

Guldan Family Farm



NOTES FROM THE FARM

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*This week's share...
Our best guess.*

Hoping you're enjoying your 4th of July holiday. The growth of vegetables in our fields took a little holiday time off earlier this season but apparently didn't over the past weekend, so we had a picking crew Monday morning. We picked berries for the last time this season which means that the lucky Tuesday shares will include a last taste of strawberries. We also had a wonderful picking of sugar snap peas so there are peas for all. We're in that transition time when the spring crops are coming to an end and the early summer crops should be starting to produce, but because of the cold wet spell, they're still lagging behind this year. So, for a while, salad and greens time will continue in Minnesota. In addition, we're planning that everyone's share will include a head of crisp romaine lettuce, spinach, and green onions. Red radishes are also making a return this week. Butterhead lettuce and additional amounts of the other produce are included in the full shares. Late week CSA pickups may have a little variation since the berries won't be available.

ON THE FARM

Last week, Denny warned Tim and I that we would need to prioritize the much needed cultivating and hand hoeing once the ground was workable. In a perfect world, if the timing is right, a weeding job is quickly accomplished if it is completed while the weeds are still small. I'm happy to say that the three of us were able to get through nearly everything that needed attention in three days. I was impressed. The worst area was 6 rows of slicing cucumbers that had started to reach out and vine across the rows. Denny wasn't able to cultivate as close as he would have liked causing Tim to use a lot more upper arm action with an old-fashioned hoe. This particular field has been invaded with a new weed to us called white cockle. It germinates all season long and looks similar to a watermelon plant. White cockle produces flowers and seed pods until the autumn frost arrives. (What a pain in the butt - to bad we can't apply some of those genetics to our edible crops.) Whenever we are through picking a particular vegetable for the season where we foresee a weed problem like this, our general plan of action is to quickly mow it and disk it down to prevent additional weed seed production for next year. Most of our vegetable crops are flat and spread out rather than upright like traditional corn and soybeans causing us to generally see more weed pressure since the weeds are not shaded out. Anyway, Tim was able to get rid of this first flush of weeds, so hopefully that area is under control for awhile anyway. We felt blessed to discover that Tim's patch of berries continued to grow and ripen all through last week and the beginning of this week.. We've picked berries now for over 2 weeks which is pretty typical of a June bearing strawberry. On the fourth of July, we were a little short help with family vacations and a couple people under the weather, but our family finished up the peas later in the day. We are so proud of our crew of pickers. Generally our crew of 10 to 12 people works from 7 to 10 am on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. It was absolutely miserable picking last Friday morning; but they were awesome - everyone showed up and no one complained. Samantha was the Egyptian water girl spending the morning filling water jugs and making sure everyone was hydrated. Often people comment to us wondering how we find good help. In 25 years of hiring youth, I can count only a few people that absolutely didn't work out. Many are returning employees and families each season. Yes, there are many energetic hardworking teenagers. Don't let anyone tell you differently. If you know a young person that works for us, give 'em a word of thanks 'cuz they're special to us!

Have a great week! Denny, Janice, Tim, Sam & Emily

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IDEAS FOR THE COOK

Did you try any of those dressing recipes last week? Our stash of the cilantro vinaigrette recipe I included last week is nearing the end. With greens still available, I am determined to find time to make another batch. Denny's request for creamed kohlrabi didn't happen since we are out of kohlrabi for probably a week. A fresh strawberry pie was a quick substitute and won his heart. For some extra color and taste, Samantha and I found a few wild mulberries on the farm and added them to the pie too. MMMMMMMmm.

As usual, store your produce in the refrigerator again this week. The spinach and romaine were not mud covered this week, but I'm sure they have some farm dirt included so please rinse and dry before eating. We've been enjoying the mild radishes this summer. I chuckle as I write this, but of course, we generally only get to eat the ugly or misshapen produce, so we enjoyed a couple snacks of split radishes dipped in my favorite, blue cheese dressing. You're probably more familiar with the type of spinach available at the supermarket, a smaller leafed variety. Spinach grown in this climate usually has a larger leaf and is not quite as smooth. Same taste, just a different look.. It's delicious in a salad or tucked into a pita sandwich or tortilla rollup. We're now on our 2nd planting of sugar snap peas which looks like it will be yielding us several large pickings this week. I'm certain that they had plenty of rain during their blossoming time which made for a better than average yield. These peas are trained to grow on a fence, but most times, it seems that wind knocks them off the fence just before they're ready to harvest so we have to work a little harder to pick them. To prepare snap peas for cooking, just snap off the stem tip toward the flat side of the pod and pull downward and remove the fibrous string. If you're going to cook them, cook them quickly, no more than a couple minutes. Run cold water over them after that brief cooking and you can add them to your tossed green salad topped with a vinaigrette – style dressing.

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

PEAS PLEASE

Peas are one of the best seasonal treats. There are three main types of peas. Snow peas, snap peas and shelling peas. Snow peas and snap peas are occasionally found in the specialty produce section in grocery stores, but I don't believe that I've ever seen shelling peas available. Depending on the season, we usually have them available from the farm into the middle of August. Actually, we just planted our last snap peas late last week with hopes that they will be available for a late August harvest. Heat is their biggest culprit, but by planting them in very heavy soil, our hope is that they'll have plenty moisture to thrive. Shelling peas are more touchy to disease late in the season, so we don't plant them as late into the summer. Snow peas are the flat peas often used in stir fries or steamed whole. Sugar snap peas also have edible pods, but PLEASE don't waste your time podding them. The pods are often times sweeter than the peas inside. The chubby more mature pods are usually sweeter than the smaller less mature pods. Finally, shelling peas have a very inedible fibrous pod that must be opened to find those sweet peas inside. All are best eaten as soon as possible. Storing them sacrifices some of their sweet flavor.

GARLICKY STIR-FRIED SNAP PEAS

2 cups fresh sugar snap peas
2 teaspoons cooking oil
Garlic powder
1 1/2 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste
Cooked rice (optional)

Prepare the peas by rinsing, cutting off the stem and remove the string. Heat oil in a skillet. Add a sprinkling of garlic powder. Add peas, cook and stir 2 to 4 minutes on medium heat. Remove and sprinkle on lemon juice, salt and pepper. Serve over rice, if desired. Makes about 3 servings.

OUR CHUCKLE OF THE WEEK

As a usual routine, our 11-year old daughter Samantha was helping at the market last Tuesday. She was eyeing the berries on the table and suddenly remarked very matter of factly. , "I've never eaten a nice-looking, big strawberry." Astonished, I looked at her with my lower jaw dropped. I repeated her comment: "You've never eaten a large strawberry?!" She explained to me, "Well, no, we always just get to eat the little ones. You always sell the big ones."