

The Farm Weekly

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Next Week Will Be Last Distribution

After assessing the remaining crops for the season Tim has decided that next week will be the last week for distributing vegetables. He drew this conclusion assuming that everyone would rather have 2 relatively full boxes of produce than to have 3 lighter boxes that are only partially full.

We are very disappointed that the season is shorter than we had hoped, but the whacky weather over the last 2 months combined with the incredible pressure from the deer has really put a dent in the harvest. We are assuming that you would rather get the same produce in two trips out of your way as opposed to making three trips for the same amount of goodies.

The winter squash in your boxes is something that can be kept for several weeks even into next year if you store it in a cool dry place such as your garage. This week's winter squash are pie pumpkins. These are very different from decorative pumpkins for carving.

Pie pumpkins are perfect for stuffing after hollowing out the seeds. You can stuff them with a simple breading type stuffing like what you might put in your turkey, or add some meat to the ingredients. This can be accomplished by treating it as you would a pumpkin for carving, or you can cut it in two and stuff each half. Just be careful whenever you cut these in half.

My favorite cutting technique is to insert the point of the knife into the pumpkin and after it has entered the squash and passed to the opposite side, rock it forward.

You are most likely to hurt yourself if you try to use the length of the knife to accomplish the task.

Of course, one of the best uses for a pie pumpkin is to make pumpkin pie! Microwave or bake the orange orb after scooping out the seeds until it is tender. Allow it to cool and scoop out the flesh. Then mash and use it in your favorite pie recipe. These pumpkins are great for making just a pie or two, but if you have any left over, you can put it in the freezer to use later.

The kids are pretty excited this week. The first egg was laid by one of their hens on Saturday. Out of storage came the nesting boxes and soon there were 3 more eggs. We anticipate about 6 eggs per day once all of the hens are laying.

The first was rather comical in its appearance. We were up by the barn and suddenly one of the hens started carrying on from inside. We initially assumed that there was a chicken altercation, but after listening closely knew that something else was afoot.

While we don't speak chicken fluently, we translated a combination of surprise and outright bragging in her crowing, but it only lasted for a minute or two. Sure enough, both the winged and the wingless were venturing into the barn to check out the commotion. Only the humans were impressed. The egg somehow found its way onto the floor of the barn and was slightly cracked.

Perhaps another chicken had wanted to be the first producer so badly that it tried to destroy the evidence

that another had beat her out., thus eliciting the unusual cacophony. Regardless, the Black Australorps have won First Place thanks to the perseverance of one determined hen who kept at laying even though her nest was frequently upset and moved into the hay feeders for alpaca consumption.

The first frost of the fall appeared this Sunday morning. Here at the house it seemed fairly heavy, but up in the garden, it wasn't that severe. The tomatoes whose upright habit makes them fairly vulnerable seemed to be only mildly affected, so we can still hope for production to continue unless tonight's freeze warning turns into reality.

A freeze will definitely take out the tomatoes, and with them, any remaining lettuce. It really won't have much effect actually for the tomatoes are starting to slow production anyway, since the days are cooling off and the getting shorter. The lettuce is almost through as well, since so much of it had bolted with the hot weather or

filled the stomachs of deer earlier in the season.

The kids are very excited about the sale of their pumpkins and gourds and we would like to thank everyone for supporting their efforts. The chickens have started to attack a few of them, but luckily they seem to be pecking on the less attractive ones.

Mowing is still on our agenda. I have managed to get the front fields mowed, and am starting to mow back in the areas around this year's vegetables. The plan is to get the soil around the vegetables worked up and planted again with a cover crop to turn into the soil next spring. This will also help to limit any erosion that occurs with the strong winter winds and the runoff of spring rains.

I am also planning to have someone come in and plant the front fields with orchard grass seed. This grass makes great hay and pasture, and the best equipment to accomplish the establishment of pastures and hay fields is a device called a drill. This is

This Week's Box

**Red Onions
Lettuce
Carrots
Celery
Peppers
Tomatoes
Broccoli
Pumpkins
Cilantro
Collards
Garlic**

Next Week

**Red Onions
Lettuce(?)
Carrots
Kale
Savoy Cabbage
Leeks(?)
Rutabaga(?)
Beets(?)
Winter Squash
Peppers
Green Tomatoes**

pulled behind a tractor and simultaneously breaks up the soil and plants the seed.

Tim and I attended the Farm Science Review out at the Molly Caren Center near London. While there we saw small haying equipment that made hay production a one woman job at a fairly economic price. Hay is one of our largest expenses with the alpacas, and I am always struggling to find hay that is mostly grass. Most farms want hay that is high in alfalfa content to help fatten their cattle or provide plenty of nutrition for milk cows.

Horse hay is often too lean or full of seed heads, and the alpacas are very adept at leaving won't they don't like behind. What we want is hay with little or no alfalfa so that the alpacas who are very efficient consumers, don't get fat. Second cutting is preferred, because it is the least stemmy, and doesn't have seed heads that get caught in their fleece.

With this system and with our smaller hay requirements, I could probably produce all of our hay ourselves. The bales are smaller which would make it easier for me to load them onto the wagon, or up into the storage stacks.

Even if we decide not to purchase haying equipment, planting the orchard grass would be great for the soil and would allow us to potentially graze it should we need to open more pasture sometime in the future.

Since next week will be our last week, we ask that you remember to bring back any and all boxes you may have stashed away. It might be easier for you to bring something to put you produce into so that you don't have to make a trip back just to bring your box the following week. Tim or one of his designees will make the rounds the following week to pick up any leftover boxes, so if you forget, you can still return them to your pickup location sometime in the next few days after the last pickup.

That's it for this week, have a safe and healthy one!



Broccoli Pesto

Submitted by member Janelle W.

2 cup small Broccoli Florets	½ tsp. Coarse Salt
½ cup Fresh Basil	¼ tsp. Black Pepper
2 large cloves Garlic	1 cup Olive Oil
¼ cup Pine nuts or walnuts	½ Parmesan Cheese

Put everything into a food processor and blend until smooth. This will keep in the refrigerator for a week in a tightly covered jar. You can freeze it in ice cube trays too. Some folks stir in the cheese after it is defrosted, but that is up to you. Makes about 2½ cups.

Come Visit Us at the ALPACA JAMBOREE

Saturday, October 16th from 1:00 to 4:00 at the Possum Creek MetroPark in Dayton, on 4901 Shank Road. This event is in conjunction with the Park's Barnyard Bash, so there will be many family activities to enjoy.

Basic Broccoli Soufflé

Submitted by member Janelle W.

6 Eggs, beaten	4 ounces butter, softened
12 ounces Cheddar, shredded	2 cups cottage cheese (or yoghurt or sour cream if you want it rich)
6 Tbsp. Whole wheat flour	
1 lb. Broccoli, steamed & chopped	

The following are optional:

2 Tbsp. fresh chives	1 tsp. salt
½ tsp. pepper	½ tsp. garlic granules
¼ tsp. curry	dash or two of paprika

Mix everything in a big bowl. Pour in a well-buttered casserole dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour, or until a knife comes out clean. Cool ten minutes.

Makes 6 servings and may be frozen