

# The Farm Weekly

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BLUEBIRDHILLS@VOYAGER.NET

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## IT'S BUGGY OUT THERE!

This spring and summer have been for us one of the buggiest on record. At the start of the season, it was ticks. We literally picked over a hundred that we or the dogs managed to harvest on our outdoor forays. We even found two of the notorious deer ticks (Lyme's disease) on our cockapoo Ella. This represents the second time in 15 years we have ever seen these.

After the ticks stopped their plague, the chiggers kicked in. These tiny buggers climb up to the nether regions and bite you, leaving a tiny food tube that a day later turns into a major annoyance, especially because the bites occur where one is not supposed to scratch, at least not when in the company of others. Because Tim was mowing high grass and stepped off the tractor a time or two last Thursday and Friday, he enjoyed the Open House

with well over 70 chigger bites on his legs and elsewhere. He actually stopped counting at 70, but looked like he had a full blown case of the chickenpox.

The good side of this buggy year is that there are so many butterflies of all varieties fluttering around the farm. It is very reassuring, for in the past few years we hardly saw any, and were worried that pesticide use and genetic engineering were having a terrible effect. I would love to know why this year is so much better than others, but I am not sure anyone knows.

In the garden, Tim has been struggling with flea beetles on the fall cole crops, broccoli, cabbage, and kohlrabi. His first attempts at control have been the use of neem oil which is an acceptable control according to the organic standards. We don't like to use anything, but if transplants

can't get ahead of the bug attacks, they never do well, and we really count on these crops for fall boxes. It has had some deterrent effect, but not as much as he would like, for the bugs simply return after a rain.

With dry weather approaching, Tim decided to try diatomaceous earth or DE. DE is actually a very fine powder that has to be dusted onto the plants. The powder is actually the silicate skeleton of microscopic organisms called diatoms. The sharp points of the diatom skeleton actually pierce the tough exoskeleton of insects causing them to die from dehydration. It takes 3 hours to dust the plants, but after doing a trial last night on one row, the effect has been better than with the neem oil, so Tim will apply DE to the rest of the rows tomorrow.

DE is a natural means to control flies as well as other insect pests, although it does not discriminate. Some livestock owners will actually mix DE into their animals' feed to help control internal parasites and flies. There is a pretty good debate about the effectiveness of this method.

If you are considering using DE yourself, it is important not to breathe the dust when applying it. It is also very important to use "Food Grade" DE, for it is unlikely to cause silicosis or lung disease from getting

these particles stuck in your lung tissue.

Some will foolishly use pool filter DE which is very likely to cause silicosis, so please don't be tempted to use this. It is artificially created and for industrial and filtering purposes only.

Yippee, the tomatoes have finally kicked into gear. Not soon enough! We have already enjoyed our first batch of salsa. If you like salsa and chips, try making some yourself, for you practically have all of the ingredients in your box today.

Corn is also in your box this week. We didn't mention it last week, for we weren't sure if there would be enough to include in your boxes.

We would like to thank all who braved the incredible heat and humidity last Saturday to attend the Open House. I will try to include all of the contact information for the vendors we had there in our next newsletter. I can personally attest to the goodness of all of the foods that were sold, from the buffalo meat, to the relish offered by Virgil's Soaps, it was all delicious. We were given some samples of the Blue Jacket Dairy that are absolutely fantastic.

But what is better than the food is the chance to meet some of our customers and their kids. Thanks for making us part of your weekend. The forecast is calling for gentler weather today. Get out there and enjoy it!

### *This Week's Box*

Walla Walla Onions  
Potatoes  
Watermelon  
Cucumbers?  
Lettuce  
Summer Squash  
Green Peppers  
Beets  
Tomatoes  
Corn

### *Next Week*

Green Beans ?  
Potatoes  
Summer Squash  
Cucumbers ?  
Lettuce  
Onions  
Green Peppers  
Cabbage  
Tomatoes