

The Farm Weekly

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THINGS ARE GOING VERY WELL!

Perhaps we had a bit too much rain last week, but the veggies certainly didn't mind! All except the spinach, which probably didn't mind the moisture, but didn't tolerate the heat we experienced. Spinach is a cool weather crop and when Tim went to check it earlier this week, it had started to bolt (go to seed) and turn yellow, which makes for lousy tasting spinach. So no more spinach.

Where the spinach has failed us, the other vegetables are stepping up to the plate. The broccoli surprised us with beautiful florets, but we must caution that with the rain, we couldn't dust the broccoli with the Bt to prevent the cabbage moth caterpillars from setting up house keeping. We advise you to soak your broccoli in salt water to get the tiny vermin off your broccoli before you consume it. Consider this proof that your produce is certi-

fied organic!

The other surprise this week is the rapid growth of the fennel. We will provide this both this week and next, although you probably won't have as much next week. As you can tell, this has an odor similar to anise or black licorice. The flavor is similar as well, but after cooking is very mild.

To prepare the fennel, slice off the leafy part and the root in a manner similar to trimming celery. If you want, you can use a vegetable peeler to remove the stringy exterior. Since you can eat fennel raw, or cooked, how you slice it depends on your use. If you want to use the grill, slice the fennel lengthwise so that you have 2 skinny halves. Then marinate and baste with oil and vinegar in equal amounts with some salt and pepper. Olive oil and balsamic vinegar is preferred by the fennel, since fennel is more com-

mon in Italian cuisine.

If using it in soup, stew, or tossed with other vegetables, then slicing just as you do celery for dicing is then appropriate. If you want to use the fennel raw for dipping, then quartering it lengthwise might work best.

I am not fond of licorice and so I am not wild about fennel, but I must confess that when cooked, it has a very mild and interesting flavor to add to a dish. Before I forget, the leaves that you trimmed off can be used as an aromatic to flavor fish while cooking. Rinse the leaves and lay over the top of a filet, drizzle with some lemon juice and cook in the oven or on the grill.

Tim was astounded to see some decent sized peppers today, but it will still be several weeks before they are ready for picking. It is unusual to have them so large already, but peppers love water and like it hot and we met their needs quite well in the last 2 or 3 weeks.

The first planting of summer squash is also coming on, so we should have one or two of those next week. Unfortunately the tomatoes are keeping to their regular schedule, so it will be several weeks before we get to sink our teeth into the first ripe tomato.

I also wanted to mention that the lettuce va-

riety we have been providing you has reddish blotches on the outer leaves, but smaller brownish spots inside. This is not spoilage! These are normal markings. By the way, did you know that leafy, colored lettuces have almost 5 times the vitamin content that iceberg lettuce does?!

Tim is a bit frustrated with the wet weather that is keeping the ground too moist to cultivate, till, or plant. It does seem that we see extremes in weather these days, either too dry or too wet, so I have given up wishing for weather to do one thing or another, taking a "be careful what you wish for" approach, fearful that asking for dry weather might land us in a drought!

The planting and transplanting continues into August, so Tim is always squeezing preparing soil in between cultivating, picking and packing. I guess it is extreme multi-tasking with the added complication of weather.

In the alpaca department, we are on cria (baby alpaca) watch now. There are 5 dams that are expecting and I am almost positive one will be born tomorrow (Friday). We had one born 2 weeks ago that is ripping and tearing around the pasture in terrible need of playmates. I hope we will have some news and baby pictures for you next week. In the meantime, enjoy your last few days of spring!

This Week's Box

Lettuce
Red Pearl Onions
Bunching Onions
Kohlrabi
Black Cherry
Tomato Plant
Purple Basil
Broccoli
Fennel

Next Week

Bunching Onions
Red Pearl Onions
Broccoli
Lettuce
Summer Squash ?
Fennel
Garlic
Chard