



ONE POTATO TWO

NEWS FROM THE FIELDS OF DRIFTLESS ORGANICS
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Week 5! Holy holy holy cow, it is HOT. What a week it has been as we sweat through this insanity. Thursday looks to be the worst with highs in the 105 range. We've been starting early and trying to end early to help cope with the heat; but honestly we are all struggling to maintain our composure. This goes for the crops as well! While the tomatoes, peppers and other warm season crops are loving this, our brassicas (cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, etc) are just plain giving up. We irrigate them in hopes that they will come back to life, but to little avail. In any event, it is hard for me to talk about things on the farm without sounding all complain-y. Despite this heat, we are doing alright. We sweat through the days and take comfort in our company and in midday dips to the swimming hole. The heat will break and the rain will come soon!

With the sun beating down, sweat on your brow and a gigantic list of tasks needing to be accomplished, you better hope you have a competent crew to rely on. I am happy to report that we have just such a crew! This season we have been blessed with one of the best groups of people we have ever had the opportunity to work with. They all work incredibly hard, pay attention to quality and detail, and are efficient and fast at what they do. An added bonus is that they are a joy to be around, both in the fields and away. It is the kind of crew that you can count on to get the jobs done, even as temperatures soar like they do this week. Not only do they accomplish the tasks given to them, but they do them well and with a sense of pride that mirrors our own.

The Driftless crew this year once again consists of our friends, neighbors and even relatives (Josh and Noah's sister, Lilly has been working here since she was 12). They live in the neighboring towns of Gays Mills, Soldiers Grove and Viroqua. Some, like Rachel, have been working with us for over six years now and for some it is their first season.

What they all have in common it seems is that they are working with us for more than just a paycheck. What I see in their enthusiasm to work is a passion for good food and for sustainable agriculture. They believe in what we are doing here at Driftless Organics and this is reflected in their concern for good quality, their

attention to detail and in their determination to provide you all with good looking produce.

Every winter we seek out and hope to find folks that share this passion I speak of. Because these are the kind of crew members that will stick it out through the heat, the driving rain and the long hours. They will work late to make sure the broccoli gets planted before a rain or the tomatoes are harvested before that first dreaded frost.

Every year I am often reminded that a farm like ours is only as good as its crew. This year is no different. Woe would be us if we didn't have Paul and Patrick working so hard to move irrigation equipment around to get water to the veggies. Or if we didn't have such amazing coordinators like Joey and Eric Smith who can lead crews with such amazing ease and efficiency. Or if we

THIS WEEK'S BOX

**Cilantro
Cucumber
Fennel
Garlic
Green Beans
Green Top Chioggia &
Gold Beets
Green Top Carrots
Green Zucchini or Yellow
Summer Squash
Lettuce Mix or Red Leaf
Lettuce
Purple Scallions
Salad Turnips**



From left to right: Paul, Lilly, Noah, Tom, Kaleb, Eric, Rachel, Sarah, Lilly, Eric, Jim, Joey, Marlene, Josh (not pictured: Patrick, Susan, Liz and me!)

didn't have such a solid harvest crew to bring in the large numbers of crops that we grow. One cannot overlook the amazing work that Mai and her crew do in cleaning up our fields. Without them, our farm would surely be consumed by weeds.

In a diversified organic vegetable farm like ours, labor is by far the biggest expense - by a long shot. What that means is that nearly half of the money that you pay for your CSA share goes directly into

the pockets of the folks you see in the picture above. I do believe that you can take comfort in knowing that it is money well spent!

I do take enormous comfort in knowing that, as I write this, veggies are being harvested correctly, tractors are being operated with care and CSA boxes are being packed with pride. THIS is what makes our farm great.

--Mike

Cilantro - finally some cilantro! Keeps best in plastic with a paper towel in the bottom in the fridge, but even so try to use it within a few days or it'll rot. If you're going out of town or something just chop it up & freeze it to pull out for emergencies. Use the leaf & upper parts of stem. Cilantro is such a versatile herb - equally at home in Mexican & Caribbean dishes as it is in Indian, Thai, or Chinese ones. An essential component of any salsa, fresh or cooked.

Cucumbers - The first of the year and a great cooling food. Slice 'em up and put them in your salad!

Fennel - We had to harvest this fennel early because it is, due to the heat, starting to bolt. Baby fennel is delicious sliced thinly on a salad or cooked in a stir-fry, pasta sauce, or minestrone soup. The greens are great added to salads. Store in plastic in the crisper drawer of your fridge. Fennel should keep for up to 2 weeks.

