very large greenhouse from the highway and from Weitz Lane. We'll see you on Sunday! If you have problems finding us please call Chris at 503-367-8124.

Cast of characters

- **Summer squash**
- **Carrots**
- **Lettuce:** This week's lettuce is 'Valmaine' a yellow-green leaved Romaine. Unfortunately it's a little insect damaged - for some reason cucumber beetles consume this variety and no other. Fortunately the damage is mostly cosmetic and we hope you agree that it is worth giving these heads out.
- **Cauliflower and/or Beets:** We don't have enough cauliflower for everyone this week, so full share members get both; small share members get one or the other. This week's cauliflower and cabbage are the last of our cole crops for a while, as we've worked through most of our spring plantings at this point. We do have some red cabbage that should mature in 2-3 weeks, and lots of broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage on tap for later in the fall.
- **Cabbage**
- **Cucumber**
- **Sweet Corn:** This week's sweet corn is larger than previous weeks as it got better nutrition resulting in larger plants (and ears). I tasted some this morning, and found this variety (Brocade) to be less sweet, have less corn flavor, but to be very tender and juicy. Incidentally, if you haven't tried the corn raw, you should!
- **Tomatoes:**
- **Eggplant:** We're back to Asian eggplants this week. Eggplant is great paired with mushrooms in a stir-fry. If you add a little sugar water to the chopped eggplant before frying it will caramelize beautifully.
- **Bell Pepper:** Our red and yellow bells are producing quite nicely right now and should carry us through the first hard frost in September or October.
- **Poblano Pepper:** The *green* ones with a pointed tip.

• **Italian Sweet Pepper:**

Often referred to as a 'frying pepper' these babies are long and red with a pointed tip. Despite their name, they are good raw, and are very sweet, although somewhat thinner-walled than the bell peppers.



• **Cherry Tomatoes:** We took a break from cherry tomatoes last week as the cooler cloudy weather interrupted fruit ripening, but there are still plenty to go around.

• **Jalapeño peppers:**

Recipes

This week we're sharing some of our favorites. We eat these on a regular basis.

Veggie burgers

This recipe makes a great veggie burger. Once you taste them you'll have a hard time going back to those ones from the grocery store. We eat them year round and tailor the ingredients to what's in season.

In a mixing bowl mix together the following ingredients, mashing the whole mixture until it sticks together, but not so long that all the beans lose their shape.

- 1 ½ cups of cooked black beans (one 15 oz can). Make sure they are well drained
- 1 c oats —add ½ c whole and use a blender or food processor to turn the other ½ into flour
- ½ onion, finely diced
- 1 egg
- 2 t mustard
- 2 t prepared salsa or ketchup
- 2 garlic cloves, diced
- 1-2 T chopped basil or other fresh herbs (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Add one, two, or three of the items below to the above mix. Form into patties, and fry or grill.

- ½ sweet pepper, diced
- 1 grated carrot
- up to 1 cup grated raw beet (this is the best!)
- 1 cup raw or cooked corn kernels
- 1 cup raw chopped greens (chard or spinach)

Quinoa black bean salad

If you are not familiar with quinoa, this is a good way to try it out. Quinoa is related to beets and spinach and was once the staple grain of the Incan civilization. It is high in protein (12-14%) with a balanced set of amino acids, making it an unusually complete protein source. It can be substituted for rice in many dishes.

- 2/3 cup quinoa
- 2 cup water
- 1 t olive oil
- 4 t lime juice
- ¼ t ground cumin
- ¼ t ground coriander
- 1 T finely chopped cilantro
- 2 T minced scallions
- 1 ½ cup cooked black beans (or one 15 oz can)
- 2 cup diced tomatoes
- 1 cup diced bell peppers
- 2 t minced jalapeño
- salt and pepper to taste

Rinse the quinoa under running water in a colander and boil the water. Then add the quinoa, cover, and simmer for 10-15 minutes until the grains are tender and have absorbed all the water. Allow the grains to cool for 15 minutes on the counter (good), or in the fridge for 1-2 hours (better). In a large bowl, combine the oil, lime juice, cumin, coriander, cilantro, and scallions. Then stir in the beans, tomatoes, bell peppers and jalapeño. Add the quinoa and the salt and pepper to taste, and refrigerate until serving. This is best made ahead of time so the dish can cool thoroughly and the flavors can meld.

Mustard carrots

It's worth seeking out black mustard seeds in an Asian grocery store or market if you can find them for this recipe. Normal yellow mustard seed will work, but the flavor will be different.

- 1/3 cup cider vinegar
- 1 T brown sugar
- 2 t Dijon mustard
- ½ t salt
- 1 t dried dill
- 2 t black mustard seeds
- 1 lb carrots, peeled and cut into julienne strips

In a cup or bowl stir together the vinegar, sugar, mustard, salt, and dill. Set this aside and dry roast the mustard seeds in a sauce pan or skillet for about 30 seconds, until they are browned and popping and fragrant. Add the vinegar mixture and bring to a boil. Stir in the carrot sticks, cover, lower heat, and cook until tender, about 15-20 minutes. Be vigilant – stir frequently during the last few minutes to prevent sticking and burning. When tender the carrots should be brown and caramelized from the sugar. Out of this world!



Pole beans – ready for harvest soon.