

Newsletter 23rd August 2011

Hello healthy eaters,

I am writing this, or at least starting this note at the island airport in Toronto while waiting for my Porter flight to carry me and the kids back to NS. The kids spent a marvelous week being spoiled by their grandparents and playing with their cousins and while it was only a brief few days for me it was a most welcome respite all the same. Thanks to Kim and Claire and Joe for holding down the fort in my absence and welcome to our new Katimavikers, Emie from Quebec and Skylar from out west. Back in Ontario in cottage country we missed the tornado that devastated Goderich, but spent a very stormy couple of days watching the wind whip up the white caps on the lake and counting the seconds between the blistering lightening bolts and the loud claps of thunder. It was a perfect time to learn the finer points of my grandmother's blueberry bun recipe as channeled by my mother. Gaining two pounds in the same number of days can only be a good thing when all of the food was prepared and served with so much love...and yes, once again, I carried a suitcase full of vegetables to Toronto.

Farm news: Last week Kim spent some time threshing and winnowing our own seeds for future use including tatsoi and B bokchoy and various mustards. This is a fun and rewarding job and while we may have some interesting crosses, most of the things we saved are "selfers" or self-pollinating so we shouldn't get too many bizarre variations on the theme. Claire has started the next round of lettuce and various greens.

Sweet Surprise: You have a new member of the hen house! I was completely in shock when I saw this sweet little thing this morning. We put mom and chick in a box in the barn for now.

So it seems that broody hen knew what to do after all! In the woolly world, Maymay and Lola have joined us again and they, along with Robin and her two lambs, Rita and Toots have been bravely taking on the very tall hay in the field between the barn and the pond. Tristan and his horses have been back to help get the new beds tilled and ready for the seeding of buckwheat and chickling vetch and rye. These are all "green manure" crops that serve different specific purposes including breaking up hard pan soil, bringing minerals to the surface, smothering weeds, adding nitrogen to the soil, etc.

In your bag this week you can find:

Mushrooms: Yes, I picked up 20 more bags of inoculated substrate last week so all of the large size members should each be getting a little bit of whatever has magically sprouted in the darkness of our root cellar. This should include white button and brown crimini and a few portobellos as well.

Onions: We pulled these Dutch storage onions last week and they have been curing in the barn on an old screen for a week now but some of the tops may still be a bit green. You can always hang them in your kitchen, just be sure to keep them out of direct sunlight.

Herbs: It looks like you each have a bouquet that includes Lemon Balm (delicious fresh as a tea or dried for later use or chopped finely into your salads for that lemony mint flavour), Sage which makes one of the best teas for a sore throat on top of being excellent with most meats, Summer Savoury...again this little culinary gem dries wonderfully and keeps its scent and flavour for months so just hang it upside down and let it dry out of the sun for a few days if you don't intend to

use it right away.

Squash: The cornucopia of shapes and colours continues to astound us. Everyone should have a great selection in their bags. I took some with me to Ontario and we ate them sliced into fat 1 inch slices that took advantage of all the great shapes, then drizzled with olive oil, some finely chopped garlic and sprinkled with herbed salt and topped with a handful of grated sharp cheese. Wow, what a gourmet treat! These sweet morsels were baked at 350 for about ten minutes then we turned on the broiler till the cheese bubbled and browned. If the seeds seem too large in some of the bigger squash you can always scoop out that inner portion but we found that the seeds were mostly very tender too and almost sweet and nutty flavoured.

Cukes: The true onslaught of endless cucumbers has caught up with us. You should all get a sampling of yellow and green and very tasty...The Lemon cukes are the ones that look like lemons, the spiny and curving ones are the tender Suvo Long, the yellow pickling cukes are the Boothby Blonds, the Persian Cukes are still small and sweet and the pickling cukes make a great crunchy raw snack.

Beans: The French Filet beans are the tender skinny ones and the wax beans are the wonderful slightly plumper ones. All come in a delightful array of yellow, green and purple. Sadly the purple disappears when cooked and most of these are tender enough to eat raw but of course, they are all delicious in that local dish that celebrates the season known here as HodgePodge.

Beets: Once again you should find a selection of the bullseye striped Chioggia, the deep red of Detroit Ace and Cylindra and a few of the golden beets.

Tomatoes: Look for a paper bag with a selection of cherry tomatoes and a few small slicers. Remember to NEVER put tomatoes in the fridge. They lose their flavour and it ruins their texture. Simply leave them on a bowl on the counter and be prepared to watch them disappear very quickly as these are nature's candy.

Flowers: Kim was able to put together bouquets for everyone this week in a wide range of colours and varieties. Enjoy!

Eggs: This week following Broody Hen's great accomplishment and one hen who remains resolute in her desire to transform a serious clutch of eggs, we have seven dozen eggs to distribute.

Happy eating and look forward to much more next week as the garden is bursting right now.