

The Farm Weekly

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 12

BLUEBIRDHILLS@VOYAGER.NET

23 AUGUST, 2005

BACK TO SCHOOL!!!????

As I have written here before, the first day of school saddens us, for it serves as a milestone that the kids are all growing older. This year is a bit more anxiety ridden as all but Hannah are changing venues, since our elementary school was closed by our priest last year.

All the pre school shopping is finished with supplies and uniforms purchased, and now all that is left is that first morning frenzy after being so relaxed and disorganized all summer.

Many assume that being organic farmers we would home school the kids. Although we have had educational moments at home such as looking through the microscope at alpaca fecal samples, sex education while breeding alpacas, and botany while helping Daddy with the vegetables, the kids would not survive their Mom as teacher. It is for their health, safety, and socialization, that we send them off to school.

So the farm routine will change a bit and we won't have as much free help as we had earlier in the season. As the school year approaches, I always anticipate how much more I will get done, much like a new retiree anticipates finally having lots of free time. In my heart of hearts I know it won't happen.

Tim held down the fort while I flew out for a weekend meeting in Colorado. If one is inclined to-

ward the suri alpaca, this was pretty exciting. I am part of a research committee that is beginning a major study that will evaluate suri fiber in the same manner that other natural fibers are evaluated. This study is to include chemical analysis, tensile strength, scanning electron microscopy, transactional scanning electron microscopy, and skin biopsies that will analyze the number and type of follicles per square centimeter.

I am sure this sounds scintillating to all of you, but it is absolutely amazing how much science goes into the clothes we wear on our backs. For instance, the chemical analysis will tell what dye formulas will work best on suri fiber.

Tim has something new in the boxes this week. One intact plant is basil, which you should recognize, but the other that has bean pods hanging, is edamame. This plant is a variety of soybean. I have very little experience preparing or using it, but I have found them very tender and flavorful. Because we aren't able to take the time to pluck the pods and remove the beans, we leave that to you.

Like the sugar snap peas, you can eat these raw, with or without the pod, but I would recommend steaming them in the pod and lightly seasoning them with salt and a bit of butter. You could also toss them into a stir fry, or remove the beans from their pods and steam them until tender. Like all beans they are great for you, high

in protein, fiber, and vitamins and all without the fat. Since no cooked vegetable in our house goes without a bit of butter, we quickly balance the bean with fat, but you don't have to compromise its merits.

Last week you received some of the first potatoes. I hope you are enjoying these. I should have mentioned that these have not been cured for long term storage. These were simply dug, washed in the carrot washer (it can be used for most of the root crops) and put in your boxes. You should either cure these yourselves by cleaning and letting them sit out on a paper towel on your kitchen counter, or place them in the fridge to consume relatively soon.

If you opt to cure these potatoes, you can transfer them to a dark and dry place to prevent them from acquiring green skins or sprouting, but if you are

like us, they go very fast. While I was gone, Tim made onion rings and french fries for dinner. I believe their might have been hamburgers as well, but the focus was on the potatoes. This is a long standing tradition for the first potatoes harvested and they never disappoint us.

Another simple and less messy version is to chunk the potatoes into bite size pieces. Throw them in a bowl and toss with some vegetable oil. Place these in a single layer on a baking sheet and sprinkle with salt, pepper, and whatever other seasonings you like, such as rosemary, garlic powder, onion, thyme, or all of the above. Bake these in the oven at 400° and remove when golden brown and tender. Better than fries!

NEW REMINDER...

***Only One Newsletter Per Box Please!**

***Please Return Your Boxes and Be Sure That If Someone Is Picking Your Box Up That They Know To Keep It For Reuse**

This Week's Box

Lettuce
Onions
Peppers
Summer Squash
Tomatoes
Basil
Potatoes
Edamame

Next Week

Onions
Summer Squash
Green Peppers
Lettuce
Tomatoes
Potatoes
Garlic
Beets