

The Farm Weekly

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Prayers Are Answered!

Each year seems to have its challenges and this year's has been the acquisition of visas for Marco, Pedro, and Hanter, so that they could come to Ohio from Mexico to work. After 3 months of applications, inspections, and conversations with 3 different entities of our Federal Government, visas were issued on Wednesday and the 3 arrived here in Springfield on Friday night.

The system for employing immigrant labor legally is in dire need of re-vamping. First there is an application to the Department of Labor so that you can get their permission to apply to the Department of Homeland Security. Part of this process is to prove that you have difficulty finding local labor and that you won't displace any U.S. workers. You must advertise in Texas for workers and have your housing inspected.

Once permission is granted some 45 days later, you can apply to the Department of Homeland Security for their okay to ask the U.S. Consulate in Mexico to issue visas. This is the most frustrating part of the process for you have no human voice to speak with or ask questions of. You have no idea whether your application has been received or filled out appropriately.

Finally a phone call

and letter to Congressman David Hobson expedited our efforts and we were approved to go to stage three, with one huge hitch. While we received notification of approval of our application, the Consulate in Monterrey Mexico received nothing.

And so we sat and waited. Once they received confirmation of our approval, Monterrey assured us that we could have an appointment for our 3 workers to come and apply for their visas. The only problem was that the earliest available appointments were 2 weeks away. Monterrey never received our confirmation and we never were able to talk to anyone in Homeland Security to find out where it was or if it could be resent. In frustration I finally broke down and the poor consulate employee took pity on me and spoke with her supervisor.

Last Monday I rushed our original confirmation to Fed Ex so that it could be sent to Monterrey overnight. A quick phone call to Mexico brought Marco, Pedro, and Hanter to Monterrey to apply for the issued visas. Wednesday night they were on their way to Springfield and arrived on Friday night and started work on Saturday morning. HALLELUJAH!

It would have been far easier to employ illegals and far less expensive

since we have to pay for their housing, transportation, and all of the various fees. But these fellows are far more dependable and work harder than any local

or migrant labor we have used so we feel it is worth it.

Things are going well in the garden. The moisture over the weekend helped Tim tremendously

DON'T FORGET OUR FARMFEST

This Saturday, June 18th
From 10:00 AM To 4:00 PM

Local Artisans
Alpaca Babies
Grilled Food
Alpaca Clothing
Horse Drawn Wagon Rides
Fiber Arts Demonstrations

For maps and directions visit our website at www.bluebirdhills.com

This Week's Box

Lettuce
Spinach
Pearl Type Onions
Pac Choy
Radishes
Arugula
Oregano
Chives
Cherry Tomato

Next Week

Lettuce
Spinach
Onions
Kohlrabi (?)
More Herb Plants

with irrigation, although it also helped the weeds to germinate and grow as well. Cultivation is at the top of the list of things to do, in order to control any competition from weeds.

In your box this week we have included a Oregano plant. I won't extol the virtues of oregano as they are very similar to the marjoram included last week. Planting and care are the same. Oregano is not as hardy as the marjoram, so you may want to bring it in or put it in a more sheltered location if you want it to survive the winter.

Chives should also be familiar to everyone. These are a perennial and although they won't be blooming this year, next year's blossoms can add edible decoration to salads and some color to your early summer garden. They will self sow and keep themselves growing and are pretty hardy here in Ohio, while the Oregano is not.

The small tomato plant solves the cherry tomato dilemma. Almost everyone loves cherry tomatoes, but they are murderous to pick and pack. One problem with this variety is that the pickers often consume too many while they are picking, so they never reach the boxes. The other is that many varieties split their skins and don't make it to your home in very pretty form.

So we have provided plants for you to pick and enjoy. This is a variety we have enjoyed for years for their sweetness and excellent flavor. Just plant in a fertile and sunny location. Even a big pot will do on your back porch. Be prepared to stake the plant for support as it will get 4 or 5 feet tall.

The alpacas are tolerating the heat fairly well, and we will have several new cria or babies for everyone to take a peek at. Two other females are now due to deliver, so maybe we will have a birth to witness on Saturday! So far we have had a reddish brown, a white with very light fawn spots, and 3 fawns.

Hope that you can come to the Farm Fest. Be sure to bring your wallets for homemade soaps, alpaca clothing, herb plants, and FOOD!

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.

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Asian Coleslaw

from member Natalie L.

1 cup Toasted Almonds, coarsely chopped

8 cups Chinese Cabbage

2 cups Snow Peas cut on the diagonal

1 bunch Radishes, sliced

3 green Onions thinly sliced

Dressing mix together until the sugar is dissolved:

3 Tblsp White Vinegar

3 Tblsp Sugar

1 Tblsp Soy Sauce

1 clove Garlic minced

½ tsp Asian Sesame Oil

½ tsp ground Ginger

½ tsp cayenne pepper

After dressing is mixed add **1 cup Mayonnaise**, whisk and mix with greens 1 or 2 hours before serving

