

Newsletter July 19th 2011

This week has been a wild ride. Rain, dry, humid, hot, cold... just a typical Nova Scotian weather pattern...if you don't like it, wait five minutes... or if you don't like the weather you see out the front door, go around to the back.

Farm notes: We were very sad to say goodbye to our wonderful WWOOFers from Quebec, Maude and Pierre-David who pulled out yesterday with bikes strapped to their car en route to Cape Breton and the next leg of their adventure. They really made a much appreciated contribution to the farm during their few weeks here and we are all left with the amusing image of Pierre charging up and down the hill on his bike with tool belt strapped on and a coil of hose over his shoulder balancing buckets on his handlebars, off to solve another problem or just find a smarter, more efficient and inventive way to do something. And Maude with her beautiful smile and straw hat deep in concentration picking scapes and potato beetles with equal grace and always looking like something out of a Vermeer painting. And very sadly Tanja, who joined us a few weeks ago (from Denmark via PEI) is also heading out later this week and we will certainly miss her cheerful energy, her love of the animals and attention to their every needs and her good spirits...not to mention her much appreciated hard work. If any of you know of anyone interested in spending some time on a beautiful farm working long hours and eating well in good company...let us know. We could use a few more hands and we can guarantee that the agri-fitness program cures insomnia. Apparently I missed a thunderous storm with winds and pounding rain last night. The garden was very happy to get such a thorough watering but this does mean that your salad mix is on the wet side and there is some back splash of soil on the leaves from the pounding rain so you have to wash more thoroughly than usual. Tristan is back with his three enormous horses to work in the woods and to help us with some field work. We took turns scything the buckwheat down so we are now ready to till in that bed and prepare it for the fall plantings.

Details: Eggs are \$5.50 a dozen, those still owing for the bags you owe us \$9.00 for the three bags we are circulating. And how did the freezer pack work for all of you? I would appreciate some feedback so I know whether or not I should pick up still more of those. You will find them in your bag this week and please return the ones from the previous week. The dollar store seems to have hit the bottom of the barrel on these items but hopefully will re-stock them soon enough.

Salad mix: You will notice that we tend to pick most of our leaves on the more mature side, and also that your mix changes somewhat week to week. I find the baby leaves less flavourful than the more mature ones and also I believe they are less nutritious. This week your salad mix (again it is very wet with the rain water from last night so wash and spin it as you can store it once dry for up to a week in the fridge, but if it is wet it won't last nearly as long) is composed of two main green leaf lettuces, Black Seeded Simpson and Waldmann's Dark Green, a collection of red oak leaf, red sails, butter blush lettuce and a handful of other lettuces as well as some purple orach leaves, bulls blood beet leaves, pepper cress, baby kale, dill and fennel fronds, purslane tops and a colourful sprinkling of nasturtiums, calendula petals and johnny jump ups. A few of you have written to us to say that your kids love eating the flowers. Just a warning...the nasturtiums are a bit peppery so beware!

Radishes: Just a very small sampler so you can slice them onto your salad or use them for that spicy crunch as a garnish in some other dish....you have a small collection of the French Breakfast which is the long red one with the white tip - crazy shapes, no? - a Raxe radish and either a purple, mauve, or white Easter Egg radish. Hopefully there will be more of these to come. The greens can also be cooked and make a great soup but you should remove the greens right

away and wash them and try to use them within a day or two as they are best when very fresh. You can also simply saute them or add them to your salad if you want a slightly spicy flavour (and a bit of a coarse texture).

Beets: The first of the beets have arrived! You should each have a small bundle with an assortment of chioggia (the one that looks like a bulls eye when you slice into it), Detroit Red, Yellowstone and Cylindra and some of you also have Bulls Blood with the dark red leaves. All of the beets greens are delicious and should be used for a nutritious and tasty dish. You can mix them with the radish greens and make a delicious soup...try this recipe using a mix of your radish and beet greens and you can also use up your new potatoes at the same time.

http://www.food52.com/recipes/6634_rustic_radish_soup

Of course they are also wonderful cooked as you would spinach and just add a squeeze of lemon, a bit of olive oil and a sprinkle of your herbed sea salt and you can finely chop some chives on top.

