

North Creek Community Farm NEWSLETTER

Week Eight - Thursday, August 2

IN THE BAG:

Collards	Summer squash
Fillet beans (small green beans)	
Tomatoes	Basil
Garlic	Cucumbers
Salsa Packs	

Farming in the “New Normal”

Weather is something that farmers talk about all the time. It was announced on NPR that climatologists have announced that this warm, wet, humid weather is the “new normal.” What does this mean for our farming?

I have become addicted to my computer even more with the advent of radar. With morbid fascination I watch the intense storms roll through. Garrison Keeler once did a great bit on weather where he explained that you don’t want to be too happy because it could get worse and you don’t want to complain too much either because it could get worse. Right now though, I need to let you know that these banks of storms with their new-found intensity have been wreaking some havoc on the farm. All summer long, we take every opportunity to plant succession crops of the direct seeded vegetables like cilantro, lettuce mix, beets, basil and dill. This summer, literally every time we get them planted a huge thunderstorm pounds the soil. The small seeds often are either floated away to the end of the field or they are encased in an impenetrable layer of soil. I have been replanting repeatedly but many things are just not succeeding.

There was a storm that rolled through on July 30 that dumped another 2 inches of rain in about half an hour. This rain fell on soil that was already saturated and it quickly ran off the fields. This water joined the water pouring off the hoop houses and it swept under the plastic shelters. Everything was well watered but I have never seen that before except in extreme spring run off. This, we are told, is the new normal and as a farmer I will need to think of ways to adapt. One will be to use more of the material I cover carrots with for germination that protects the soil from the destructive activity of the raindrops. Another is to start more little plants in the greenhouse and transplant them into the soil.

Because we lose the opportunity to get succession plantings in, those crops are not ready when they usually would be and their absence will show up in the bags in a few weeks time. Does this mean that the bags will be empty? Not at all, but they will not be as crammed as some seasons. I am working on adjusting to the new normal but it is a moving target. In the meantime, you will have to make do with fresh, vine ripened tomatoes, melons and sweet corn.

Note: Just heard that a neighbor’s dairy cow herd was hit by one lightning bolt and 20 cows were killed, decimating a life of breeding and planning. Guess I haven’t been too careful getting my crew out of the field during storms.



About the vegetables:

Salsa packs are everything to make a delicious bowl of salsa in one bag. Chop it all up and enjoy. Basil is one of the great treats of the summer. I like to make pesto and spread it on bread and melt cheese on it under the broiler. Fillet beans are just gourmet baby green beans. The seed is very expensive, but this year I am trying to save some of the seeds by isolating a row of these beans from the other beans. Collard greens are new this year and they are loving this weather. If you have never had them before, give them a try. The traditional way is with bacon, cooked a long time. I love this way but there are less traditional recipes on the back.

Intern Maddy Shaw

Hey everybody! My name is Maddy Shaw and I am one of the interns on the farm this summer. I grew up in south Minneapolis, and graduated from Southwest High School in 2009. This past year I studied at Kalamazoo College in Michigan. I got out of school in mid-June, so I got a bit of a late start out here, but I am loving every minute of it.

I got interested in farming two years ago when I took a gap year after high school and spent 8 months as a WWOOFer (Willing Workers On Organic Farms) on various organic farms in Europe. What started as a cheap way to travel became a total love of farming. I’m now planning to become an organic farmer, but that is only the beginning of the story. There are so many different ways to farm, and I have so much to learn. I feel really lucky to be having this learning experience at North Creek Community Farm. This is my first time working on a CSA, and I love it. Kate is amazing to work with, and I feel lucky to be living and working with her. She is energetic, fun, patient, and willing to answer questions and pass on farming knowledge. One of my favorite things about working here is how the crew (weekday mornings there are six of us, including Kate) works all together, laughing and telling stories as we weed or harvest. It is one of the things I like most about farming - the feeling of collaboration and community it can create. What I love about North Creek Community Farm is that you as members get to be a part of that community, too. I loved working with those of you who came out to the garlic festival and meeting a few of you when I drop off Thursday deliveries. It is a pleasure growing your veggies this summer!

Shredded Collard Greens with Walnuts and Pickled Apples

This recipe got rave reviews in Epicurious

For pickled apples

2 red apples such as Gala or Idared

1/2 cup cider vinegar

1 cup water

1/2 cup sugar

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon pickling spice

1/2 cup walnut halves (3 ounces)

1/4 cup olive oil

1 bunch collard greens (1 pound)

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

Quarter and core apples, then cut each quarter lengthwise into 1/8-inch-thick slices. Boil vinegar, water, sugar, salt, and pickling spice in a saucepan, stirring, until sugar is dissolved. Add apples and return to a boil. Transfer to a heatproof bowl and cool. Chill, uncovered, until cold, about 1 hour.

Toast walnuts in oil in a small skillet over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until a shade darker. Cool nuts in oil. Transfer nuts to a cutting board with a slotted spoon, reserving oil. Coarsely chop 1 tablespoon nuts and finely chop remaining nuts. Halve each collard leaf lengthwise with kitchen shears or a sharp knife, cutting out and discarding center ribs. Stack leaves and cut crosswise into 1/4-inch-wide strips. Transfer to a large bowl.

Just before serving:

Transfer all nuts and oil from skillet to collards and toss with 1/2 teaspoon salt and pepper to taste. Add apple slices, discarding pickling liquid and spices, and toss again.

Cooks' notes:

·Apples may be pickled 3 days ahead and kept chilled, covered. Nuts may be toasted and chopped 1 day ahead and kept in the oil in an airtight container at room temperature.

Collard Greens Miniera

If you're from the South, you're probably used to collards cooked long and slow. What makes this simple, flavorful Brazilian dish unusual are greens that are finely sliced and barely cooked.

Active time: 25 min Start to finish: 25 min

Yield: Makes 4 servings

1 1/4 lb collard greens, halved lengthwise and stems and center ribs discarded

3 slices bacon, finely chopped or chicken sausage

Stack collard-leaf halves and roll crosswise into a cigar shape. Cut crosswise into very thin slices (no thicker than 3/4 inch) with a sharp knife.

Cook bacon or chicken sausage in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over moderate heat, stirring, until crisp. Add collards, tossing to coat, and cook until just bright green, about 1 minute. Season with salt and serve immediately.