

Fair Fields News

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On the Farm

We breathed a breath of fresh air last Thursday, when we finally got some rain, around 1.5 inches.. Many of the localized thunder-showers that have been sweeping across Ontario over the last few weeks have missed our farm completely, but that one rain has made the farm start to look green an alive again. Now if we could only get that rain every week for the next month....,

Though the rain has led to a small flush of weeds, we are at the point in the season when both the weed and pest pressure is diminishing. Both

weeds and pest go through life cycles and by the end of July or beginning of August many are done for the season.

We are happy to be able to take some time to relax as well as to focus on other tasks like our expanding harvests and fixing tools and implements,

New on the list this week are melons and onions. The melon patch is filling out quite nicely and our early sampling leads us to believe they will be delicious this season.

Tomatoes are almost there but not

quite. The plants are loaded with green fruit and some are light yellow now, so soon there will be a glut... it may come time for a tomato-a-day week!,

Looking further ahead, we spent time this week weeding the strawberries, and though they have had a harder time of it with the drought conditions this year they will certainly bear some fruit next year.

Tastes to look forward to!

This Week's Harvest

- ◆ Basil
- ◆ Beets
- ◆ Bulb onions
- ◆ Carrots
- ◆ Cucumber
- ◆ Eggplant
- ◆ Fennel
- ◆ Green onions
- ◆ Green peppers
- ◆ Head lettuce
- ◆ Hot peppers
- ◆ Watermelon
- ◆ Yellow beans
- ◆ Zucchini
- ◆ Salad mix (mesclun)

Feature Produce – Eggplant

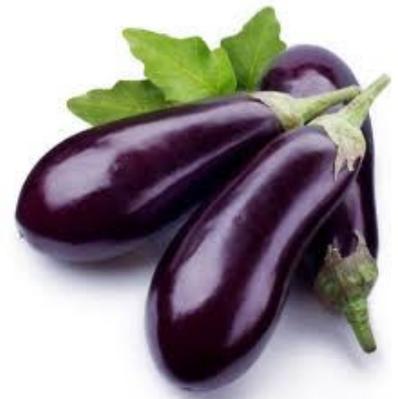
Eggplant or aubergine, belongs to the nightshade family along with the potato, tomato and bell pepper. There are several varieties including the globe and Asian varieties we grow.

Eggplant provides a host of vitamins and minerals as well as

antioxidants that reduce free radical damage and according to the Mayo clinic may protect against cancer, cardiovascular disease, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

Eggplant was introduced to Europe from Africa in the 14th century. It wasn't until less bitter varieties were

developed in the 18th century that eggplant became an important component of cuisine for several European countries such as Italy.



Some Notes on Preparing and Cooking Eggplant

Eggplant is ripe if when you press on it, the imprint of your fingers remains visible.

The flesh of the eggplant discolors quickly so it should be cooked soon after cutting. You can also sprinkle cut eggplant with lemon juice to slow discoloring.

Large eggplants can be bitter. Sprinkle slices with salt and let them "sweat" an hour or so to extract water and reduce bitterness.

Eggplant can be grilled, roasted, sautéed, or steamed.

It is delicious brushed with olive oil and grilled on the barbecue.

Eggplant soaks up oil like a sponge. To counter this, coat slices with beaten egg and dip in seasoned flour or bread crumbs. Eggplant prepared this way can be sautéed or baked so that it is crisp on the outside and tender inside.

Fair Fields Wish List

- ◆ Freezer packs
- ◆ Plastic shopping bags

Thanks for your previous donations!

Indian Ratatouille

2 C diced onions
2 tbsp vegetable oil
2 large garlic cloves, minced
1 chile pepper, minced
1 tbsp grated ginger root
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp coriander
1/2 tsp turmeric
1/2 tsp cinnamon
1/2 tsp cardamom
1 tsp salt
Pinch crumbled saffron
1 C orange juice
5 C cubed eggplant (1-inch)
4 C cubed zucchini
1 1/2 C diced fresh or canned tomato
1/4 C chopped fresh basil

In a stew pot, sauté the onions in the oil on medium heat until translucent, about 10 minutes. Stir in the garlic, ginger, cumin, coriander, turmeric, cinnamon, cardamom and salt and sauté for a minute, stirring constantly.

Add the orange juice and eggplant, toss to coat with the spices, cover and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes until the eggplant is barely tender.

Add the squash, bell peppers, tomatoes and basil. Cover and continue to simmer about 15 minutes, until all of the vegetables are tender. Add a little more orange juice or water if necessary to prevent sticking.

Serve hot or at room temperature.

This ratatouille can be served on rice or orzo or with a crusty loaf of bread.

From Moosewood Restaurant New Classics

Roasted Eggplant with Basil

2 medium eggplants
1/4 C olive oil
Salt and pepper
1-2 tbsp red wine vinegar
1 C torn fresh basil leaves

Heat oven to 475°F. Cut eggplants into 1-inch cubes. Toss with olive oil, place on a rimmed baking sheet and flavor with salt and pepper. Roast until brown and tender, about 25 minutes. Toss with vinegar and basil leaves and serve.

From Everyday Food
Makes 4 servings