

Guldan Family Farm



NOTES FROM THE FARM

GULDAN FAMILY FARM CSA
46198 561ST AVENUE
NEW ULM, MN 56073
507-359-2543
GULDANFAMILYFARM.COM

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This week's share... Our best guess

At this point, we're intending to have sweet corn return to all the shares this week. This planting is one of our four last plantings that we hope to harvest from yet this fall. We plan on including beans again this week, tomatoes, and watermelon. Probably a hot pepper or two for those of you enjoying a little fresh salsa each week. New this week are beets. Believe me, that is quite a feat for us. We have an incredibly difficult time growing beets on our farm. For 17 years, we tried and in those 17 years, had a decent crop, once or twice. So we quit for a couple years only to try again this year. And you know what, it looks like they're going to be harvestable. We'll probably even have enough to include them a couple times this fall!

ON THE FARM

This past weekend, a road trip south took us past some pumpkin fields and trailers loaded with gourds, pumpkins and various other types of fall décor. The calendar says September, but for a short time yet, our fields will still say summer. Tomatoes, melons and sweet corn say it best - SUMMER! Apparently to some of the resident wildlife, they're in agreement. Today seems like a good time to chat about some of the wacky eating habits we've noticed in the field lately. The deer are gleaning the remains of one of the watermelon fields that we've just finished picking. Usually, they are unable to break open most varieties of watermelon. (You'll notice that I said "most varieties.") They are most certainly talented creatures. With a stomp of their hoof, they are able to break open the thin rinded "Yellow Doll" watermelons as well as a very tiny variety used as a pollinator for the seedless types. We aren't complaining too loudly since we've harvested most of the melons from this field, but they better stay the heck out of the next field! Denny chuckled telling friends about some other four-legged creatures enjoying our sweet corn. We're not sure what animal is going through this ritual, but we know it's not the coons or deer. This particular animal knocks down all the corn stalks in a small circular shaped area and pulls off the cobs. They (we assume it's a group of animals) eat all the corn from those cobs and neatly place the bare cobs in a small pile in the middle of this area. (Similar to a bon fire in the center of the gathering?) The routine reminds us of how our dog eats sweet corn, so we imagine that perhaps this muncher is a mama coyote and her pups feeding on the corn. How I would love to see this in action. How do we know it's not raccoons or deer? Easy, raccoons are notorious for taking a bite out every cob and just wrecking everything. Deer are not as wasteful and will finish each cob before moving onto the next, eating it right off the stalk. Yup, just like people, they all have their own style of table manners.

Our first week with somewhat of a skeleton crew went better than we expected. Tim came out to work after a full day in the science classroom. Samantha helped where she could after school and Emily will be back in New Ulm for a short while just in time to help with fall harvesting. With some brainstorming, we came up with a few more people who also are willing to help out with morning harvesting, so we feel like we're in pretty good shape for the month. Whew and I've been a little worried about that. No need to spend time fretting over that any longer! Sounds like we've got beautiful weather forecasted for this coming week preludeing our favorite time of the year-fall.

Have a great week! The Guldan Family, Denny, Janice, Tim, Samantha & Emily

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IDEAS FOR THE COOK

Are beets totally strange to you? I'm willing to bet that to many of you, they are. Growing up in a family that always had a garden, beets seemed as routine to me as green beans and cabbage. These beautiful root crops are usually boiled or roasted followed by the removal of the peeling. There are multiple ways of doing this, all tried and true methods for someone, but I'll explain to you the method I know best. My mom always boiled them till they were tender enough for a fork to pierce halfway through. The trick is to prepare beets that are quite similar in size so that they cook evenly. If the beets are rather large, they can take a very long time to cook through. Once tender, drain the water and let them cool long enough to handle comfortably with your hands. Here's the simple part. Just hold them under running water and with a rub of your hands the peeling will easily slip off. Slice into bite sized rounds or cubes, gently reheat and season with a bit of salt and pepper and a dab of butter. The less desirable aspect with this procedure is that your fingers will turn a beautiful shade of magenta. You'll find yourself scrubbing your hands real vigorously to removal the stains on your fingers. But it's worth it! Another method is to roast the beets wrapped in tin foil in a 400 degree oven until tender. (about 45 minutes to an hour) This works really well for large beets. When tender, unwrap the foil, give them time to cool and rub off the peeling under running water. A third method which is super simple is to cut the thin peel off with a vegetable peeler before cooking. Cut the beets into bite sized cubes before cooking. Boil in lightly salted water until tender. Which ever method you choose, you're sure to enjoy this sweet vegetable. Last week I prepared a kettle of beets using the boiling method. I removed the skins, reheated them and seasoned as I described above. Just before serving, I added a few tablespoons of crumbled feta cheese and a couple tablespoons of coarsely broken walnuts. And it was positively divine. Enjoy!

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

WATERMELON FOR GROWN-UPS

It doesn't come much easier than slicing a melon into slices or bite sized pieces for an instant dessert. But if you feel a little adventurous, the following recipes offer a little spin on preparing a watermelon dish. Leave the boring slices for the kids!

GINGERED WATERMELON

Watermelon

1 6 ounce container plain yogurt

2 tablespoons honey

1 tablespoon fresh lime juice

1/4 tsp grated fresh ginger

Chopped pistachios

Cube the watermelon. If using a seeded watermelon, you may want to remove the seeds also. Stir together the yogurt, honey, lime juice and fresh ginger. Divide watermelon cubes onto individual plates. Spoon the dressing over the watermelon and sprinkle with chopped pistachios.

WATERMELON FIRE AND ICE SALSA

3 cups chopped watermelon

2 tablespoons lime juice

2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro if desired

1 tablespoon chopped onion

1 tablespoon chopped jalapeno pepper

1/2 teaspoon garlic salt

In a large bowl, combine the watermelon, lime juice, cilantro, onions, jalapeno and garlic salt. Mix well and serve with chips. (Hint: drain the chopped watermelon in a colander to remove some of the liquid before combine all the ingredients.) Makes about 4 cups.

WATERMELON AND TOMATO SALAD

4 cups cubed and chilled watermelon

1 cup chopped tomatoes

1/2 cup sliced sweet onion

1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese

Fresh basil, parsley or mint leaves if desired

Salt to taste

Gently toss the watermelon, tomatoes, onion, and your choice of herbs together in a large bowl; add the feta cheese, season with the salt, and gently toss again to combine.