

THE TIPI TIMES

June 30, 2011, week 7 (purple EOW)

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THIS WEEK'S BOX CONTAINS:

Strawberries, 1 pt
Pointy-headed cabbage
Snap peas, 1.25 lb
Kohlrabi, 1
Zucchini/summer squash
Romaine lettuce
Parsley
Spinach, 1/2 lb.
Garlic scapes

NEXT WEEK'S BOX WILL PROBABLY CONTAIN:*

Chard, garlic scapes,
peas, zucchini, lettuce and
more

*depending on weather, critters
& other forces of nature.

MENU IDEAS

The cabbage we sent this week is perfect for coleslaw and other raw salads. You'll need picnic foods over the July 4th weekend. We chose this new cabbage variety because it's good raw. See more under Veggie Notes.

The garlic scapes and parsley combine nicely for sautéed veggies, eg a medley of zucchini, snap peas and wilted spinach.

Found Seedlings Our farm has few natural areas, but we continue to discover diverse species living here. While searching for a farm, we hoped to find land with woods or a creek. Natural areas bring such interest to a farm. However, finding the right soil type and local community were our top priorities. As a result, our farm is almost all cropland. It's been the right choice; this farm grows vegetables very well. We appreciate any natural diversity when we discover it. I just found a 30-foot swath of horsetail growing on the sandy hill behind the farm buildings. That area is scrubby and eroded. It was planted to corn for many years before we bought our farm, but is too dry for vegetables so we've let it revert to scrubland. New species appear each year. Much of what grows there is unremarkable (quackgrass, goldenrod, thistles). Some is invasive and needs to be removed periodically (buckhorn, multiflora rose, honeysuckle). Horsetail is such an interesting plant, the single surviving genus of a group of primitive plants living over 350 million years ago. The stems are hollow and jointed, irresistible to pull apart and reassemble. I need to identify the species; some are poisonous to livestock (not that we have any, but the next farmers might). Regardless, this tenacious plant will remain on our sand hill - it is almost impossible to eradicate, even if we wanted to.

We've tilled a section of our sand hill in order to plant prairie species this fall. We need to be realistic about this project. We won't use herbicides to eradicate the current weeds and vegetation, which will limit establishment of the prairie species. We chose a section where perennial weeds haven't taken over yet, so I remain hopeful. I'll be satisfied if we can establish a handful of interesting native species.

Crop plants are not as tenacious as the weeds on the sand hill. Sometimes we'll find stray vegetables growing in the weedy edges of a planted field. When the crew finishes transplanting seedlings, they empty the flats at the edge of the field. There are always cells with plants too small to transplant. A few of those small plants survive if it rains soon. We find lettuce and bok choy growing in the weeds. Wouldn't it be great if we could plant our crops that way, just scattering them along a field, then walking away until harvest? Of course it doesn't work that way.
Beth

Here are two interesting news updates from MACSAC (Madison Area CSA Coalition):

Bike the Barns - Registration now is open for this September 18 event, "a spectacular fundraising bicycle ride that features local farms and local food prepared by Underground Food Collective." Bike the Barns supports the Partner Shares program which helps low-income families purchase CSA shares from local farms. Go to <http://www.csacoalition.org/our-work/bike-the-barns/> to learn more or to register for the ride.

Recipe Contest - MACSAC is preparing a new cookbook, a successor to their popular Asparagus to Zucchini cookbook. Have a favorite recipe to share? Want the glory of seeing your recipe in print? Go to <http://www.csacoalition.org/news/recipe-contest/> to learn more. If you submit a recipe, please send me a copy too!

Farm and Veggie Notes -

We enjoyed the strawberry u-pick on Sunday. We were pleased that the weather was mild again, sunny but not too hot. The berries were small but good quality. This is the first time we've run out of berries to pick. We send members into specific sections of the field to pick. By the end of the event, we just opened up the berry fields and let everyone hunt around. There are always a few overlooked berries. Does anyone have good photos from the u-pick to share? I meant to take photos but did not get to it.

Most of the berries in the box this week are from a late-bearing variety called Ovation. It is a challenge to extend the strawberry season beyond three weeks. We have favorite early- and mid-season strawberry varieties that we rely on. There are not many late-season varieties available and we've tried most of them without much success. Ovation looks like a winner.

Cabbage - Isn't this great looking cabbage? We've planted two new cone-shaped varieties of cabbage this year. This one is called Caramba. These cabbages are appealing for summer production. Try them raw. Here's the seed catalog description of Caramba: "Delicious salad crop - use like lettuce but easier to grow and store and more nutritious. The flavor is very mild and tender-crunchy. Unlike lettuce, Caramba won't wilt or brown in salads."

Snap peas - This is a very nice batch of snap peas. We were able to buy seed for our favorite variety, Sugar Ann. It has been in short supply for several years. It's a good variety in many ways: productive and very tasty. Sugar Ann always contains a small percentage (1%?) of shell peas, so watch for oddball pods with thinner shells. You'll recognize them when you de-string the pods. These shell peas are great to eat - just throw away the pods.

Garlic scapes (curly green things) - We bought these from John Hendrickson of Stone Circle Farm who is growing organic garlic for our CSA again this year. The scapes grow at the top of garlic plants. John snaps them off to direct the plants' energy into forming garlic bulbs underground. Use scapes as a substitute for garlic cloves. They can be minced, mixed with olive oil, and added to stir fries or simple pasta dishes. The scapes can be sautéed, but will not brown like garlic cloves. Expect them to retain their crunch even when cooked, and to be milder than garlic cloves, closer in pungency to the green garlic we've sent. We asked John to pick the scapes a bit younger this year, and he did.

Easy Coleslaw

from Farmer John's Cookbook, *the Real Dirt on Vegetables*, by John Peterson and Angelic Organics

"This quick and easy recipe will be even more convenient if you use a food processor to shred the cabbage. This is a great standby when you're in a pinch for time. Recipe-editor Matt relates that caraway seeds help in digestion of raw cabbage, so they are included in this recipe. Homemade mayonnaise will do wonders for this recipe (adapted from *Fast Vegetarian Feasts*)."

Beth's notes: We don't have carrots yet, but julienned kohlrabi is good in this slaw.

5 cups shredded green or red cabbage
2 large carrots, grated
3/4 cup mayonnaise
1/3 cup apple cider vinegar
2 Tbsp. honey
1 tsp. caraway seeds
3/4 tsp. salt, or more to taste

1. Toss the cabbage and carrots in a large bowl.
2. Mix the mayonnaise, vinegar, honey and caraway seeds in a small bowl. Pour the dressing over the cabbage; toss to combine. Stir in salt to taste. Chill until ready to serve.