



JERICHO SETTLERS' FARM

22 Barber Farm Road Jericho, VT 05465
jsfarmvt@gmail.com (802) 899-4000
JerichoSettlersFarm.com

July 21, 2008

Rain, rain

How can we not talk about the rain. Too much, too little. I think I do recall one growing season when the rain was just about right. Not too much – light warm rains at night with bright sunny days. Not so this year. Dry as a desert in April and then monsoon season in July. But vegetables love water, right? Yes, but everything has its limits. Too much rain can leach nutrients from the top soil and waterlog roots. Most soil nutrients available to plants are soluble, meaning they move with the water. As the rain water moves across the soil surface and down through the soil profile to the water table, the nutrients move with it, away from the plants' roots. The result is yellowing of the plants' foliage and poor, stunted growth. The solution: maintain field drainage to minimize water-logging of plants, maintain well-balanced soils with long-term fertility by adding composts and other organic matter, and fertilize as needed to make up for short-term nitrogen deficits. The new field by the greenhouse has been a challenge for us this season, as it collects and holds a lot more water than we realized it would. The first bean crop was affected by this – so early beans in the share will be minimal, but the second crop of beans is flowering heavily now and starting to produce copious beans.

In addition to the rain water, the cloudy days and lack of sunlight has slowed the development of some of the heat loving crops, like cucumbers and tomatoes. They of course need sunlight to photosynthesize, and warm nights help to keep things growing rapidly. They are coming along though, and the tomato crop is looking spectacular. The first fruits are starting to ripen – stay tuned.

On the up side of all this rain and mild weather, the head lettuce have been growing beautifully all season, young and crisp, with rarely a “bolting” head. Check out CSA member Rhonda Vogelzang's recipe for wilted dutch lettuce.

Pastured Poultry this Thursday!

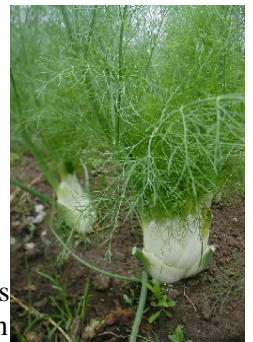
Fresh broiler chickens will be available starting July 24th. You may pick them during your regular CSA pickup or on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. If you have ordered chicken shares, one share entitles you to 6 chickens. You may pick them up all at once or a few at a time – however you wish. Please pick up your complete share by the end of September. We will also have some chickens available for purchase, first-come first-served.

Fennel

Also called, anise, this vegetable is known for its subtle licorice-like flavor and excellent crunch. You can use the bulb, tender stalks, and fronds. There are many excellent fennel recipes on this website from the Mariquita CSA farm in California:

<http://www.mariquita.com/recipes/fennel.html>

I copied out one of my favorites below.



FENNEL, GRAPE, AND GORGONZOLA SALAD

| | |
|---------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 bulb | fennel |
| 2 tbsp. | extra-virgin olive oil |
| 1 tbsp. | fresh lemon juice |
| 1/2 cup | halved black grapes, seeded |
| 2 oz. | Gorgonzola cheese, crumbled (1/2 cup) |
| 1 cup | thinly sliced radicchio |
| 1 cup | thinly sliced romaine (wash and dry) |

Trim fennel stalks flush with bulb and discard any tough outer layers. Halve bulb lengthwise, discard core, and slice fennel thin. In a bowl toss together fennel, oil, lemon juice, and salt and pepper to taste and let stand 10 minutes. Add grapes, Gorgonzola, radicchio, and romaine and toss to combine.

Wilted Dutch Lettuce

Here is a recipe that comes from the Netherlands--my parents would have this every week using freshly harvested veggies. I have also added things like snap peas, radishes, etc. -Rhonda Vogelzang

Fry 2 cups potatoes, set aside.

Cook and dice 3 or 4 hard boiled eggs, set aside.

Fry 6 slices bacon, break into pieces and add sliced green onion.

Stir the following in to the bacon mixture:

1 T. flour

1 T. sugar

1 t. each salt and pepper

1/4 c. vinegar

1/2 c. water

1 t. celery seed

Cook until thick.

Place garden leaf lettuce in bowl. Top with hot potatoes and eggs. Pour hot bacon mixture over all.

Radicchio is a member of the chicory family, along with dandelion, cornflower, endive, and many others. Cultivation of this plant began in the 15th century in Northern Italy, and today it is still an important specialty crop in Italy. Radicchio can be difficult to grow, as the plant still has some "wild" tendencies – even though select breeding has been going on for centuries. The crop does not always head up and requires cool nights to form a nice, tight head without getting too bitter. Well, that's one thing all this cold rain and lack of sun has done for us this season – formed some nice tight heads of radicchio. Unfortunately, too much rain resulted in bottom rot in about 1/3 of the crop. So, for those of you less partial to radicchio we have some beautiful rainbow chard to try. You'll have a choice of one or the other when you come for pick up. Below is one of my favorite ways to prepare chard.

Braised Swiss Chard with Sweet Onion and Bacon

Cook 6 slices of bacon and remove from pan. Sauté chopped sweet onion in bacon grease. Add coarsely chopped chard and toss in pan to lightly brown. Cover for 8 minutes to steam chard in its own water until just tender. If you need more liquid in the pan at this point a bit of white wine is superb. Remove and toss chard, onion, and chopped bacon together with a splash of balsamic vinegar. For a milder flavor omit the balsamic.

Grilled Radicchio

Cut radicchio in half lengthwise. Brush cut surface with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Place on grill cut side down and cook over low flame until cut surface is barely blackened and leaves are tender. Eat as is and/or toss into your favorite greens and add a soft goat cheese.

Radicchio is also excellent roasted with fennel and potatoes around a chicken.

Radicchio and Fennel Pork Salad

Olive oil, to brush

1 lb. of pork center cut chops

3 oranges, peeled, white pith removed

1 radicchio, leaves separated, finely shredded

1 fennel bulb, thinly sliced

1/4 lb. baby spinach

1/4 cup fresh orange juice

2 tsp. olive oil

1 Tbs. wholegrain mustard

Salt & freshly ground black pepper

Heat a large frying pan over medium heat. Lightly brush pan with oil to grease. Add pork and cook for 4-5 minutes each side. Transfer to a plate and cover to keep warm. Meanwhile remove the orange segments, cutting close to either side of the white membrane to remove segments from membrane. Transfer segments to a large bowl. Add radicchio, fennel and spinach and toss to combine. Whisk together orange juice, oil and mustard until well combined. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Thickly slice the pork across the grain. Add to the radicchio mixture and gently toss until just combined. Drizzle salad with dressing to serve.