

The Farm Weekly

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NUEVA CUCARACHA!

A few years ago the single row potato digger that Tim picked up in Michigan was estimated to be over 60 years of age, and Marco and Pedro called it the cockroach or actually, "cucaracha".

So Tuesday when Tim and I called them over to the stock trailer to help unload something, Marco exclaimed "Laura! Nueva Cucaracha!" It took a bit of maneuvering, but we removed it and Tim used it for the first time on Tuesday.

I traveled up to McBride, Michigan on Monday to fetch the machine whose design is really only slightly modified from the 60 year old model we are retiring. McBride sits in the middle of an area that leads Michigan in potato production and the folks we purchased it from make it from scratch, and the number "14" is written on its frame in with a welding bead.

We didn't retire the old cucaracha without a fight. One of its gears had

some teeth broken and we were unable to get it repaired and couldn't find a replacement, so now it's the back pasture for Vieja Cucaracha, pictured to the right.

Wednesday was the first day on the job for the potato digger and it took a while for everyone to get used to working with the new bug in town. Potatoes were dug though, and were bagged up and are in your box this week.

Since your potatoes are fresh dug, they have not had a chance to cure and the skins are very fragile. This makes them more prone to spoilage, so these should be refrigerated until you use them.

As new potatoes, losing their fresh flavor in a casserole, stew, or soup is worthy of prosecution. Keep it simple and steam or roast these. One of our favorites is to cut them into bite size chunks, toss them with a little oil to coat, and then season with salt and



pepper, and any other herbs you think would taste good. Place them in a single layer on a cookie sheet and pop them into a hot oven (400 degrees) until they are a nice golden brown. If you steam them, start with chunks that are just about the same size and cook until you can pierce them with a fork. Add a bit of butter and salt and brace yourself for some incredible flavor.

Even after all the years Tim has been growing organically for sale, he still gets stumped. Why is this year such a good year for green beans is this year's stumper. The bean beetles seem to be much less active this year, so that the sequential plantings are minimally nibbled on. But why? Darned if we know, but hopefully everyone is pleased with the outcome.

Tim is also pleased with how well the winter squash is doing and anticipates a good crop of delicata and spaghetti squash. The tomatoes are probably at their peak, but will con-

tinue to bear fruit up until the first freeze. Some of you have asked about green tomatoes. We will have these in the boxes later in the fall when the frost is imminent and the green tomatoes will have no chance at ripening.

The fields are at peak production now, and Tim has had to enlist the kids to help with picking. Only the lettuce needs to be planted now and soon there will be spinach and perhaps some greens to sow, but the planting has slowed way down. Cultivating is slowing down as well, but mowing is still on going. Free time is at a premium, but it won't be too long and Tim will be able to take a breath.

School starts next week. It makes me sad that another summer has whisked by. I vote for going back to school starting after Labor Day. I bet I can get a bunch of teachers to join my campaign.

This Week's Box

Onions
Lettuce
Summer Squash
Green Beans
Tomatoes
Peppers
Garlic
Watermelon

Next Week

Lettuce
Onions
Summer Squash
Green Beans?
Tomatoes
Green Peppers
Sweet Corn
Melons ?