

Newsletter July 26th, 2011,

Hello healthy eaters,

It has been wonderful hearing from so many of you and even meeting a number of you for the first time along with your wee ones, whom we are happy to hear are enjoying the vegetables as well. It has been a very busy week at the farm, again. We enjoyed ourselves at the Sustainability festival in Bridgewater on Saturday and my 13 year old son Isaac, also known at the market as "The Coffee Guy" sold more free trade organic coffee and our homemade organic lemonade then seemed humanly possible. He is making use of his hard-earned cash right now at the Teen Music Academy at Ross Creek Centre of the Arts. At the farm we were very busy with enormous changes in our garden... together with Tristan and his horse we managed to work up another acre or more of land including the area that had been planted out in buckwheat and then hand scythed by everyone ... scything is great fun, it's sort of like white-washing a fence but more muscular. That area will hold most of our fall crops like the broccoli and cauliflower and rutabagas that Claire has just started in the greenhouse in soil blocks. The rest of the beds, especially the areas that were previously mowed grass we plan to sow into cover crops for next year's garden. The place looks truly transformed... and more than a bit daunting too. We have certainly more than tripled the amount of ground we are working since last year at this time! We are grateful for all offers of help and this morning for our harvest we were very fortunate to have Paula come at the crack of dawn and lend a very capable hand even though she swears she has never spent any time on a farm... despite her lack of previous knowledge, she now knows all there is to know about how to clean up a kohlrabi and harvest purslane.

This week's basket:

Lettuce: Everyone will receive a head of lettuce and there are about seven different varieties. There is a romaine called Green Towers that we love, a chartreuse leaf lettuce called Black Seeded Simpson which you will see lots of in your salad mix, another green leaf lettuce called Waldmann's Dark Green, a few different red lettuces including the gorgeous Red Oak Leaf and the Bronze Blush. If they are wilted when you get them you can often revive them by placing them in a sink full of ice cold water. remove them after a few minutes and hopefully they will have become crispy again.

Cabbage: Most everyone will receive a green cabbage but a few of you lucky ducks will get a Napa cabbage instead. Both are delicious but the Napa's were a favourite treat of many other creatures as well so we lost some to various creepy crawlies. Enjoy your cabbage raw in coleslaws but don't forget about how delicious they are lightly sauteed in a stir fry or shredded into a soup.

Kohlrabi: They're back, these strange bulb/stem/sputnicks. Lately I have been chopping mine raw into every conceivable salad. What a satisfying crucng. I admit that I haven't yet used the leaves but I understand they are very tasty.

Salad Mix: Another colourful blend of greens, reds and a few colours in between. Look for lots of arugula in this batch.

Summer Squash: Gone are the boring days when the only summer squash any of us knew was Zucchini. We have about eight varieties and now that the striped cucumber beetle has been laid to rest, at least for the moment, we will begin to see the fruits of our labour. (All puns intended, Isaac) Use these tender squash chopped raw into salads or lightly steamed and then seasoned with a few leaves of fresh basil or slice them and marinate for a half hour in your favourite marinade sauce

then grill them on the barbeque.

Herb Bouquet and Basil: Everyone should find a small bundle of cilantro and dill also a lovely bag of very tender basil thanks to Maria Wolter at Rumtopf Farm.

Broccoli: We were not as successful as we hoped to be with our early spring planting of broccoli. The weather being what it was this spring I am not surprised. But we did manage to squeeze out just enough for everyone to have a small head of this very nutritious vegetable. We have many more trays started for a fall planting so we hope to be able to have more of this later in the season.

Radishes: Once again a small bundle of these cheerful looking, crunchy and spicy treats. A hot tip from one of our members about her new favourite radish recipe: try lightly steaming them and then chop some of your dill or cilantro on top and a sprinkle of sea salt.

Mushrooms: Yes folks, we grew these. Actually , they grew themselves in my root cellar in the dark and damp and cold air they appeared overnight like... well, like mushrooms. Each day my daughter and I would go downstairs to be amazed at their progress. We got the bags of substrate already inoculated with spores of portobello , white button and crimini and we watered them and then stood back and watched. We may try this experiment again if we get positive feedback from everyone but it really was a just a lark... and a fun one at that.

Flowers: The garden is full of an explosion of colour and the bees are enjoying themselves as much as we are as we walk past this glory everyday. Enjoy a selection of flowers that now includes celosia, corn cockle, bachelor buttons, yarrow, salvia, ageratum, calendula and more.

In the chicken world, we have had a number of changes that are worth noting. A few hens have gone broody on us...this basically means that their biological clock has gone off and all they want to do is fulfill their inner maternal instinct by laying on eggs. Hey, I remember being there when I turned 35! However these gals feel this need even if there are no eggs under them to lay on. And as they stop laying fresh eggs at this time, we have had fewer eggs than usual. We managed to squeak by this week by adding a few duck eggs to your egg cartons but we may have to change around the three week rotation and make it a four week rotation if we can't convince a few more girls to become liberated and stop attempting to reproduce. The silliest part of it all is that our two handsome roosters seem to favour each other more than the girls so we're not too sure how fertile these eggs would be even if we did let a hen sit for the requisite three weeks. We are trying an experiment and seeing if the green eggs, whose handsome mother is the black Aracauna hen and who manages to attract the attention of even our nonchalant roosters, may in fact be fertile. So poor old Broody Hen may yet hatch a small clutch of babies she won't recognize as her own.

Parting notes: A few of you have managed to complicate our lives by not returning ANY of your bags from the previous weeks. We are doing our best to muddle through this but it really complicates things for us and it will start to mean that you will be receiving your vegetable in less than optimum condition as we may have to just put them in plastic bags. We also need you to be sure that the name tag ribbon stays on your bags and is not removed. Please take the time to return your bags, clean and zippered with any payments owed for eggs or other items inside your bag with your name on the envelope and what the payment is for written on the outside of the envelope so that we don't have to do the guesswork.

Thanks and enjoy another week of abundance from Watershed Farm.