

# North Creek Community Farm NEWSLETTER

Week Nine

Thursday, August 14, 2014

## IN THE BAG:

Carrots  
Cucumbers  
Fennel  
Lemon basil  
Peppers  
Salsa Pack  
Green beans  
Hakurei turnips  
Garlic

## Musings from the mud

We are getting a wonderful soaking rain this morning. It would be nice if it slowed for working but even then, I am not too unhappy to get wet. Everything needed a good watering and I am not dragging hoses around. The raspberries are just ripening and will love the moisture. The small carrots will grow bigger and the newly turned soil will open up and loosen. I am getting ready to plant cover crops for the winter. Cover crops improve the soil structure with their roots and organic matter. They catch nutrients that could leach away and provide food for soil microbes and fungi.

This year I qualified for some government support to pay for cover crops. I haven't accepted government incentives before but the money is there so why not? The new farm bill has changed the way crop subsidies work. Most of the support still goes to a very few huge farms. The political outcry against these supports made me a bit hopeful that there would be real change. The new bill will have subsidies for crop insurance instead of direct payments to farmers. There are several things wrong with this.

1. Insurance companies will get huge new accounts and act as conduits for the government money.
2. It inadvertently encourages farmers to plant in areas that might not grow a good crop.
3. It keeps the recipients of the money a secret. Now there is no way to find out which farms are getting this new form of subsidies.

Supports like these began after the depression and were an attempt to stop the boom-bust cycle of farming, but they have become an enormous transfer of money to a few farmers. I say this and yet I too am taking a bit of money to buy cover crop seeds. Encouraging farmers to plant cover crops is the latest in trends. It is easy to justify the help but it doesn't feel quite right. Just because "everyone else is doing it," does make it correct.



## About the vegetables:

Fresh vine ripened tomatoes! What could be better? They begin their appearance in the salsa pack. There is a flood on the way. This is just the beginning. This fennel was grown outside and is not as big as the earlier ones grown in the hoop house. I am able to concentrate the fertility and water in that controlled environment. Fennel is good sliced very thin in a salad. The green beans got a little big but they are so fresh that it doesn't matter. I don't really know great ways to use lemon basil but it smells so good. Try it in a pasta salad with shrimp or cold salmon.

Some vegetables produce their bounty slowly and so we send them to a drop site at a time. They will show up in your bag unexpectedly; eggplants and cherry tomatoes are an example of this.

## Corn Feed and Overnight Camping

Saturday, August 16 – 17

Starting at 2:00 p.m.

You are warmly invited to the farm for supper on Saturday, Aug. 16. The sweet corn is ready and we will pick it in the field and pop it in the boiling water. Supper is at 5:00. Menu is sloppy Joes, salads, and lemonade. Bring a dish to share. We'll get out the giant ice cream maker and make home made ice cream from local cream. Bonfire in the evening so bring smore fixin's if you want.

If you like, you can pitch at tent and spend the night. I'll make pancakes in the morning on the wood stove and of course there will be coffee. It looks like there might be rain but we'll have to play it by ear.

Please RSVP if you are planning on coming so I can plan accordingly.

# Couscous with Roasted Fennel and Toasted Almonds

- juice from one orange, about 1/2 cup
  - 1/3 cup black raisins
  - 1 fennel bulb, trimmed and cored and cut into about 16 slim wedges
  - 3 tablespoons good quality olive oil, divided
  - 1/4 cup almonds
  - 1 1/4 cup chicken stock
  - 1 cup couscous
  - 1 large shallot (or two small), minced
  - 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar
  - 1-2 tablespoon fennel fronds, chopped
  - freshly ground pepper and salt, to taste
  - 1 pinch coarse sea salt, such as Maldon
1. Soak raisins in orange juice until they plump up, about 1 - 2 hours; strain, and set aside
  2. Toss fennel wedges in one tablespoon of olive oil, pepper and salt; spread on a lined baking sheet and roast in a 350 oven for about 12-15 minutes, until edges are beginning to brown, and the fennel wedges are softening - but still have a little bite
  3. Toast almonds on a separate pan in the oven until lightly browned; allow to cool; coarsely chop, and set aside
  4. While fennel and almonds are in the oven, bring chicken stock to a boil over high heat; add couscous, stir, cover, and remove from heat; let rest for about 15 minutes until all of the stock is absorbed
  5. In a separate bowl, whisk together shallots and vinegar, then whisk in remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil; add pepper and salt to taste
  6. Transfer couscous to a serving bowl and fluff with fork; stir in the orange-soaked raisins, and fennel fronds; toss with enough of the vinaigrette to lightly coat everything - be sure to include all of the shallot bits
  7. top with roasted fennel and almonds; finish with a sprinkling of ground pepper and coarse sea salt

# Lemon Basil Chicken Salad

## Ingredients

4 cups diced cooked chicken  
1 rib minced celery  
1/2 cup chopped fresh lemon basil leaves  
1/4 cup slivered almonds  
1/4 cup sour cream  
1/4 cup mayonnaise  
1/2 plain yogurt  
1 1/2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice  
1/2 teaspoon salt or to taste  
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

## Directions

In a medium bowl, combine chicken, celery, lemon basil and almonds. In a small bowl, combine sour cream, mayonnaise, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Add to chicken mixture, tossing gently to coat. Cover and chill.