



BLACKBROOK FARM

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Technology on the farm

Hi Members! This is the eighth box in our eighteen week installment of local, organic vegetables and we are happy to see that summer is finally arriving. Based on the weather, summer is coming about a month late this year. Not to complain though—it has been great weather to enjoy the outdoors. Usually if it's not cold, snowing, or raining, then usually it's like ninety degrees and humid to beat all. Thankfully though for us people (not the tomatoes and melons) it has been an unusually cool and pleasant summer to be outside. Hopefully you all have had some time to steal away for a camping trip or a visit to the cabin to enjoy this summer too.

Despite the cooler weather slowing our summer crops down a bit, we are seeing a pretty reasonable season shape up this year in terms of filling the boxes. We are still a bit shy of where we would like to be in this wet and then paradoxically dry year. The spring inundation is still taking its toll on yields and this summer drought does not help either. But the nice thing is that we are able to pull through. That brings me to the topic of our newsletter this week: technology!

Technology on small farms is really interesting in conflicting ways. For one thing, mechanical technology can be a huge labor saver and allow us to get more things done in a day. What can be accomplished by tractor in one day could literally take weeks by hand or with small motors like rototillers. In turn this allows us to put more veggies into production at a lower cost of production, which helps protect us against years like this by ensuring that there will still be veggies to pick for members (even though half the bed may be under water!). Cultivation tractors can also save tons of back-breaking human hours pulling weeds or hoeing. But when we take a step

What's in the Box:

Bell Peppers- They are coming in strong now! Great on kabobs or sliced into a salad.

Green Top Carrots- Ugly carrots! But sweet, fresh, crispy ugly carrots at that. The spring rains compacted our soil so much that these carrots had to take on some pretty funky shapes to grow down (or sideways!) Recommended to be eaten raw, but recipe included too. Top the carrots to keep them crisp in the fridge.

Broccoli (and some small shares also got cauliflower)- These heads are looking really great this week! Some pretty big ones in there. Store in plastic bag in fridge.

Eggplant- *Small shares only.* Since small shares did not get eggplant last week, we thought we would give you some this week. recipe in last weeks newsletter. Slice thin and grill or roast

Field Tomatoes- *Full shares only.* Just a taste of what's to come! There are some red hybrids and some heirlooms like cherokee purple and red and green zebras in there. Enjoy! Store upside down on counter- **DO NOT STORE IN FRIDGE-** they lose their texture and taste.

Cherry Tomatoes- Everyone got these this week and next week we will take off. Hopefully you are getting to them before your children do! Some members got lesser ripened tomatoes, so leave them on the counter for a couple days and then dig in!

Yukon Gold Potatoes- These are a favorite! Great as mashed potatoes or roasted with rosemary and thyme.

Rosemary/Oregano/Thyme Bunch These fresh herbs are a wonderful addition to any dish. If you can not use them up within a week or so, hang them upside down to dry



Ayla washing carrots bunches



Broccoli plants looking really healthy in the field!

Carrot Top Pesto

from the perennial plate
 1/2 cup toasted almonds, sliced
 1 cup parmesan cheese, grated
 2 cloves of garlic, minced
 1 bunch carrot tops, leaves only, discard the stems
 Juice of 1 lemon
 1 tablespoon honey
 1 cup olive oil or enough to blend it all together
 into a thick pesto
 salt to taste

Put the ingredients in a food processor and blend thoroughly. Blend it more than you would other pestos, you don't want any big carrot leaves as they will get stuck in your throat. Use on crackers, boiled eggs or with veggie sticks

Technology on the farm

back to look at our mechanical technology on our small farm, you start to notice something kind of funny. Read the serial tags on any of our cultivating tractors: "1949", "1954," or on our larger tillage and utility tractors: "1959," "1963." It's funny because when most people think of technology they think of smart phones, touch screen computers, flat screen TVs, or cars that can park themselves. Out here on the farm, we live in the stone age of technology!

