

North Creek Community Farm NEWSLETTER

Week Three
Tuesday, July 1, 2014

IN THE BAG:

Mustard greens
Chard
Fresh fennel
Small bunches of lemon basil
Cilantro
Flowers – Hollandia variety
of sweet Williams



Bees!!!

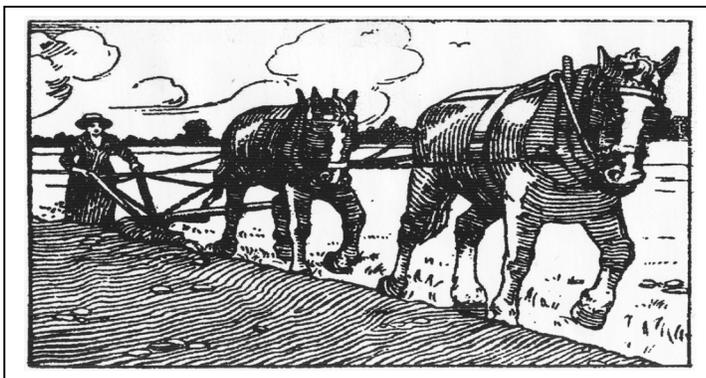
The “bee guy” is bringing the farm some beehives. I am very happy. Trevor Mansell has been bringing his bees here for the last few summers. It’s a great deal for both of us. He gets diverse, organic habitat for the bees and I get free pollinators. One year, unannounced, he skipped bringing them. I was afraid that had happened again this season, because I forgot that he comes so late.

Bees are in crisis across the world but the Midwest has been hit very hard. There is a perfect storm of new pesticides that coat seeds called neonicotinoids, a sharp reduction of crops that support bees and new diseases. There is lots of information in this article that appeared in the Star Tribune. It can be found online here: <http://www.startribune.com/local/264929101.html?site=full> Luckily they are not the only pollinator on the farm. Bumblebees and many other insects spread lots of pollen around. Honeybees seem to be more important in the cucumbers and summer squash and their increased number will be very, very welcome. I also get 12 pints of honey out of the deal.

Interns Continued:

Introducing Richard, a fun, smart and valuable guy who is great to have working on the farm. Here is a short introduction from him.

My name is Richard and I was born and raised in Los Angeles CA. I decided to leave the west coast and I ended at St. Olaf College in Minnesota, where I studied dance. After graduation, I left to New York City to pursue dance professionally. It took only a year for me to realize that I missed the Midwest too much, which is how I now find myself on the farm. I love everything about being on the farm! The peace, silence, and countless stars are blessings I’ve never had the privilege to experience! My favorite things to do are putting the horses in and out of the barn and wheel hoeing. I’m looking forward to the rest of this summer and the potential of physical, mental and spiritual growth. I might just end up choreographing a dance piece about the experience!



About the vegetables:

Mustard Greens I didn’t grow up with “greens” as part of my eating repertoire, but have come to enjoy them now. While some greens are good quickly sautéed, I like mustard greens done Southern-style with some bacon or ham. If you are a vegetarian, it is still worth cooking these greens longer to achieve the velvet consistency that is so good.

I saw in a recent study that **chard** is better for you than kale. They are both good for you of, course but here is another reason to embrace chard.

Fresh fennel was new to me but I have grown to love it. I have included some recipes. It can be used in many of the same ways as celery.

Cilantro is a favorite of mine. I add it to store bought salsa or add it to burritos.

Mustard Greens with Bacon

- 1 bunch mustard greens
- 4 slices of bacon chopped in bite sized pieces
- 1 medium onion cut in thin strips
- 1 Tablespoon white vinegar
- 1/2 cup chicken broth or water

Wash mustard greens several times to remove any grit. In a large pot of boiling water, blanch greens for 5 minutes and drain well. While the greens are draining, brown bacon pieces in heavy skillet. Remove when crispy. Drain off half the fat and add the onion and sauté until browned. Roughly chop the greens and add to the pan with the onion. Cook over medium heat for 5 minutes or so. Add the bacon pieces and stock or water. Cover and cook for 15 minutes over low heat.

