

The Farm Weekly

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FRIDAY THE THIRTEENTH!

We aren't particularly superstitious, but the date does make one pause as you load a refrigerator truck for deliveries in 90 degree heat. Especially when you took the truck in for servicing because an alarm keeps going off telling you something is wrong with the brakes! The mechanics said that they could find nothing wrong, so we will cross our fingers and hope that all is working well.

The mechanicals have been a challenge this week. The pump for the well had to be pulled and replaced. Better to get this done now rather than in the middle of a dry spell, so we are happy to have that security, but not particularly elated to have the bill.

I bush-hogged most of Sunday to cut down the annual rye Tim had planted for a cover crop and green manure. He started, but could not complete the job due to grass allergies. The pollen formed a yellow coating on everything, including me, which saved me the trouble of putting on sunscreen!

Unfortunately, in the process of mowing, I managed to get a thorn in one of the front tractor tires. This took all day to remedy on Monday, so Tim could not get his tilling done. Not to be defeated, he planted some carrots and green beans instead.

Rain kept him from tilling until last night and today, so he hopes to get several things transplanted and out of the greenhouse before the rain comes tomorrow night.

We had a wonderfully smooth start to the season thanks to all of you, and we would like to thank you for that. We know that the boxes were very light, and hope that this week will make you feel a bit better about the commitment you have made.

We do have lettuce, although not quite as much as we would like you to have. The leafy, thick stemmed plant is Pak Choi, a variety of Chinese cabbage. If you aren't familiar with such things this is a very mild flavored vegetable that is commonly used in

Chinese stir fry dishes. It wears sauces well, or you can eat it raw in a salad. The entire leaf from stem to stem is edible and tasty. Just separate the leaves as you do with celery stalks and rinse individually before consuming.

There are another 4 herb plants this week. Two are absolute favorites of mine, basil. The leaves of each are similar in shape, but the one variety is purple basil.

All of these herbs can either go into a pot, or into the garden directly. The basil is an annual, so will not winter over for next year. Basil is a natural accompaniment to tomatoes and is frequently used in Italian cooking. One of my favorites is to pluck a leaf, once the plants get a little bit bigger, cut it into little bits and add it to scrambled eggs. It sounds a bit odd, but it is delicious.

Sage is the fuzzy leaved plant, and when you rub its leaves you will probably be reminded of ground pork sausage or the stuffing in the Thanksgiving turkey. It is a perennial plant, and even though I am not as enamored with it, as I am the basil, it still is a pretty plant and will look nice in the flower bed.

Lastly is the oregano, which looks very similar to the thyme and marjoram of last week. This is a tender perennial, so if you want it to live into next year,

you might want to choose a sheltered and sunny garden spot.

All of these plants require about a square foot of space, and a sunny location. Fertility is not as important, and most think that lower fertility actually makes them more flavorful. I am a bit skeptical about that one, but you can do what you want with it.

The alpacas have been tolerating the heat fairly well. We have had 3 births and the babies (crias) are doing great. Usually they are born before noon or soon after. However the day these were born, there were showers in the morning, so the dams held off until afternoon. One was born at around 1:00 and as I looked him over, I spied his grandmother and said to myself, "I bet she unpacks tomorrow". As I was waiting to take the workers home that evening, there was the newest addition to the herd, nursing on his mamma, the grandma.

Somehow the little bugger was born, took its first steps, and suckled its first milk without any help from me at all. For a moment I felt a little bit slighted and unnecessary, but when I checked out his incredibly dense and lustrous fleece all was right with the world and he was forgiven!

About 9 more are due to be born in the next few weeks, so I will have plenty of other opportunities to interfere!

This Week's Box

Bunching Onions
Lettuce
Chinese Cabbage
2 Basil Plants
Sage
Oregano

Next Week

Bunching Onions
Greens
Lettuce
More plants