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Broad Branch Farm
Community Supported Agriculture Program
August 16, 2018
www.broadbranchfarm.com

Dates to Remember

Tuesday, August 28
Deadline to order extra items
Thursday, August 30
Next CSA Delivery

Vegetable Share

Tomatoes

Sweet Sungold cherry tomatoes and sweet slicers. The tomatoes are hitting their stride. Lucky to have such beautiful fruit this season.

Pole Beans

These beans are sweet and delicious but our harvest is short. Japanese Beetles have done a lot of damage to our plants this year and with these beans being climbers, covering the plants isn't easy and the beetles find a way. But, the beans and the farmer have stuck with each other. We have watered, composted and cared while the plants have continued to bloom and put on new growth. A good inch of rain would make us both happy.

Fresh Basil

Our basil is abundant this year. We are harvesting the tips every week and the plants grow bigger and bushier. Easy to whirl the leaves up in a food processor with olive oil and a clove or two of garlic until the mixture is smooth. This simple pesto can be frozen for winter use, add to your homemade salad dressings, baste fish or chicken or spread over those delicious tomatoes with a slice of fresh mozzarella.

Roots

Beets or Radishes this week.

Salad Greens

Red leaf lettuce, green Escarole and Arugula.

Garlic var. 'German Extra Hardy'

Eggplant

We make a roasted supper by oven roasting tomato halves, diced zucchini, peppers, onions, whole garlic cloves and diced eggplant - all of these veggies get sweeter and more delicious by simply roasting them. We brush the veggies with our olive oil first and a light sprinkle of salt. Once removed from the oven, sprinkle with chopped fresh parsley or basil. Serve with your favorite protein and a salad. This is a fast, absolutely delicious dinner.

Peppers

All green peppers today .

Summer Chickpea Salad

2 (14 ounce) cans of chickpeas (garbanzo beans), rinsed and drained
1/2 cup diced sweet peppers
1/4 cup sliced kalamata olives
1/2 cup sliced cherry tomatoes OR diced slicing tomatoes
1/2 cup sweet onion, diced
1 clove garlic, smashed with a little salt until smooth
2 T Lemon Juice and lemon zest if you using a fresh lemon
1/4 cup Olive oil
Fresh Herbs – basil, parsley, oregano, chives

In a small bowl, add smashed garlic/salt mix and lemon juice, combine. Whisk in the olive oil until combined. Add salt and pepper to taste. In a larger bowl, combine beans, peppers, olives and tomatoes. Drizzle the dressing and add chopped fresh herbs. Toss gently.

Serve over a bed of salad greens for a perfect take to work delicious lunch.

Farm News

Sorry to say the significant rain has missed us so far this week. We had a brief down-pour at the new farm that dampened the leaves but not enough to actually water anything. I have to admit, we allowed ourselves to think our dry spell was ending. It looked promising! But, our northeast corner of Peoria County was not in the path of the real rain and so we continue hoping.

As we were finishing up our harvest late Wednesday evening, a little sun shower came through - a gentle sprinkle with the sun shining low in the horizon - very beautiful. It was quite pleasant even though it lasted only a few minutes. Droplets of water were falling off the basil leaves, the heat of the day was over, the sun setting and the garden seemed happy. For that little period of time, all was good.

Looking back in our notes, our last significant rain was on July 1st. Since then, we've had a couple of sprinkles and a whole lot of heat. Brian and I are very worried about this dry spell. There is nothing to be done about our pastures and he's very close to feeding hay since the forage is not growing back after grazing. Last year, we had the same dry weather but he didn't feed hay until September. We are running irrigation non-stop to keep existing and new plantings up and going in the garden. But, seasoned gardeners know there is nothing like a rain to make a garden grow. I fear you are already seeing a reduction in the variety of food in the veggie boxes. The hot dry days, no rain - those conditions make growing food much harder.

We fear this is what we have to expect. We're not going back to normal weather. In any growing season, we have to plan for the worst. We count on rain for our garden but maybe we should just stop that counting. We're hotter and dryer earlier and for longer periods of time. We have a third hoop house we had planned to cover with plastic for extending the growing season. Now we realize we don't need plastic - we need *shade cloth* to reduce the heat stress on plants. That's a big shift.

Let's hope our next report in 2 weeks is a brighter and wetter one.