

The Farm Weekly

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 2

31 MAY, 2004

A NEW SEASON BEGINS!

For those of you that were members in years past, the boxes at startup this year hold much more both in variety and quantity. The weather seems to have changed from winter directly to summer, skipping spring altogether.

We certainly aren't complaining, for the warmer weather helped the plants really take off in the field. The rain has been a constant obstacle, but that is always expected to be the case, and Tim has taken each and every opportunity to get everything planted.

When the rain has kept him out of the fields, he has either worked on improving the deer fencing or starting seeds in the greenhouse. Almost everything is running according to schedule with the exception being the deer fence, which we had hoped would have been completed a month or two ago.

Last week, Tim finished transplanting all of the tomato plants, and has noticed that those set out earlier have tiny tomatoes hiding in the vines. It takes about 40 days to get a ripe tomato from a flower. Perhaps we will have tomatoes close to the 4th of July.

Peppers, lettuce, red cabbage, basil, parsley, leeks, sweet potatoes, and summer squash were also transplanted into the field.

Today, Tim worked in the greenhouse starting some of the fall produce such as broccoli, cabbage, and lettuce. It's hard to believe that it is time to work on fall crops already!

Some of the contents in the boxes are probably foreign to many of you. The plant similar to romaine lettuce with a very thick stem is a variety of Chinese cabbage known as Pac Choi. It is a common ingredient in many Chinese

dishes and added at the very last to the ingredients in the wok for it wilts quickly.

Simply separate and wash the leaves and chop into bite size pieces. All of the plant is used, just trim off the root end a bit as you would a celery stalk.

You can use the pac choi in the traditional Chinese manner, chopping it into bite size pieces and stir frying it, or you can eat it in the same way you eat salad greens or raw cabbage. Try tossing the chopped pac choi with some lettuce and top it with a sesame soy dressing.

Arugula is the odd, weed-like green. Like the pac choi, it can be stir fried, but it is most often consumed as part of a tossed salad. Arugula has a peppery taste and adds an interesting zing to whatever it is mixed with.

We have added some spring garlic to your boxes. The spring onions are in a bunch, but the garlic stands alone, and one whiff will tell you which is which. Only the bulb portion of the garlic is tender enough for consumption, since the stem is usually rather woody.

The garlic cloves were planted last fall and will get a bit larger over the coming month, but it won't be long before all of the garlic is harvested and hung for curing in the barn.

The herb plants are something we thought of two or three years ago to accomplish two things. First, they help fill up the lighter boxes of the early season. Secondly, many have wanted fresh herbs to jazz up their cooking, but as you can imagine, these are tough to pick each week and they may not be what you want that particular week. Storage of picked herbs is also a problem.

These plants will do great in pots on your patio, or transplanted into a small space in your garden, and they will always be just a few steps away from your kitchen.

Each of the herbs this week are perennial plants, meaning they will come back next year if they are planted in your garden. Putting them in pots allows you to easily bring them inside in the fall to enjoy over the winter months. Some folks like to put them in pots and then dig a space in the garden to place them in. This makes for easier care, and likewise easier removal back into the house later in the fall.

The German thyme is similar to other varieties of thyme and is hardy in our winters. Allow a one foot square space in the garden and simply pick off a twig and strip the leaves to use in cooking. Thyme is great with almost every meat and in many casseroles.

This Week's Box

Pac Choi
Arugula
Radishes
Scallions
Spring Garlic
Marjoram
Sage
German Thyme

Next Week

Lettuce
Radishes
Spinach
Scallions
Spinach
More Herb Plants
Greens

Sage is often used to season sausage and is a telltale ingredient in the stuffing of our traditional Thanksgiving turkey. Sage can be used elsewhere, though, including casseroles, pasta dishes, and poultry. The sage will require a 2 foot square space since it grows a little wider and taller.

Marjoram is a very close cousin of oregano and can be used in much the same way. Italian dishes often include a dash of oregano, and there is no reason why you can't substitute marjoram. While oregano is a tender perennial in our area, marjoram is a bit more hardy and should hold up better in our climate.

Herbs are easy to care for and actually thrive in average to poor soil, in fact, some think they are more flavorful if they have to struggle a bit, instead of coasting in very fertile and moist soil. We hope that you will experiment a bit with the fresh herbs to add something special to your cooking.

Everyone should have received their packets of CSA information in the mail. Most of your questions should be answered there. If you are regularly sharing your box with someone else, please be sure to relate any information in the packets, or any of the announcements made in our newsletters with them.

We still have some shares available. The referral discount is still available, so if someone signs on and identifies you as the person who brought them to our CSA, you will receive \$20 off of your CSA membership. If you have already paid in full, we will send you a check in July. There is no limit to the number of referral discounts you can receive.

The alpacas are doing very very well. The cria (baby) to the right is one of six born this spring. We expect 2 more any day now. You are welcome to come and visit to see the alpacas, just be sure to close any gates you open for we do control which male breeds to which female.

Tim and I would like to thank you again for joining the CSA. We welcome your ideas and suggestions for making things run more smoothly. Thanks for joining us.

We Need Your Favorite Recipes!

One of the Bluebird Hills Newsletter traditions is the inclusion of recipes from our members.

These recipes don't have to be solely for produce. They can be your favorite cookie, casserole, dessert, salad, or whatever.

So please send them to us by e-mail, snail mail, or pony express.

**bluebirdhills@voyager.net or
3617 Derr Rd. Springfield, Oh. 45503**

IMPORTANT PLEASE NOTE

**The Open House has been
rescheduled to Saturday,
July 17th from June 12th**

10:00 to 4:00 PM

Details coming later