And that's really the funny thing: for our farm to be sustainable, we use agricultural technology that is sometimes literally centuries old. In fact, many of the implements that now mount on our tractors were originally designed to be pulled by horses. Of course there is other technology on the farm too. Like our greenhouses or hoop houses, they are a fairly new invention, at least in the form of relatively cheap plastic covered hoop structures that are available to us now. Imagine how much a 30'x96' glass greenhouse would have cost to build? Then there's a sort of technology we don't usually think of as technology, what I would call intellectual technology. That would be our planting charts, productions plans, greenhouse schedules, CSA member database systems, invoicing systems, budgeting, in other words, the nitty gritty knowledge and planning part of farming. Heck the whole CSA model of farming and consuming is kind of a radical new technology that enables the relationship between farmer and consumer that we enjoy now.

What I'm trying to say is that the technology that enables sustainable farming is not the sort of technology you might think of. We don't need giant John Deere tractors or computer guidance systems to drive our tractors to within an inch of precision. The types of machines that a sustainable farm will use do not require millions of dollars of research and development to create. For the most part they already exist. Or farmers like me can invent and build them ourselves. And more importantly than any new machine, we need the knowledge to run a farm and the intellectual technology

out of direct sunlight. Or keep in a jar of water in the fridge. Recipe included

Onions- ailsa or small red- Full shares only. The red onions were originally supposed to be storage onions, but they started flowering instead of filling out so we decided to harvest them for bunching onions. Peel outer layer off and they are a nice red onion, but don't use the green part as its too tough. The Ailsa white onions are great raw or cooked, and you can eat the green tops.

Spring Mix- 3/4 lb full shares, 1/2 lb small shares. Not too bitter for summer, because of the cooler weather!

Patty Pan/ Summer Squash/Zucchini- Almost everyone got a pattypan this week, either white or yellow. Great sliced the long way and grilled with olive oil, salt and pepper.

Cucumbers- Still coming in strong! Eat salads!

to see the task through. In many senses, the pursuit of sustainability drives us back in time. Yet we believe that this is the right way forward.

Just a little food for thought. We hope you've been enjoying the veggies. Your favorite summer veggies are right around the corner, waiting in full abundance!

Have a great week!
Your farmers.



Digging yukon gold potatoes!

Skillet-Cooked Creamer Potatoes with Rosemary

from sur la table
1½ pounds creamer potatoes (small)
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 rosemary sprig, 6 inches long
6 cloves garlic, peeled
Kosher or sea salt
Put the potatoes, olive oil, rosemary, and garlic in a heavy skillet just large enough to hold the potatoes in a single layer. Season with salt. Cover and cook over moderately low heat, shaking the skillet occasionally to rotate the potatoes, until the potatoes are tender when pierced, about 30 minutes, depending on their size.

Zucchini-Crusted Pizza

adapted from Moosewood Cookbook

Olive oil and white flour for the pan
2 c. packed grated, salted, drained zucchini/summer squash (about 2 large or 4 small)
1 tsp. salt
2 eggs, beaten
¾ - 1 c. whole spelt/wheat flour or sprouted flour
½ - ¾ c. finely grated parmesan cheese
pinches of basil, thyme, oregano, etc.
2 tbsp. olive oil
1 tsp. salt

Topping Suggestions:
1 large ripe tomato, sliced
cherry tomatoes, halved
fresh chopped garlic
mozzarella cheese, grated
thinly sliced onions
mushrooms dipped in olive oil
sliced olives
thinly sliced bell peppers
prepared pasta sauce

- 1) Put grated zucchini in a colander. Sprinkle with 1 tsp. salt and stir. Let sit for 20 minutes. Squeeze out all excess water.
- 2) Preheat oven to 400 F. Generously oil a pizza pan and coat lightly with flour.
- 3) Combine zucchini, eggs, parmesan, herbs, and 1 tbsp. olive oil in a bowl and mix well. Add flour and stir to make a thick batter.
- 4) Spread into the prepared pan and bake for 35-40 minutes, or until golden brown. About halfway through the baking, brush with remaining tablespoon of olive oil (optional). Remove from oven.
- 5) Top with your favorite pizza items and bake at 400 F until heated through.

Don't forget the Farm Event on August 24th!

12-4 bring your family to walk around the farm, dig some potatoes, watch the pigs, maybe even grab some tomatoes off the vine! bring a dish and we will have some fun!
Please RSVP by emailing us

What's in store for next week?

Green Top Beets
Peppers
Hot peppers?
Eggplant
Red cabbage?
Parsley
Field Tomatoes
squash
cucumbers
strawberries- rotating
broccoli