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Cycle Farm CSA Newsletter

Week 7- August 2, 2012

This week's share

- 2 summer squash (Costata romanesco)
- 1/2 lb leaf lettuce (Fine cut oak, Blushed butter oak, Hyper red ruffled wave, Flashy Trout's back, Devil's tongue, Mascara, Jester, Merlot)
- 1 bunch green onions
- >1/4 lb kale (5 oz, Rainbow dinosaur, White Russian)
- 1 lb bush beans (Red swan, Marvel of Venice, Provider, Rattlesnake, Empress)
- 2 eggplant (Diamond)
- 4 heads garlic (Persian star)



Hello CSA Members!

August welcomes us with lush rain showers and beautiful eggplants. Here's an update of what has been happening on the farm this week.

The young roosters are getting their crow on. Kind of, some of them are succeeding with more of an enthusiastic honking.

Rafters are going up on the greenhouse. Setting up the first rafter was a fun geometry challenge, but we got it up and it fits magically. The others should domino right into place now.

Lots of time has been spent weeding and collecting potato and bean beetles.

We checked in on the bees this past weekend, Anna's hive is filling her honey comb. Those combs are heavy. We've discovered that when the bees start filling honey comb, they build the combs just slightly wider than their brood comb. So we have some cross combing happening. Trying to fix this on a bar heavy with honey comb is a sticky, drippy, heavenly mess.

We've engaged in a battle of wits with the deer who are munching down our winter squash rows. We are currently testing a very simple, and possibly effective, deterrent involving a MacGyver boobytrap arrangement of t-stakes and fishing line.

And most exciting! The drip tape is all stretched out, the filter is in, and now we're irrigating. Hoorah!



Greenhouse rafters



A break in the rain



Bee sipping honey

Good-bye pump, hello drip.

We are on a piped lateral of the Evans-Tonn ditch (the oldest irrigation ditch in Spearfish Valley). Until recently water came into an open ditch along the south boundary to just behind the house, and was then pumped into a center line/hard pipe to sprinklers down the field. These sprinklers were our only way of getting water to the crops.

The sprinklers sent water to areas that don't need it, like the edges of the field and walkways, and they were especially inefficient on windy days. Different plants have different water needs - which, with a sprinkler set-up, we were unable to regulate. Furthermore, the pump is a loud, obnoxious machine, it uses a fair amount of electricity, and is stressful to operate.

We are now running water directly from the piped lateral into a 2" hard line along the southern edge of the farm. This enables us to keep the pressure from the lateral and use it without a pump to run more efficient drip tape or low pressure sprinklers. With the drip system we can select which plants get water and how much.

One of our big concerns with the drip system is the amount of plastic it uses. No matter what, this will eventually become garbage we have to deal with. We have tried to reduce this by buying the most durable drip tape available, which will hopefully last 5-7 years, instead of the standard 1 year tape used in most agricultural applications. We are also trying to think of ways to creatively re-use drip tape when it finally is time to replace it. Handwoven up-cycled drip tape purses? Drip tape jump ropes? Plastic all-weather hammocks?



Our new irrigation system

This is a super simple recipe Trish enjoys especially. By roasting the eggplant solo, you really get a chance to enjoy its flavor.

Oven Baked Eggplant Chips

1 medium eggplant washed and sliced into 1/8 inch rounds
olive oil
salt

Wash eggplant and slice into rounds rather than length wise.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Place eggplant on a large metal baking tray and brush both sides of the eggplant lightly with olive oil and sprinkle with just a touch of salt.

Place in oven for 15-25 minutes, checking after 15 minutes.

Keep an eye on the eggplant chips, they will get very brown and will need to be flipped so the other side can brown as well.

Remove and place on a plate to serve - enjoy!



Eggplants!

Happy eating!
your farmers,
Trish and Jeremy