



The Beanstalk

Easy Bean Farm's Weekly Newsletter

Easy Bean Farm

5075 100th Ave. NW Milan, MN 56262

easybean@fedtel.net

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

Starbor Kale: *This is the classic Kale that everyone either knows and loves or knows and wonders, "What the heck am I going to do with this kale?" There are countless uses for Kale. My son, who is not a person who tends to LOVE greens, LOVES to blend it into his fruit smoothies. WE make lots of Kale and eggs. Last night my mother-in-law made the most delicious greens pie with*



tons of greens and an ample amount of cheese. Kale Cesar salad is delicious. There is a great Portuguese Soup called Caldo Verde that uses Kale. If you are not using it soon, wrap it loosely in plastic and keep it in your refrigerator.

Arcadia Broccoli: *This first round of broccoli has really enjoyed the cool nights that we have been having. We plant a LOT of broccoli (around 1000 plants every two weeks) with the goal of having broccoli through a good portion of the summer... but if the weather gets too hot for an extended time, the successions tend not to do well. This one looks great and the heads will likely be a little larger next week. These heads are still VERY tight and they are VERY mild and I found them to be excellent raw... something that not all broccoli can claim.*

Red Cabbage: *In past years we have given people massive heads of red cabbage and we have gotten a few complaints (since we will probably have a green cabbage next week) when the cabbage starts to build up. This year we made our first planting a little more tightly spaced and we got some smaller cabbages. These are proba-*

bly single meal heads. I am not sure how I feel about it. Please DO give me some feedback! Red Cabbages are my favorite and these guys are crisp and just a little peppery. I love Red Cabbage and Apple slaw.

Amazing Cauliflower: Cauliflower is among my favorite of the early summer vegetables we grow and it is my favorite thing in this week's box. Much like the broccoli, it has benefitted from the cooler temps. It took me many years to figure out how best to grow cauliflower and have it look good.

The crop is a heavy feeder and need steady, but not overly-much water. As soon as the curd starts to form, our crew walks through the crop, every few days, and wraps the outer leaves around the curd with a rubber band. This keeps the heads from getting too much sun.

When they get a lot of direct sunlight they will start to turn a little yellow and, while they taste

just as good, people really seem to like the head to be white. Because the heads are not shrink wrapped, they will bruise easily. Wrap them in a plastic bag and keep them in your crisper drawer.

Oregon Giant Snow Peas: The snow pea crop has done very well and we should have a LOT of them over the next few weeks. These guys are crunchy and a little sweet and the whole thing, other than the stem, can be eaten. I love them lightly stir-fried with a little sesame oil, some scallion, a little ginger, tamari and, when they are done, a dash of rice wine vinegar.





Green Scallion: *In the next week or two we will begin to transition from scallion to one of our bulbing onion varieties. The first ones that will be ready will be our Cippolini onions which are small and flat and are delicious grilled. Until then, more scallion!*



Bloomsdale Spinach: *A few weeks ago I was beginning to get worried about this spinach because it was getting pounded by so many heavy rains that I was worried that all of the leaves would be too damaged to be marketable. While there ARE a few tears, here and there, the leaves are spectacularly delicious and have a nice turgid texture. While we have washed this spinach for you it does seem to hold onto grit and would likely benefit from another washing. Refrigerate this stuff ASAP.*

SlikPik Summer Squash, Patty Pan and/or Raven Zucchini: *Brace Yourselves. The Summer Squash are just beginning to hit their stride. There will be more in the coming weeks. Soon there will be green cukes as well. Summer Squash and Zucchini can be used interchangeably. I like to use a vegetable peeler to make thin noodle-like strips from the squash. I then cook them (briefly) in a little olive oil with salt, pepper and whatever else might be tasty. Serve it with a little chopped basil and some parmesan or Romano cheese. Yum.*

Basil: *The basil plants needed a little pinching to promote their growth so we decided to give you all some small bouquets. There is more basil in your future...so says Zoltar.*

