



Sogn Valley Farm

CSA Newsletter July 5-6, 2016

www.sognvalleyfarm.com

Greetings,

What an absolutely beautiful week it has been, weather-wise. Seems like every day has been sunny, in the 70s, with low humidity and just a calm wind. Since our work is physically demanding and unavoidably outdoors, we really appreciate this pleasant working weather. During the last week, I often paused my work to look around, take a few deep breaths, and appreciate the place where I live and the work that I do.

People often refer to “good weather” and “bad weather,” which are almost always synonymous with sunny and rain, respectively. Farmers make the case that this dichotomy is far too simple to characterize weather, because, right now, I could really go for some “bad weather.” We haven’t gotten a meaningful rain in over three weeks, and we’re pushing the limits of our irrigation system to keep the crops watered. Several storm systems that passed through in the last few weeks left us with just a tenth or two of rain, enough to wet the top inch of our bone-dry soil for a few hours, only to evaporate after a couple hours of the subsequent sunshine. They’re forecasting rain for tonight and Thursday, so we’re really hoping it doesn’t miss us.

Along with the forecast for rain comes the inevitable scramble to get weather-sensitive things done, such as seeding, transplanting, weeding, and certain types of harvest. On today’s agenda (after packing CSA shares) is garlic harvest, which we want to do while the soil is dry. Wet soil remains caked to the bulb and roots, increasing postharvest losses to decay and making it much more difficult to clean before sale. Garlic is “mass harvested,” meaning we don’t just harvest incrementally, as we need it for CSA and farmers’ markets; we harvest the whole crop in one shot. Then we cure the garlic under shade cloth in our greenhouse with lots of airflow

What’s in the box?

New red potatoes: These are featured in this week’s recipe. New potatoes are those that are dug early in the season, while they are still small and before their skins have “set.” The skins are very thin and not very noticeable when eaten (i.e. no need to peel them), but they are also susceptible to scuffing during harvest and washing. We have been as gentle as possible, but you will probably notice some skin peeling and possibly a little soil, since we only lightly washed them to keep the skins intact. New potatoes have not been cured, so should be considered perishable and stored in the refrigerator.

Cucumbers: These are American slicing cucumbers. Very tasty and refreshing on a salad, or in the Cucumber Potato Salad. The skin is certainly edible, but somewhat thick, so you may prefer them peeled. You may notice some scabbing on the end caused by our foe, the cucumber beetle. In order to fully control this pest, we would need to spray an organic insecticide twice a week, which we don’t feel is in line with our growing philosophy, so we accept some damage. Just remove the scabbed portion with a peeler.

Dill: Dill goes so well with so many cucumber and potato dishes, we just had to put it in the box! Try using some in the Cucumber Potato Salad recipe, or on a salad with lettuce.

Red leaf lettuce: These heads matured to a nice, dark red color. They’re still quite tender and mild-flavored, thanks to the cool weather we’ve had lately. In coming weeks, you’ll receive some other lettuces, such as butterhead, summer crisp, and romaine.

Green cabbage: This cabbage works well in place of Napa cabbage in the recipe from last week’s newsletter, if you didn’t make it or are craving another batch. Otherwise, use it to make sauerkraut or put it in a stir fry. This will store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for a couple months.

Strawberries or cherry tomatoes: Those of you who received Sun Gold cherry tomatoes last week should see strawberries in your box, and some (but not all) of you who received strawberries last week have Sun Golds in your box. For those of you who received strawberries two weeks in a row (and are somehow disappointed!), know that you will receive cherry tomatoes several times this season. The plants are still getting warmed up!

Basil: Pesto time! We’ve put a larger volume of basil in this week’s boxes so you can do something more substantive with it, like make basil pesto. If you’re interested in bulk quantities of basil to make pesto to freeze, I can arrange to have it delivered along with your CSA share next week. Send me an email and we can work out details.

Zucchini and summer squash: Grill it, stir fry it, make zucchini bread, or use it to as pasta substitute in a zucchini lasagna or a spiralized (very new term to me) summer squash “noodle” dish. Several farmers’ market customers have told me they spiralize their zucchini, but it does require the purchase of a new kitchen gadget—you guessed it, a spiralizer.

Bunched red beets: These can be roasted in the oven or grated onto a salad for a colorful, sweet, and flavorful addition. Don’t forget to use the greens—they can be cooked just like Swiss chard.

Broccoli (full shares only): This is a new variety of broccoli, an organic variety that I hadn’t grown before this season. You’ll find the bead size to be fairly small, compared to previous weeks’ broccoli, and the color to be somewhat lighter with a hint of purple.

On Deck

Some of the items you’ll likely see in your box over the next 1-2 weeks.

Serrano hot peppers — Carrots — Rosemary — Butterhead lettuce — Green beans

provided by fans. This process dries the outer layers of the garlic bulb, creating the skin that preserve the bulb during storage.

We're also getting the ball rolling on other storage crops. Today, I hope to seed about a 1/3 acre of storage carrots, which will be ready to harvest in late September or early October, in time for the last Summer Share box and the whole season of Fall Share boxes. Carrots are one of the more challenging direct-seeded crops—they require shallow sowing and are quite slow to germinate. In order for those seeds to germinate, we need to keep the surface of the soil almost continually wet for about a week, which we'll accomplish by rolling out drip tape along each row of carrot seeds and running irrigation for an hour or two every day that it doesn't rain.

While carrot seeding does give me visions of autumn, the reality is we're just arriving at the heart of the season. Heavy clusters of green tomatoes and peppers cling to plants in the field and will be ready to harvest in a week or two; young watermelon and cantaloupe fruits are starting to size up; and sweet corn is tasseling. The quintessential tastes of summer are just around the corner :)

Have a wonderful week,

Dana

Cucumber Potato Salad

This is yet another one handed down from my grandma Phyllis via my mom, Mary Jane, and another one that has been a fixture on my summer menu for years. This simple recipe really takes advantage of the rich flavor of these new potatoes. I'm noticing a pattern that many of the recipes I've been putting in newsletters have been salads. I suppose this time of year, it's just nice to eat things fresh, and cold salads are refreshing during warm, summer weather. As the season progresses, we'll branch out with a greater variety of recipes.

Ingredients:

1 cucumber, peeled and sliced
Salt and pepper, to taste
1 medium onion, sliced
3 Tbsp. vinegar
3 Tbsp. oil
Dill, to taste (1-2 Tbsp chopped)
5 medium potatoes, boiled and sliced

Preparation

1. Mix cucumber, onion, salt, pepper. Allow to sit for 30-60 min, then drain.
2. Add oil and vinegar and mix well
3. Add dill, and toss mixture with sliced potatoes.

Refrigerate until serving.