

The Farm Weekly

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SUMMER OFFICIALLY BEGINS

Summer officially began on Sunday, Father's Day, even though it has felt like summer ever since the kids were freed of the bonds of school.

It is early morning as I sit on our back porch (screened to keep "skeeters" out) writing this, a wonderful perk of having a new laptop computer. I just went inside for a pair of binoculars for I spied a mother opossum carrying two young on her back. Presumably, they have grown too big for her pouch. As our highways often testify, opossums are snail-like, especially compared to their kangaroo cousins, so I certainly did not have to rush to get a good view. These critters are so ugly, they are cute.

The bambis are starting to make their appearance around the farm, and we enjoy them as long as they are outside of the garden, where their relations are still taking their toll. I have to be careful mowing to be sure that I don't accidentally run over them.

The rain, while not as plentiful as last year, has kept us from accomplishing all Tim would like in the garden. It keeps us from being able to cultivate and plant, and makes harvesting a sloppy mess. We are fortunate, though, for our neighbors to the north received 4 inches all at

once last week.

In frustration, 2 weeks ago, we began the arduous process of immigrating 2 Mexicans up to our farm under what is known as the H2A program. Under this program we must guarantee housing (inspected by the state), reimbursement of travel expenses to and from Mexico, a wage base of \$9.00 per hour determined by the state, and evidence that we have tried to utilize local labor. There is no doubt that we have the proof of the last requirement, for we have gone through 8 employees in 4 weeks for two positions.

In compensation for all of this effort, we employ 2 individuals whose visas only allow them to immigrate to our farm and work only for us. This is the program we have utilized in the past, but the agent we used previously had sent our application to the wrong office, where it sat for one month.

We felt then that it was too late to restart the process, but have now reconsidered due to the current circumstances. Our test of the local labor market has proven once again that we must go abroad for workers willing and able to work side by side with Tim in the field.

The process takes a minimum of 45 days, so we shall see what transpires. In the meantime,

we have one gentleman working for us who is dependable and hard working, and we are truly grateful for that.

Our second employee, Lisa, has now assumed the responsibility of delivering the boxes to the various pick up locations. Lisa is the school secretary at the school that our kids attend. She is working part time with us cleaning, packing and delivering your veggies, and is great to work with.

Although Tim enjoys delivering the boxes, it isn't the best use of his time, so now he can remain back here on the farm working and supervising all that needs to be accomplished.

New in your boxes is Kohlrabi. It is the odd alien-like life form that is pale green. This is my favorite product of our farm, for it is wonderfully versatile and tasty.

Kohlrabi is one of the many relations of the cabbage family. The bulb is

actually the swollen base of the plant from which the leaves shoot upward. I would imagine that perhaps the leaves would be edible, but these have been trimmed away.

Like other members of the cruciferous family, this is a cool weather crop and will tolerate frosts when other plants like lettuce will not. It also keeps very well in the crisper compartment of your refrigerator, so you don't have to hurry up and use it.

To prepare them, trim off the very top and the end where the root comes off. Then pare away the green outer layer which can be rather tough and chewy. Now you will have revealed the hard white flesh which can be prepared innumerable ways. Like cabbage, it can be eaten raw or cooked. To capture its essence, I love to just cut it into chunks and either steam, or microwave it with a little moisture in the bowl. A pat of butter and salt, and

This Week's Box

**Cinnamon Basil
Plant
Spinach
Pearl Onions
Kohlrabi
Broccoli**

Next Week

**Spinach(?)
Lettuce(?)
Onions
Broccoli**

