The Weekly Note

One Step at a Time Gardens

Jan Libbey & Tim, Andrew, & Jess Landgraf

Week of August 4, 2008 – Box #10

In This week's Box: Sweet corn, Tomatoes, Green and Yellow Beans, Zucchini, Garlic, Broccoli

News –This week we say good-bye to two of our crew - Anne Munaretto who returns home before heading into her Junior year at University of Illinois. We've thoroughly enjoyed Anne's playful nature and wonderful laugh. We wish her well as she returns to classes and heading up a project on biodiesel. We also say goodbye to Kay Trampel who is returning to school demands, but closer to home. Kay winds down her 7th season at the farm as she heads back to teaching Elementary PE and helping with the XC team at Belmond-Klemme.

Cookbooks – We are wrapping up cookbook delivery. If you haven't received yours or have decided you'd like a copy, please let us know.

Veggie Notes - Sweet corn is here! This is the first of two deliveries of sweet corn. We harvest corn at our neighbors on the morning of delivery. Why don't we grow the corn ourselves? It's better use of our time and resources and a great way for our business to support our neighbors.

As the veggies keep coming, do check in on our Recipe Collection, posted on our website - lots of delicious recipes provided! Just a heads up - Monday we received heavy rain (1.3"), wind, and hail. We've tried to cull out damage to green beans.

Cucumbers are coming – look for some in the coming weeks.

Connections - Sylvia & Curt, Julia & Joshua Fett, of WDM, are first year members. They come each week with great enthusiasm for this new experience of food fresh from the farm. They are taking the experience seriously, each week sharing some new insights they have gained from resources they've been researching. If you too want to take a bigger bit into community based agriculture, they'd be more than happy to share their resources with you.

From the Ground Up: Farm Bill Part IV

In the previous three paragraphs in this four-part series, I talked a bit about how the farm bill influences the food we eat, the management of our natural resources, and the health of communities and individuals. Most of the effects are negative; while we have readily available cheap food, our health, communities, and environment are paying a hefty price. But an agricultural system that has so many negative effects is not inevitable. It is in large part a result of the decisions that our representatives in Congress and at the state and local levels make. We (and the politicians who represent us) can choose a food and farming system that sustains communities, health, and the environment instead of degrading them. As members of a CSA, you have already taken an important step in supporting a healthy alternative food system. But if we are to make larger system change, then it is also important to contact policy-makers and ask them to support a better agricultural system. Becoming involved in local and national efforts led by non-profit organizations is another way to effect change (we will highlight a number of the organizations involved in this important work over the next weeks and invite you to consider that, as a farm member, you have an important voice to lend to this national discussion).

Farmers' Footnote - This week we'll take a quick look at our weekly harvest and post harvest routine. On warm days, we start early to get harvest in before the sun warms the plants (and the harvesters) too much. Prompt cooling of vegetables from the field is an important step toward retaining the highest possible nutrition. Toward that end, we harvest in the cooler temp.s, set harvested crop in the shade until ready to return to the wash station or spray down with water for immediate hydration. Once we come in, we weigh all harvest. We have kept years of harvest records, which become our yield record, which then helps us with our projections for planting for the next season. Once weighed, those items to be rinsed are placed in our large sinks for cooling and final cleaning and a final quality check. Next is some time on draining racks before bunching or just storing in tubs prior to pack out. We have two coolers allowing varied storage temperatures to accommodate differing needs of the vegetables. At pack out, tubs with prepared vegetables are lined up on our packout counter. Boxes are placed on a slightly lower ledge and moved along as vegetables are placed in the box – assembly line fashion. After all the hard work from planting to weeding to harvest, pack out is a highlight for the crew. Next week we'll begin looking at improvements implemented this year and improvements under consideration for 2009.

Our Contact: Phone: 641/495-6367 or libland@frontiernet.net, Cell: 515/571-3383, Web site: www.ostgardens.com