

# Cycle Farm

## 2017 Farm Stand Family Newsletter

for August 10 and 12, 2017

Greetings Farm Friends,

What a good week! These cooler temperatures have us feeling bright-eyed and energized. Lots of early morning and late afternoon weeding this week, trying to make room for our fall brassicas and greens that are patiently waiting transplanting. We had a fun afternoon last weekend building native pollinator nesting boxes – thanks to all who came out to join us! We set up two additional nesting blocks at the farm and have been scouting them out for new inhabitants all week. The grapes are at 13 degrees brix (as of Wednesday). We've netted the front vines and will wait until they are at 20-21 degrees brix (higher sugar content) before harvesting. These are Valiant grapes, a South Dakota bred variety similar to a Concord. These grapes make excellent grape juice and jelly, our best guess is they'll be ready at the farm stand in two weeks. Butterfly weed (or pleurisy root) and chocolate flower are both blooming. And we've been finding katydids (yes we did, no we didn't). Jeremy had a near-record bird day on the farm; this week, 34 different species, including a Western Tanager, Great Horned Owl, and Osprey and Eastern King Bird, and a MacGillivray's Warbler. AND there has been a young female *Rufous Hummingbird* frequenting our hummingbird sage and sunset hyssop!

Last week at the County Fair, we received the 2017 Citizen Conservation Award from the Lawrence County Conservation District. We're honored to be recognized for the conservation aspects of our work on the farm and the efforts we make towards engaging our community around them. And we're feeling especially humbled and motivated to become better food producers, land stewards, and engaged citizens. We'd like to share a heartfelt thank you to both you, farm friends, and the Lawrence County Conservation District for your support and encouragement.

At the farm stand this week we'll have lettuce, chard, scallions, basil, cucumbers, zuchinni, cabbage, the first of the tomatillos and jalapeños, eggplant and some incredible newly dried and blended herbal teas. We'll have salsa verde recipe bags – everything you need to make salsa verde – tomatillos, scallions, garlic, basil and jalapeño (just add salt and lemon juice) with a recipe. The lettuce this week includes two new varieties, Total Clown (crazy speckled, red and green) and Mantilla (all green). We're all eager for tomatoes; there is great fruit-set in the field, but still pretty green. Jeremy is telling them all his dirty jokes, hoping to make them blush.

Warm smiles and big thanks, your farmers,  
Trish and Jeremy



*A Rufous Hummingbird, above (excellent photography by Greg Albrechtsen), and Jeremy setting up at the farm stand, special feature: the first harvest of eggplant, below.*





*Posing in the rain with our neat new sign; jandale tomatillos!; Total Clown lettuce is a new variety from a seed breeder in OR we admire, Frank Morton. It really is a circus around here; tell me, is Jeremy harvesting lettuce here, or is he bird watching?*

**Fried Eggplant with Jalapeño** This is a recipe we haven't yet tried, but it looks quick and delicious, and easily made with farm fresh ingredients.

- 1 large eggplant (or ~1.5 lbs small eggplants)
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 jalapeño pepper, sliced
- ½ cup red wine vinegar
- fresh ground black pepper
- 1 bunch fresh thyme, strip leaves from stems
- Olive and/or vegetable oil, for frying

Slice eggplant(s) into 1/4 to 1/2 inch slices. Season the slices with salt. Heat 1/4 inch of oil in a large skillet. Once it's hot, carefully add eggplant slices in one layer. Working in batches, fry the eggplant until very soft and well-browned. Remove cooked eggplant to a sheet pan, and season generously with more salt. Don't worry about blotting excess oil; it will become part of the dressing. Sweat the garlic and jalapeño in a bit of oil in a small sauce pan. Add fresh ground black pepper and red wine vinegar. Simmer gently for a few minutes to allow the flavors to meld.

Pour the vinegar sauce, with chunks, over the eggplant while both are still warm. Season with more salt if necessary. Allow to cool slightly, then sprinkle with thyme. Transfer everything to a bowl or platter and allow to sit and marinate for at least half an hour (or up to several days, in the fridge) before serving at room temperature.