

Cycle Farm

2017 Farm Stand Family Newsletter

for May 6, 2017

Greetings Farm Friends,

We are welcoming these longer days as our to-do list also just keeps growing. And growing. Unfortunately, although perhaps expectedly, our to-do list is outpacing our daylight hours. On the farm this week: the ditch is on! We haven't yet opened our line to the fields, but water is flowing in the lateral and ready to go. Our farm is on the Evans-Tonn ditch, which has the oldest water right in western South Dakota (possibly in the whole state) and we are so very grateful for this water. We've got all the fruit trees planted around the hedge in the orchard and just a few more to plant up by the house. Jeremy did the planting: aronia berry, highbush cranberry, hazelnut, black currant, juneberry, sand cherry, and the special boy-don't-these-sound-delicious trio: chokecherry, chokeberry and hackberry. Rugosa roses are planted in between the different varieties. Greenhouse beds are getting swapped, after 4 weeks of harvest on the arugula and Asian greens, we flipped those out for kale, bok choy, and yet another round of radishes.



Jeremy's been hauling water in buckets by bike to the orchard trees; we're glad to have the irrigation ditch running.



This row of snap peas got hammered by sparrows (!?)

The compost tea pot – a 22-gallon brewer - has been brewing up quite the tea party this week to feed our garlic beds. Compost tea is a natural liquid fertilizer we use for starts in the green house, on specific row crops, and as a foliar application for our grapes. We don't apply compost tea to edible greens or fruits. Our tea this week was a blend of worm castings, compost, a fungal inoculant, and barrel compost. The "brewing" process helps mix and cultivate beneficial bacteria and fungi, suspending them in water in a form that makes them quickly available to plants.

We spent a little bit of time this week sketching out the planting plan for the herb and flower bed back behind the farm stand. This is a special little wonderland. If you haven't already been back there to check it out, we invite you to peek around the corner on Saturday morning. You'll see part of this area was planted last year with culinary herbs, the section along the south is a new hügelkultur bed to be planted with pollinator-friendly and you-pick flowers.

One of the most exciting things to happen on the farm this week, hands down, was our encounter with the lemon meringue ants and their honeydew dairy herds.

Trish got so tickled by this she wrote up the whole story on our website – it's amazing. Another exciting thing: we dug up our cow horns, biodynamic preparation 500. Also amazing.



Horn manure, a preparation to help build healthy soil.



A basket of herbs; parsley, tarragon, cilantro and chives at the market last weekend.

Plum trees are blooming and smell intoxicating. Male meadowlarks are singing in the tree tops. Tomorrow morning's harvest for the farm stand includes: lettuce, spinach, scallions, spring turnips, radishes, just a few bunches of leeks(!) and fresh herbs – cilantro, parsley, tarragon, chives, and sage.

With grubby hands and warm smiles,
Your farmers,
Trish and Jeremy

Poached eggs with Pancetta and tossed greens



New planting of lettuce in the field

Last week we included a recipe for greens and eggs. Here's another one. 'Tis the season, after all. This recipe is from an excellent cookbook put together by a CSA farm in Minnesota, Featherstone Farm. It may say poached, but it could just as easily be made with a quick and dirty fried egg. Likewise, it may say pancetta, but it could just as easily be made with... well anything really.

- 8 eggs
- 1 Tbs olive oil
- 4 oz thickly sliced pancetta, cut into ¼ in dice (or pieces of bacon, or ham, or whatever leftover bits you have in the fridge, or none of this at all)
- 1 large shallot, minced
- 2 Tbs chopped tarragon
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- 10 cups greens, mix up some spinach and lettuce! (about 6 oz)
- Salt and fresh ground black pepper
- Crusty toast

Bring a large, deep skillet filled with 2 inches of water to a simmer. Crack each egg into a cup and gently slide it into the water. Cook until the egg whites are solid but the yolks are still soft, 5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the eggs to a plate (if you'd like, drain the eggs by laying them on a cloth towel or paper towel on the plate).

Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat the olive oil, add pancetta and cook over moderately high heat until crisp, about 3 minutes. Add the shallot and cook until softened, 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and add the vinegar, tarragon, and scallions. In a bowl, toss the mixed greens with the dressing; season with salt and pepper. Transfer the salad to plates, top with the eggs and serve with crusty toast points.