The Weekly Note

One Step at a Time Gardens

Jan Libbey & Tim, Andrew, & Jess Landgraf

Week of August 11, 2008 – Box #11

In This week's Box: Sweet corn, Tomatoes, Cauliflower/ Broccoli / small Cabbage, Green & Yellow Beans, Zucchini, Cucumber, Onion

Veggie Notes – We talk about eating last week's weather. What heat, rain, or other conditions took place last week course its way through the plants and into the crop you eat this week. Last week's heat pushed the supply of corn along for this Tuesday. This is our final delivery of sweet corn. This week's cooler temps will slow crops down a bit. υ This week's onions are Walla Walla – one of the sweetest onions. These Walla Wallas have a fairly short storage life at one month. There are more onions to come as we gather in that harvest. υ We are finally coming toward the end of our cauliflower and broccoli supply and beginning to harvest the cabbage. There will be more cabbage next week. Toward the end of this season, we expect to deliver some of our purple cauliflower – really gorgeous and delicious. υ Our first two plantings of beans are winding down. We have some Cannellini beans coming (harvested at a very plump, beany stage) – probably a one time delivery. Our next round of snap beans, in beautiful, full bloom now, include French green beans for all shares and some Dragon Tongue beans for the Go Gourmet shares. We have a final, fourth planting of green and yellow snap beans to wrap up the season. We are watching a beautiful patch of watermelon maturing. We grow a very delicious, juicy yellow watermelon and this year's patch is probably the best we've ever had. We expect they will be coming ready in a month or so.

Connections - This week we are spotlighting new members from Mason City, Paul & Claudia Collier. New to Mason City from Mankato, MN last summer, the Colliers sought out the farm and farmers market to cover their organic produce demands. Both Paul and Claudia enjoy cooking and specifically like broccoli, yellow squash, and tomatoes. Paul is pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Mason City and Claudia is Program Assistant with Wright on the Park. They say they like knowing where their food comes from as their own gardening space and time is limited. We're glad to have them as new members and welcome them to Mason City.

From the Ground Up - We begin a brief introduction to a number of farming organizations you should be aware of, starting with the Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI). Their webpage summarizes their mission as *fostering profitable, ecologically sound, and community-enhancing approaches to agriculture*. Begun in 1985 with a focus on sustainable practices for corn and soybean farmers as well as livestock farmers, today PFI membership is near 700, including direct market producers of fruit and vegetables as well as non-farmers. Several of our farm members are already PFI members and we encourage others to join to support their tremendous work. PFI is recognized for its remarkable farmer led research, which we are both proud to have participated in and continually benefit from. PFI has been one of our main support networks here in Iowa; we connect with a wonderful network of farming colleagues who generously share information and wrestle with big picture issues as well as technical production strategies. Some excellent support for fruit and vegetable growers has emerged in just the past year. Tim currently serves on their Executive Board, representing our area and serving as Secretary. He says he's "impressed with the continuing grants that have been secured and the innovative approaches to bring the organization's goals close to its members." You can visit their website at www.practicalfarmers.org.

Farmers' Footnote - This past Sunday we treated ourselves to some time away from the farm. After weeks of working deep into the weekend, an afternoon biking on the Root River Trail in SE Minnesota on such a beautiful day was a well-deserved break. We headed into this week in good spirits with plans for another play Sunday next weekend. While our crew is starting to take a slight downturn, Becky showed up Monday with her two daughters and Kay decided she could come one more week before wrapping up the summer. Monday was crazy busy around here. Work in our neighbor's field to the east brought the REC in, shutting our power down for a bit. It was a cool morning and with no power, we opted to start with fieldwork clipping the field tomatoes' long branches, making it easier to get among them. We had some dirt work begun on a new wetland site we're having constructed on the farm and ended the day with an impressive harvest of tomatoes from the hoophouse.

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