

North Creek Community Farm NEWSLETTER

Week Twelve

Thursday, September 4, 2014

IN THE BAG:

Romano string beans

Summer squash

Jalapeno peppers

Tomatoes

Peppers

Garlic

Chard

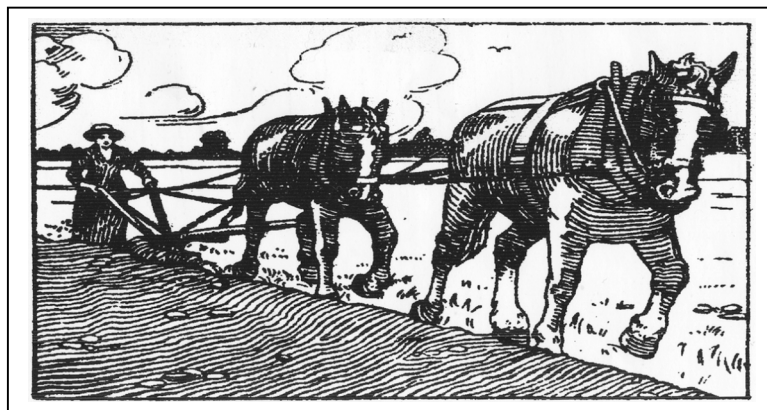
Little basil bunches

Maybe a cucumber

On the side: more melons

Silly Me

Silly me, why did I think that there would be something to talk about besides the weather? Again we are inundated with rain. I was talking to an older farmer and he said he does not remember the weather ever being like this. It has yielded good vegetable crops for the most part but weed fighting and cover crop rotations are thrown way off. Quack grass is hard to fight and to kill off even in dry summers and the fields that are not in crops this year have grown green with the thick growth of quack grass. In order to kill it without herbicides, you have to pull the long fibrous roots to the surface and let them dry and die on the long hot days of July. This must be repeated 3 or 4 times during the summer. This year there were no long hot periods and the quack grass has grown and flourished. This will set back the crop rotation for several years. If we have another extremely wet year next year, well.... Better not to look too far ahead. Right now many things are doing well and we have all been reaping the benefits of the moisture. The leeks for example are growing large and sturdy.



About the vegetables:

I have been trying to grow Romano beans for years. They have a low germination rate because they are large seeds. This year I used a bigger seed plate and just poured in the seeds. Even though only 50% grew, there are lots. These beans look like they might be tough but they actually cook faster than you think. They are just like regular green beans.

These are the bounty days of summer when we are getting my favorite vegetables. I try and savor them before the long winter with no "real" tomatoes. I have been sautéing peppers for almost every lunch. They are one of my favorites.

Harvest Festival

Saturday, September 27, 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

(Come either day)

Bring snacks for lunch and we'll have a big soup at about 4:00 p.m. Please bring bread, cheese, desserts etc. More details will be provided as the date approaches.

Long cooked Romano beans with Pancetta

- 1 pound Romano beans, not overly mature
 - 3 ounces pancetta, cut into small cubes
 - olive oil
 - kosher salt
 - fresh ground black pepper
 - 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)
1. Place a three quart enameled Dutch oven over medium-low heat. Add a glug or two of oil and the pancetta while the pan is still cold. Render the fat from the pancetta and cook it till crispy but not overly so.
 2. Add the Romano beans and stir them around to coat with the fat, season them with a good amount of salt, fresh ground pepper, and red pepper flakes if you choose. Cover the beans, reduce the heat to low and cook them for one hour occasionally removing the lid and giving them a stir.
 3. The idea is to let the beans cook in their own juices, become tender but not mush. If you think they need a little water then add a tablespoon or two to the pan.
 4. Serve the beans.



CREAM OF TOMATO SOUP

Ingredients

3 tablespoons good olive oil
1 1/2 cups chopped red onions (2 onions)
2 carrots, unpeeled and chopped
1 tablespoon minced garlic (3 cloves)
4 pounds vine-ripened tomatoes, coarsely chopped (5 large)
1 1/2 teaspoons sugar
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1/4 cup packed chopped fresh basil leaves, plus julienned basil leaves, for garnish
3 cups chicken stock, preferably homemade
1 tablespoon kosher salt
2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
3/4 cup heavy cream
Croutons, for garnish

Directions

Heat the olive oil in a large, heavy-bottomed pot over medium-low heat. Add the onions and carrots and saute for about 10 minutes, until very tender. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add the tomatoes, sugar, tomato paste, basil, chicken stock, salt, and pepper and stir well. Bring the soup to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer, uncovered, for 30 to 40 minutes, until the tomatoes are very tender.

Add the cream to the soup and process it through a food mill into a bowl, discarding only the dry pulp that's left. Reheat the soup over low heat just until hot and serve with julienned basil leaves and/or croutons.

PASTA WITH SWISS CHARD

INGREDIENTS:

1/3 pound penne pasta	salt and pepper to taste
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil	1 teaspoon lemon juice, or to taste (optional)
1 clove garlic, minced	1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, or to taste
1 bunch Swiss chard, chopped	
1 teaspoon capers	

DIRECTIONS:

1. Fill a large pot with lightly salted water and bring to a rolling boil over high heat. Once the water is boiling, stir in the penne and return to a boil. Cook the pasta uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the pasta has cooked through, but is still firm to the bite, about 8 minutes. Drain well in a colander set in the sink.
2. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Stir in the garlic, and cook for 1 minute to soften. Add the Swiss chard. Cook and stir until the stems of the chard are tender. You can use some of the hot pasta water to help steam the chard in the covered pan.
3. Stir the hot penne into the chard mixture along with the capers. Season to taste with salt and black pepper, and drizzle with lemon juice if desired. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese to serve.