



Full Harvest Farm, LLC
7112 County Road S
Hartford, WI 53027
262 673-6760
fullharvestfarm@yahoo.com
Box #4 **Even Week**
Newsletter #4
16 July 2014

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Lettuce: Lovelock, Red Boston, Red Romaine
Sugar Snap Peas
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New Stuff: cucumbers, kohlrabi

Cucumbers are high in vitamin E (probably why they're so soothing on the eyes), and low in calories. Few vegetables are as satisfying on a hot summer day for replenishing liquids and filling you up. Here's a tip on storing cucumbers so they don't get mushy: put them in your refrigerator's vegetable drawer, but **DO NOT PUT CUCUMBERS INTO A PLASTIC BAG**. Just place them in the drawer, cut or uncut. They'll keep for at least a week, often two. I discovered this by mistake one night, when I was too tired to dig up a plastic bag. I just tossed a half-used cucumber into my vegetable drawer, figuring it could fend for itself. 3 days later, I opened my frig to find a cool cucumber whose cut end was only slightly dried out and skin perfect. It was a thin-skinned, burpless variety, the kind that can go mushy overnight. I was amazed. You will be, too.

If you were raised in this part of the state, you probably know and love kohlrabi. It has a juicy, mild flavor, and is excellent eaten raw. To keep it from drying out, put it in a plastic bag. To use kohlrabi, trim off the leaves (which are edible, but can be a bit bitter) and peel it with a paring knife. Start by cutting off the bottom: you'll see a ring of small, white "hairs". Cut just inside the hairs, underneath the kohlrabi's skin and work your way around it like you would peel an apple. With the skin removed, cut it up any way you like. I favor julienned pieces in a salad. It's great shredded and added to coleslaw, or in chunks on a veggie and dip tray. Many of our farmer's market customers prefer it raw with a little salt. Oh, and don't forget the beer and a baseball game.

Cucumber & Kohlrabi Salad

Into a bowl, whisk together:

¼ cup mayonnaise
1 Tbsp. brown mustard
2 Tbsp. chopped fresh basil
salt & freshly ground pepper to taste

Add: 1 cucumber, cut up however you like
1 kohlrabi, peeled and cut up or shredded
2 Tbsp. finely-sliced onion
2 Tbsp. finely-chopped garlic scapes

Toss to mix thoroughly and serve.

Here's our basic, basil pesto sauce. If your plant is growing well, you can probably pick enough for the all-basil version when combined with the bunch in your box.

Basil Pesto

makes approx. 2 cups pesto

In the bowl of a food processor, put:

2 cups, packed, fresh, basil leaves, washed and spun

4 medium cloves garlic, halved
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. freshly-ground pepper
¼ cup almonds, walnuts, pine nuts, etc.
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Process all ingredients just until uniform in size. Add more salt, pepper, etc. to suit your taste. You can also freeze this pesto, altho the flavor and texture are better if you leave out the cheese. Pesto is a pretty potent sauce on pasta, so use sparingly. Start with about 1 Tbsp. per serving, taste, then increase the amount, if desired. Pesto can be frozen easily. I buy a package of ½ cup containers and put the finished paste in those. To thaw, take a container out of the freezer the night before and put it into your refrigerator. Do NOT try to thaw it in the microwave: it'll turn black. Basil oxidizes easily (turns black and doesn't taste nearly as good), so always cover it when you're not actually spooning some out. If you can, pour a thin film of olive oil over the top of the paste to protect it from the air.

"Pesto" simply means "paste". You can make pesto with other herbs besides basil. People often substitute parsley when they're a bit short on basil--some folks even prefer the combination. I've made delicious herb pestos using tarragon, thyme, parsley, fennel, sage, lovage, oregano, rosemary, cilantro, marjoram, Summer savory and sorrel. Use one quarter to half as much of the stronger herbs: sage, rosemary and lovage. If you do not use any basil, the black color will not occur. If you use some basil, that pesto will turn color, but will appear to do so more slowly.

To prevent basil from oxidizing, blanch the leaves in boiling water for 10 seconds, then plunge into cold water to stop the cooking. Drain the worst of the water off, then use for pesto.

Field Notes

Rain: 1.5" more this week.

The zucchini are producing well, after a rather slow start. The staff is picking them every few days to try and keep up.

Cucumbers are also producing very well, so you'll find them in your boxes for several weeks. If you have a favorite cucumber salad recipe, now is the time to pull it out. It's also pickling season, and there are lots of great recipes that use the larger, slicing cucumbers.

The onions are sizing up nicely. We're growing both red and yellow onions this year, as well as the so-called "sweet" Walla-Wallas. Expect onions in next week's box.

Colorado potato beetles have found our potato crop and are attempting to chew it up. They feed on the leaves and stems of potato plants, and can chew them down to mere skeletons. These are a problem every year, and one we spray pyrethrum on. Pyrethrum is a contact poison: it only kills what it hits. In its organically-approved (OMRI) formulation, pyrethrum volatilizes in sunlight, disappearing completely in an hour.

As a certified organic farm, we can only use OMRI (Organic Materials Review Institute) approved insecticides. No one likes to walk around with a spray pack, or have to hitch a tractor to a pull-behind spray rig, so we use chemicals sparingly. Most organic farmers encourage beneficial insects to live on their farms so they'll feed on the pests. We plant vetch, zinnias, and others to provide attractive plants for our beneficials.

The 2, new, 3-season greenhouses are completed, and our grant money is in process. Hooray! It required a lot of hard work and long hours to put up these greenhouses, especially the one with the top vent. Friends, CSA members and several of our staff stayed late many nights, or came in on weekends to work on the houses. A thousand Thank-You's to everyone!



The top-vented greenhouse with tomatoes.

A reminder: please be careful to pick up the properly-sized box. We've had more Family Share members than usual finding a Couple box instead of a Family box at their pickup site. We have several solutions in place for these folks, but the best one is prevention.

Thank you!

Looks like we may be in for a nice stretch of sunny weather. Let it be so!

Have a great week.

Terry & Chuck



Both greenhouses with doors rolled up.