Garlic - The first of the cured garlic and this week it is our "German" variety. Every week we will provide at least one bulb of garlic in hopes of ensuring you have a constant supply of this staple. As the garlic is cured, you can now store it in a room temperature, dry place (not in the fridge).

Green Beans - are such a great summer treat! Tasty fresh with dip or on salads or lightly steam & top with olive oil/butter & lemon juice or add to pasta or potato salads. Delicious sautéed/stir-fried in olive oil/garlic or toasted sesame oil/garlic/ginger. Our local bar makes an awesome breaded & deep-fried green bean appetizer (only in Wisconsin!). They should store for at least a week in the plastic bag they are in.

Green Top Carrots - What these carrots lack in size, they make up for in sweetness. The greens aren't necessarily edible, so unless you've got a pet rabbit or turtle, go ahead and remove them and toss 'em in your compost pile. The carrots will store better w/o the tops.

Green Top Chioggia and Gold Beets - (or just gold) - Both types of beets are delicious variations on the classic red beets. They are both a little sweeter and not as "earthy". Try the recipe - it is wonderful! Remove greens from roots and store in separate plastic bags in your crisper drawer. Remember, you can eat the greens and are great sautéed with garlic and a little lemon juice at the end.

Green Zucchini or Yellow Summer Squash - There will be either green zucchini or yellow summer squash (or both!). Zucchini and summer squash are such a versatile veggies. Use them in pasta sauces, stir-fries, fajitas, omelets/scrambled eggs, on pizzas, or roast them with garlic & herb of choice (I like marjoram or oregano). For a tasty sandwich addition, slice them thinly lengthwise, rub them with olive oil & salt, & roast them (flipping once) until starting to brown but still soft. The roasted strips last for several days wrapped up in the fridge to add to weekday sandwiches.

Lettuce Mix - It is pretty amazing that we are able to harvest this lettuce mix with this intense heat and all (most times, the heat destroys all lettuce crops). Store your mix in its plastic bag and use up as soon as you can. If you didn't get a mixed bag, then you received a head of red leaf.

Purple Scallions - otherwise known as green onions, are what we use to replace onions until onions are ready (which should be next week). The tops on these are looking pretty sad, but still taste great. If you've got the grill going, try throwing the whole bunch (sans twist tie, of course) onto the hot grill for a half minute.

Salad Turnips - Look for the bunches with the white and red roots that look like radishes. You CAN eat these greens and highly recommend trying them as a sautéed green. The turnips themselves are great grated up in salads, or cut into rounds to use in place of crackers. Remove the tops from the turnips and put them each in their own separate plastic bag.

Zucchini & Green Beans with Garlic, Fennel & Lemon

3 Tbsp. olive or Driftless sunflower oil, or butter
1 head fennel, core removed & thinly sliced crosswise, leaves reserved
2 zucchinis, cut into long strips
2 cups green beans, stems removed
2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
Salt & pepper to taste
Juice & zest from ½ a lemon
3 Tbsp. fennel leaves, chopped

In a large skillet, heat oil over med-high heat. Add fennel & sauté for a couple minutes. Add zucchini, green beans, & garlic & sauté for a couple more minutes. Turn down the heat & cook, stirring occasionally, for another 4-5 minutes. Season with salt, pepper, lemon juice/zest & remove from heat. Garnish with fennel leaves. Serves 4-6 as a side dish. Delicious with pasta, fish, chicken, or Parmesan, white beans & French bread.

Roasted Beet & Spinach Salad with Goat Cheese, Pepitas, & Lime-Cilantro Vinaigrette

4-5 beets, greens removed 1" from bulb & tails trimmed
Zest & juice of 1 lime
1 tsp. honey
Salt & pepper to taste
2 scallions, minced, green parts reserved & sliced
2 Tbsp. cilantro, chopped
¼ cup sunflower oil
1 bag of spinach, washed & spun dry
2 oz. soft goat cheese, crumbled
¼ c. pepitas (pumpkin seeds), toasted

Heat oven to 400 degrees. Wrap each beet tightly with tinfoil & roast for about 45 minutes, until knife just inserts easily. Let cool a bit, remove peel, & slice. In a small bowl, whisk together lime zest/juice, honey, & salt until dissolved. Whisk in minced scallions & cilantro. Slowly whisk in oil to emulsify. Toss a bit of the dressing with the spinach in a serving bowl, top with the beets & drizzle with more dressing. Garnish with goat cheese & pepitas & serve. Serves 4-6.