The Weekly Note

One Step at a Time Gardens

Jan Libbey & Tim, Andrew, & Jess Landgraf

Week of September 8, 2008 – Box #15

In This week's Box:

Potatoes – *All Red or Purple Viking*, Tomatoes, Zucchini, Cucumber, Leeks, Beets – *Red or Chioggia*, Kohlrabi

News

Final Fruit Shares begin this week. An email went out to all fruit share members with specific details about which delivery site would receive the fruit on what date. If you have any questions, please contact Jan or Tim at the farm.

The September issue of the National Geographic focuses on food – if you haven't had a chance to review it, here's just one fascinating fact reported: The areas with the most organic production around the world include Europe, Australia, Canada, a little bit of Central America, and western and southern South America. The United States is listed at 0 – 0.50 percent of total ag. land in organic production.

Veggie Notes

The leeks have done really well this year and with delivery of potatoes and cool weather, it's feeling like Leek Potato Soup! Check out our Recipe Collection on our website for more ideas on how to prepare and enjoy leeks (page 10).

Kohlrabi, related to broccoli and cauliflower, is an unusual vegetable. It is actually a swollen stem and harvested above ground. The variety we grow is called Gigante and will fill your hand and more when you go to pick it up, but is solid all the way through. To eat Kohlrabi, peel the outer layer off and enjoy the inner, crispy vegetable raw, in salads, grate into slaw or sandwiches, steam and serve as a side vegetable or in soups, stews or stir fries. υ All Red potatoes are a beautiful blush of pink inside. Purple Viking has a purple skin and is white inside. What kind did you get? Both are great baked, boiled or roasted. υ Beets pack a great supply of vitamins A & C, calcium, iron, and carotenes. Find a traditional red or pinkish (striped inside, no staining juices) beet in your box and try some new ways to enjoy beets. See page 3 & 4 in our Recipe Collection. There's a double bonus in the beet tops! Nutritious addition to salads, sandwiches.

Connections

If you didn't catch last week's Connections column, please check it out on our website. A quick follow up here. We're gathering resources that you can consider using to speak out in favor of local food and sustainable ag. We'll be including a copy in the next two week's boxes. A little encounter today impressed me that even before swaying policy makers with this information, it's important that we speak out to peers and our community via editorials, conversation over coffee, at church, the grocery store, school, etc.. Raise the decibel level of support for a more appropriate agriculture with folks we know. It's important to let other likeminded folk that there is, indeed, a growing swell of support for food you can taste, trust, and take home.

From the Ground Up – The Iowa Network for Community Agriculture – INCA- (www.growinca.org) organized in 1996 to *cultivate connections among Iowans creating healthy, just and sustainable local food systems.* INCA has a pioneered not only the local food focus, but also a very grassroots approach to cultivating connections. Over the years, INCA's rotating annual local food conference has come to help spotlight and catalyze local efforts. North Iowa is fortunate to be hosting the 2009 INCA Local Food Conference and I'm very excited about the "bounce" expected out of this experience. If any of our North Iowa members want to be involved, please contact Jan. We strongly encourage our DM members to attend. More details coming.

Farmers' Footnote – oh my gosh! There's just so much to talk about. It's been a very full week at the farm. We've dedicated parts of the past two weekends to canning tomatoes, peaches, freezing corn, beans, etc. What can't be preserved needs to be used up now and there are just so many good ideas, my head spins. I want to try them all, and begin to dream of having a chef come stay at our house for a week so we could at least enjoy them all! We've also gone from tragedy to wonder at the farm this past week. Last Wednesday and again Thursday we had a predator get in a kill chickens from our second to last batch. Only four chickens of this batch of 130 survived from these attacks. We have worked with a couple of local trappers and over the weekend interrupted further attacks. Monday we found a young badger caught. The traps are reset for vigilance, but the main threat has past. It's a very sad and disturbing experience on the farm when chickens are attacked (not often, but once last year and once this year is too often for us). Our complete focus on the chickens' safety for several days impacts the overall mood of the vegetable work that also must continue.

Saturday morning, in the middle of this stress, was a foggy, gray morning. But as the air began to dry out, we had an absolutely delightful discovery of hundreds of Monarch butterflies who had roosted along our shrub/tree line between two sets of gardens. As the sun came out they flittered around, jockeying for the best spot to dry off and take wing. What a treat amidst a couple of tough days on the farm!

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