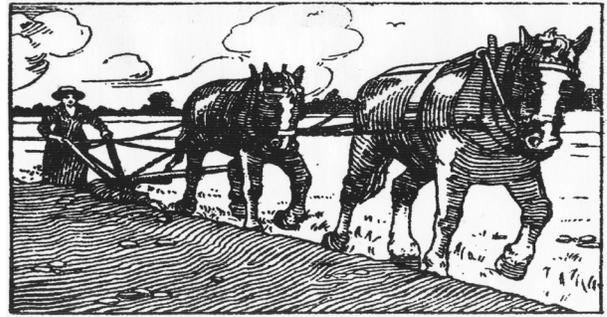


North Creek Community Farm NEWSLETTER Week 7, Thursday August 1



IN THE BAG:

Kale
New potatoes
Basil
Cucumbers
Summer squash
Green cabbage
Arugula
Beets
Sweet corn!!!

Nature's Chaos

Nature is insistent. It doesn't like things to be empty or unmoving. Nature is not tidy. A basic tenant of ecology is that systems like to run their course to a terminal, stable system. Grasslands and forests are some examples. We humans seem to be drawn to order and strait lines. Nothing makes me happier than a weeded row. Of course weeding isn't just to have clean lines, but there is something about a green plant on dark soil. Nature frowns on this though and quickly weeds sprout up to cover the bare soil. July is the time that nature's relentless drive to cover the soil begins to win. The pigweeds tower above the crop in some places. The "to do" list gets reordered again to include rescue missions. Sure, at the beginning of the summer it was all vanity and clean rows and now its survival. It happens every summer. Luckily, vegetables are usually strong and can compete with the chaos.

Cucumber & Red Onion Salad

- 2 cucumbers, peeled & sliced very thin
- salt
- 1 Cup cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 red onion, cut in half & sliced thin
- Fresh dill, chopped for garnish or a bit of dried

Place the cucumber slices in layers in a large colander, lightly salting each layer before starting the next. Place a large plate, weighted with a heavy object, on top of the layers of cucumbers. Place the colander over a large bowl (to catch the drippings). Refrigerate. Heat the vinegar, sugar and red onions in a saucepan over low heat until the sugar dissolves (2-3 minutes). Transfer to a serving bowl. Cool. Remove the cucumbers from the refrigerator. Rinse thoroughly under cold water. Pat dry with paper towels. Add to the onion mixture.

Refrigerate, covered, for at least 3 hours (overnight is better). Drain the mixture, reserving 5 Tbs of the liquid as a dressing. Toss the salad with the dressing. Garnish

About the vegetables:

The late spring and the now cooler weather are slowing things down a bit. I was feeling grumpy that it hadn't rained and then "POOF" some small but powerful storms went right over the farm. It watered everything but brought much cooler weather. Should I plant some spinach? It needs cooler weather. These are the questions that you just can't answer and you just have to try things.

I love **cabbage**. I know some people are not so fond of it. I cook mine with a little kielbasa or other sausage. Brown the sausage and then add finely sliced cabbage. Sautee briefly and then add a little water. Cover and steam until just tender.

Arugula is a bit of an acquired taste. It is strong and I like it with balsamic vinegar dressing, pecans and blue cheese. The eggplants are slowly developing. More will come later but the first ones are sent to a different drop site each delivery. I like to bake slices of **eggplant** and when they get tender, spread on some pureed olives and cheese. Bake until the cheese is melted. Add some tomato slices if you have them. (You may not have gotten eggplant yet but it is coming soon.)

The basil looked great last week. Basil is the canary in the mine when it comes to cold weather. To my dismay, when I went to check on it Sunday morning, it had light brown areas on the leaves. Checking with my neighbors, they too had some cold damage. Yes, you heard that right, cold damage!!! It will still taste good so we are sending small bunches but REALLY!???

REMINDER: ITS ALMOST AUGUST 1 AND THE BALANCE ON YOUR SHARES IS DUE SOON. If you are unsure of your balance, please email.

Crispy Kale "Chips"

Cook time: 20 min
4 servings

Ingredients

1 head kale, washed and thoroughly dried
2 tablespoons olive oil
Sea salt, for sprinkling

Directions

Preheat the oven to 275 degrees F.

Remove the ribs from the kale and cut into 1 1/2-inch pieces. Lay on a baking sheet and toss with the olive oil and salt. Bake until crisp, turning the leaves halfway through, about 20 minutes. Serve as finger food.

A few tips from reviewers: Use a perforated pan and don't let the chips brown much.

Grilled Nectarine, Arugula And Prosciutto Salad

The next time you fire up the grill, make this salad. When nectarines are grilled, their sugars caramelize, creating an intoxicatingly sweet and smoky flavor that complements the salty prosciutto and spicy arugula in this salad.

Makes 4 servings

Dressing

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

2 tablespoons white balsamic vinegar*

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 tablespoon fresh parsley, finely chopped

Salt and pepper, to taste

Salad

2 small ripe yet firm nectarines

Olive oil for brushing fruit

2 ounces thinly sliced prosciutto

6 to 7 ounces arugula, about 8 packed cups

2 tablespoons chopped, lightly toasted walnuts

2 tablespoons crumbled blue cheese

To make the dressing, whisk all of the ingredients in a small bowl and set aside. To grill the nectarines, preheat grill to medium-high. Slice fruit in half and remove pits. Brush flesh with a little olive oil and place flesh-side down on the grill. Grill for a few minutes, just until grill marks appear and the fruit is tender. Place prosciutto in a small skillet over medium-high heat. Cook for 60 to 90 seconds, flipping once, until just browned and crispy. Remove and cut into strips. To prepare the salad, place arugula, nectarines and walnuts in a large bowl. Add dressing and toss gently to coat. Divide the salad among 4 plates, topping each with prosciutto strips and crumbled blue cheese. *White balsamic vinegar is made from white wine vinegar and grapes. Because it is milder than traditional brown balsamic vinegar and doesn't stain food, it's preferable for this fruit salad. It can be found at specialty markets and most major supermarkets. Rice vinegar can be substituted.

Sauteed Kale

Serves: 4 servings

1 1/2 pounds young kale, stems and leaves coarsely chopped

3 tablespoons olive oil

2 cloves garlic, finely sliced

1/2 cup vegetable stock or water

Salt and pepper

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

Heat olive oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and cook until soft, but not colored. Raise heat to high, add the stock and kale and toss to combine. Cover and cook for 5 minutes. Remove cover and continue to cook, stirring until all the liquid has evaporated. Season with salt and pepper to taste and add vinegar.