Panisse Head Lettuces: *I have been eating a whole head of lettuce, in the field, by myself EVERY day. I just can't seem to get enough of it! Romaines are coming soon!*

From the Fields

Folks,

Over the last few days folks from all over, including friends from back out east, have been sending me copies of an article that appeared in the Washington Post on Saturday which told the story of a set of events the took place



in and around our small little “hometown” of Montevideo. While, often, I am glad when stuff about rural America makes its way into the columns of larger newspapers (too often we are forgotten), this one did not leave me feeling good. The article was about a series of talks put together by a local Lutheran Intern (pastor) and a local doctor, and his family, who are Muslim and who have made their home here for the last several years. In the winter they put together a talk to help clarify, for many people who have had little exposure to Islam aside from the scary stuff they get from their media, that Islam and Terrorism are NOT synonymous. Malena and I went to the first of these events in Dawson and we were shocked by the HUGE turn-out. The Doctor gave a really good talk, the best part of which (IMO) was when he just showed photos of his family, and their cat, and we were pleased that MOST of the people in the audience seemed both genuinely interested and supportive. There were a few “off-the-wall” questions and assertions at the end, but overall I thought that the town showed up in a positive way. Afterward there was, apparently, some blow back against the Pastor and the Doctor. A few weeks later the same talk was given here, in Montevideo, and, while I would still say that MOST people were polite and supportive, there was a group who, over the previous few weeks, had worked themselves into a lather and were angry that the Public Library was “Promoting Islam” and was giving a voice to a non-Christian. People put up nasty posters around town, wrote nasty letters to the newspaper and then showed up and were rude to the Doctor going so far as to call him an “anti-Christ”. Things got heated and his wife and children were genuinely worried that violence was going to erupt. People in my town made this man, who has come here with advanced degrees to help SAVE THE LIVES of people on our small town, feel like an outside. They made him question his sanity for bringing his family here.

As a farmer, and an organic farmer in particular, one of the things that has become abundantly clear to me over the years is the importance of “edge”. Edge, on our farm, is where two different “eco-systems” meet and, after 21 years of watching carefully, I can tell you that “edge” is where most of the greatest diversity exists (biologically) on our farm and it tends to be the most resilient part of our farm. Our fields are fairly diverse... but they have nothing on the zones where fields meet the groves, the woods meets the river, or the edge of our pond. In these places where things meet all sorts of important processes take place and I always notice that they seem the most immune to meteorological stresses or pest outbreaks. Be-

cause there is diversity at the edge, the systems tend to be more dynamic. Edge is where we find the milkweed for the butterflies. Edge is where the beneficial insects hang out during the day. I fear that some elements of our own community are modeling their view of what a healthy community looks like more on the vast stretches of uninterrupted GMO corn fields, than on the beautiful and diverse (and rapidly disappearing) edges between those fields and the groves and wetlands that still dot this area. The fact that they found it more important to make him feel, acutely, as a “Stranger in a Strange Land”, than to welcome him as the brilliant, funny, and charming doctor, husband, father, and neighbor that he is something that makes me feel both ashamed of my small town (which I love) and makes me wonder at the continued diminishment of the “edge” that exists between our rural communities and our urban and suburban communities. We need to find a way to create more points of contact so that we might better understand one another and so that we can be a more diverse and resilient nation. We need to see the benefit of making our tent as big as is possible.

Now that July is here I know that we are in for around 8 more weeks of really intense work. The crops are growing faster and faster and keeping up with the harvest, weeding, trellis work AND planting is always is both exhilarating and a little bit exhausting. Right now my energy levels are high and we are really excited about the upcoming summer-crops like cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers and eggplant. My best guess is that cucumbers could show up as soon as next week and the rest will probably arrive in late July. We should have lots of broccoli, cauliflower, peas and cabbages in the next few weeks. Beets are coming soon. Cippolini Onions are coming soon. Romanesco is coming. The boxes will get heavier and heavier over the next few weeks.

- Happy Fourth of July for all who are Celebrating,
- Farmer Mike