Herb Bouquet: This week you have a lovely little bouquet with fresh chives, dill and for the larger size crowd, sprig of summer savoury. The dill and chives both go really well with the new potatoes and the summer savoury is delicious with any meat dish you may have on the go. It also dries really well. Just hang it up out of the sun and let it get good and crispy before crumbling into a jar.

Carrots: Large size bags have a small bundle of young carrots....some from our farm including the Dragon Tooth which is a deep purplish red and the remainder being a white and yellow carrot hail from Rumptopf Farm.

New Potatoes: All those weeks of hilling and weeding and potato beetle squishing are finally paying off as the new potatoes are now ready! This wonderful collection of very tender potatoes includes an all purple variety (apparently this heirloom variety lent their name to the original "blue-nosers" of Lunenburg) , an all red with a pinkish interior, and some yellow and white potatoes. The skins are very tender and young and will easily rub off when you wash them if you aren't gentle. These boil up in just a few minutes and would be wonderful in that soup recipe but I cooked mine and then added them to scrambled eggs with onions... a simple and delicious meal that my kids always eat with delight.

Broccoli/Kale: Most of you will get a head of broccoli but things being what they are, we were a bit shy of the magic number so some of you will receive a bundle of three kinds of kale instead. Here's hoping that the European Root Fly doesn't get to our fall planting of broccoli as they knocked off a considerable number of our spring planting. If you haven't cooked kale before you are in for a treat. There are a million great dishes on line and you can also try making kale chips which I love making to gobble up as snacks whenever I am driving. Just wash the kale and do your best to dry it then tear it roughly into smaller pieces each about the size of your hand. I discard the stems and ribs at this point. Next toss it in a bowl with a tiny bit of olive oil and some herbed sea salt or just salt and pepper. Spread it out on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper and bake at 350 for about ten minutes, They get crunchy as chips and are a lot healthier for you!

Asian Green Mix: Our large size members will have a bag with Hon Tsai Tai, Te You Flowering Broccoli, Red Rain, Bok Choy, Green Mustard and a few other Asian Greens along with a small handful of snow peas and a smattering of purple broccoli for a meal in a bag. Some of you have

been eating these raw which is great. They are all delicious that way and don't really need to be cooked though they are great when very lightly steamed or sauteed and lend themselves to that tamari/soya sauce/sesame oil sort of treatment.

Flowers: Every week brings a few new blooms and colours to our garden. You may end up with one of our mainstays...the calendulas in an ever changing palette of orange and yellows, but you could also get a bouquet of snap dragons or corn cockles or ageratums or bachelors buttons.

Garlic Scapes: Need I say more...ok, try this one on for size... get out the jars and the vinegar and kosher salt and make yourself some garlic scape pickles. Here's a recipe that is essentially a Dilly Bean recipe altered for the scapes. Works very well and they last forever.

<http://thedeliberateagrarian.blogspot.com/2007/07/making-pickled-garlic-scapes.html>

Upcoming weeks: We can soon look forward to some summer squash and cucumbers in the upcoming weeks though we have been fighting an uphill battle with the cucumber beetles. The corn seems to be a right off unless we can still get a second planting to take before the weather turns yet again. Beans are coming along though the slugs dined heavily on the young plants, still our second planting of beans seems to be alright...and the very first tomatoes are starting to ripen so fingers crossed for those. Cabbage are looking great and there's some new spinach and chard that will soon be ready for picking. Happy eating and please send along all of your comments and thoughts and share your recipes with us.

Special orders:

We now have the herbed salt in both spicy and original so let us know if you want a jar for next week. They are \$5.00 and will last quite awhile. I hope to have a list of Meredith's great jams out to you before the next delivery so you can place orders for those as well. I always buy them as gifts as they make a great house present but I always keep a few around the house and they disappear very quickly.

Happy eating and pray for the right mixture of rain and sun for us here at Watershed Farm.