Garlic Harvest

**Saturday, July 19 and Sunday, July 20
TWO DAYS. Choose which day works
for you.**

The garlic harvest is one of my favorite festivals because we have a specific taste to complete, digging and drying the garlic, and the food is so good. Start time is 10:30 with supper at 4:30. Bring snacks for lunchtime and something to add to supper. The menu for supper is French bread, cheese, roasted garlic, green salad, other salads, olives etc. The farm will provide the garlic and salad. If you have a sturdy potato fork, that is helpful although I am hoping to dig them up with a new tractor tool this year.

FLAVOR SYRUP FOR SODAS from member Andy Wright

INGREDIENTS 2 cups water 2 cups granular sugar 1.5-2 cups fruit of your choice

In a medium saucepan combine sugar and water. Add fruit. Bring to a boil, stirring, until sugar has dissolved. Continue to boil at medium-high until the liquid has thickened (but before it is too thick; corn syrup consistency is too thick and won't stir well in a cold drink). Remove from heat and pour the liquid and fruit through a fine strainer/sieve into a bowl. Then Google something creative to do with your discarded fruit. Transfer liquid to a glass bottle suitable for pouring. Allow to cool. Yields 1.5 or so cups of syrup. IN YOUR DRINK I always use cold club soda. Pour your glass and then add syrup to taste, stirring to combine. Enjoy. RHUBARB-BASIL I used about 2 cups of chopped rhubarb, and about 6 basil leaves, which I added in the last 3 minutes or so of cooking.

Fennel Soup

"This soup is so easy to prepare and tastes better than most soups you could buy. Mild onion and anise flavored - it's awesome!"

INGREDIENTS:

1/4 cup butter	broth
4-5 fennel bulbs, trimmed and quartered	salt and pepper to taste
1 (32 fluid ounce) container vegetable	

DIRECTIONS:

1. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the quartered fennel bulbs; cook and stir until golden brown, about 10 minutes. Pour in the broth, and simmer until fennel is tender, about 15 more minutes. Puree if desired. Ladle into soup bowls, and season with salt and pepper. For a more substantial soup add several cubed potatoes when you add the broth.

Crispy Cream-Braised Potatoes and Fennel

Serves 4

- 3 med. potatoes (about 1.5 pounds) – peeled and cut into irregular 1.5" to 2" chunks
 - 2 fennel bulbs (about 1.5 pounds) – trimmed (with tough or bruised outer layers removed), then cut lengthwise into wedges about 1.5" wide (leaving core intact)
 - About 2 to 3 cups of half-and-half or cream, or enough to cover the vegetables
 - 1 bay leaf
 - 1/4 teaspoon fennel seed
 - Kosher salt + freshly ground black pepper
 - 3 or 4 large springs of thyme, leaves removed and finely chopped
 - 1 large leafy sprig of rosemary, leaves removed and finely chopped
 - heaping 1/4 cup finely grated pecorino romano (or parmesan reggiano)
 - zest from 1 small orange, finely grated
 - olive oil
1. In a 3 to 4 quart pan, combine potatoes, fennel wedges, bay leaf, and fennel seed. Add enough half-and-half to fully cover the potatoes and fennel. Season generously with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper. Over medium-high heat, bring the half-and-half to a simmer, then lower heat to just maintain the simmer. Cook until the potatoes and fennel are soft and tender, about 20 minutes. Take off the heat. The potatoes and fennel should be fully cooked at this point.
 2. While potatoes and fennel are braising, preheat broiler to medium-high. In a small bowl, combine rosemary, thyme, pecorino, and orange zest.
 3. Remove potatoes and fennel wedges from the half-and-half with a spider or slotted spoon, and transfer them to a gratin or casserole dish. Some of the half-and-half will cling to the vegetables, which is a good thing. Make sure to generously coat the bottom with olive oil to prevent sticking. Taste the potatoes and fennel for seasoning – if you need more salt or pepper, add them now. Toss with olive oil (about 1 tablespoon), then the herb-cheese-orange zest mixture. Arrange the potatoes and fennel wedges in a single layer to promote even browning.
 4. Place the casserole dish under the broiler (about 6 inches away from the source of heat). Broil for about 3 to 5 minutes, or until the potatoes and fennel are caramelized and crispy around the edges. (I typically brown the vegetables more than the ones in the picture above...just leave them under the broiler until they've reached your desired crispness!)