

Fair Fields News

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On the Farm

Weeding and harvesting now consume most of our time.

Weeds are most problematic in May through July, when days are long, temperatures warm and there is usually consistent moisture. This year in our garden, the pressure from annual weeds that grow from seed each year trailed off early, probably due to hot weather in June and little rainfall.

The perennials have been less forgiving...

Our perennial weeds are thriving, especially alfalfa, thistle (ouch!), dandelion and most of all twitch grass. Also called couch grass, quack grass and other names, twitch is one of the most formidable weeds in Ontario. It is thought to have come here from Europe and central Asia

with cereals that were planted by settlers.

Twitch grass can reproduce from seed or asexually through rhizomes, root-like stems that travel horizontally through the soil and send up new shoots along the way. These rhizomes are what make twitch such a pernicious weed. It is easy to pull up the grass, but almost impossible to dig up all the rhizomes, which quickly give rise to more grass...

We have been trying to keep the twitch at bay, but it and other weeds are taking a toll on our crops, our backs, our patience and equipment. In the last couple of weeks our wheel hoe, rototiller and our neighbor's cultivator all broke in our garden. However, this equip-

ment did hold up long enough to reduce the weed pressure.

We wish we could say the same for the @&*% \$#! cucumber beetle which has attacked our cucumbers and squash. The adults eat young leaves, stems, buds and petals, while the larva burrow into the roots. The only way to control these beetles organically is through the use of row cover, or a broad spectrum natural insecticide like Rotenone. Row cover protects young plants but it needs to be removed when they start to flower to let in pollinating insects. Though Rotenone is allowed in organic production, it kills both harmful and beneficial insects, so we are reluctant to use it. We'll keep you informed!

This Week's Harvest

- ◆ **Beets**
- ◆ **Cabbage**
- ◆ **Chard**
- ◆ **Cucumber**
- ◆ **Eggplant**
- ◆ **Green and yellow beans**
- ◆ **Green onions**
- ◆ **Green peppers**
- ◆ **Herbs**
- ◆ **Patty pan squash**
- ◆ **Zucchini**
- ◆ **Salad mix (mesclun)**
- ◆ **Baby carrots?**
- ◆ **Baby fennel?**

Feature Produce – Beets

Most of the beets we see are round and deep purple. The colour comes from a high concentration of the pigment betalain, a phytonutrient which has anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Beets are also a good source of

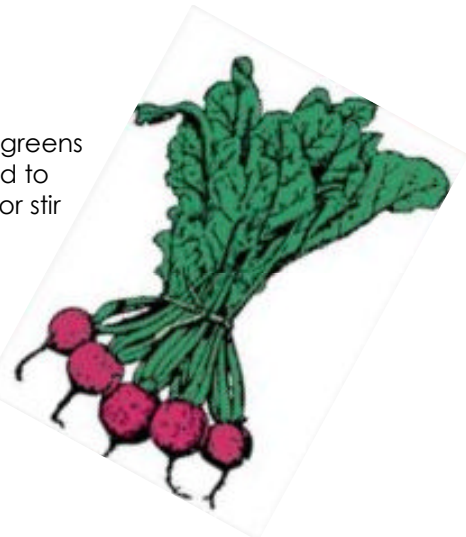
Vitamin B9 (folic acid).

One cup of beets contains almost four grams of fibre.

Beets are often boiled, roasted or pickled, but are also delicious grated raw and served with a vinaigrette dressing.

Nutrient-rich beet greens can also be added to salads, smoothies or stir-fries.

Beets can be stored unwashed in the fridge or root cellar for 3-4 weeks.



Chilled Beet and Buttermilk Soup

4 C chopped cooked beets
1 C apple juice
2 C buttermilk
1 tbsp minced fresh dill
1/4 C minced green onions or chives
Salt to taste

Finely chopped cucumber

Heat butter and oil in large pan over medium-low heat. In a

combine beets, apple juice and buttermilk and puree until smooth. Transfer to bowl or storage container, stir in the dill and green onions or chives. Refrigerate at least 2 hours.

Add salt to taste and serve topped with finely chopped cucumber.

From Moosewood Restaurant Low-Fat Favorites

Makes 4-6 servings

Fair Fields Wish List

- ◆ **Plastic berry boxes**
- ◆ **Freezer packs**
- ◆ **Plastic shopping bags**
- ◆ **Sturdy folding table**

Thanks for your previous donations!

Roasted Beets with Goat Cheese & Herbs

6 beets, about 1 1/2 lb
1 tsp chopped fresh thyme
1 tsp chopped fresh chives
3 tbsp. olive oil
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
2 oz goat cheese, crumbled

Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C).

Use your hands to put a little olive oil on the beets and place in a single layer in a roasting pan. Cover with aluminum foil to retain moisture. Roast until tender, about one hour.

When cool, peel and quarter the beets and place in a serving bowl. In a separate bowl, mix together thyme, chives and olive oil. Drizzle this mixture over the beets, season with salt and pepper and top with the crumbled goat cheese. Serve right away.

From Cooking from the Farmers' Market.

Makes 4 servings.

Beet Greens & Beets with Maple Walnuts

1 bunch (about 1 lb) beets with greens
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
2 tbsp butter, divided
1 tbsp maple syrup
1/2 C chopped walnuts

Cut the greens off the beets, leaving about 1/2 inch of stem. Rinse.

Add beets to a large pot of boiling water and cook until fork tender, 40-50 minutes.

Drain and rinse with cold water until they are cool enough to handle. Use your fingers to rub the skin and tops off under cold running water.

Cut the beets into wedges and transfer to a bowl. Toss them with the vinegar and set aside.

Rinse the beet greens and chop coarsely. Melt 1 tbsp butter in fry pan and add greens. Cover and cook gently over medium heat about 10 minutes. Pile greens on a platter and top with the beets.

Melt the remaining tbsp of butter in a small saucepan. Add maple syrup and walnuts and stir constantly until the mixture is thick, being careful that it doesn't burn. Pour over beets and greens and serve.

From Eat Greens: Seasonal Recipes to Enjoy in Abundance

Makes 4 servings