

Fair Fields News

Volume 2, Issue 4. July 27, 2013

On the Farm

We were joking recently that we should have a feature pest along with our feature produce every issue. This issue we'll talk ground hogs. From the group of large ground squirrels, known as marmots, ground hogs are common throughout Canada and other parts of North America. They live in burrows, clearly visible throughout our tree lines and old hay fields. Gordon, the previous owner, never allowed his fields to be worked so in places the ground hogs are very well established...

Ground hogs have mainly herbivorous diets that include wild grasses, berries and agricultural crops. They seem to be particularly fond of our

beans, lettuce, peas, salad mix and the tender new leaves of several other plants.

Last year our garden was next to the house, in the middle of a worked area of field and so the pressure was not as great. Now with a hay field to the north and a tree line to the east it is under nightly attack!

Natural predators of ground hogs include foxes, coyotes, wolves, bears, bobcats, cougars and hawks. We have some of those around and are considering getting a good domestic predator, i.e. a dog to help turn the tide...

The hot weather earlier

this month accelerated some of our salad mix plantings, giving us a glut that is now being followed by a couple of lean weeks. This, in combination with the pressure from the ground hogs, is why we have fewer salad greens in the line up.

In the next few weeks we should start harvesting melons, garlic, more onions and hopefully some tomatoes, sweet peppers and new potatoes. There are many flowers and small fruits on all of our night-shades (peppers, eggplants, tomatoes) and cucurbits (cucumber, melons, summer and winter squashes, pumpkin), so many more fruits to come!

This Week's Harvest

- ◆ **Beets**
- ◆ **Carrots**
- ◆ **Cucumber**
- ◆ **Eggplant**
- ◆ **Fennel**
- ◆ **Green pepper**
- ◆ **Herbs**
- ◆ **Kale**
- ◆ **Mesclun**
- ◆ **Summer squash**
- ◆ **White onions**

Feature Produce – Kale

Kale has been cultivated in Europe for almost 2000 years. It grows well in many challenging environments, and withstands frost well. (Many people believe it tastes better after a frost.)

We grow three kinds of kale at Fair Fields: a curly leaf variety, a Tuscan style kale with flatter and darker leaves, and a red Russian kale

that has large, flat, oak-shaped leaves that are a purplish-red around the edges.

Kale has many of the nutrients of other brassicas. It is high in fibre, very high in vitamins K, A, and C, as well as minerals such as calcium and iron. Kale has anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory properties and appears to protect against cancer.



Notes on Preparing and Cooking Kale

Kale can be steamed, sautéed, roasted or eaten raw.

Lightly steaming kale preserves vitamin C in the vegetable.

Steamed kale is nice sprinkled with lemon juice and salt.

Kale is delicious chopped and sautéed in a little olive or grapeseed oil. Add finely chopped garlic or ginger for more flavour, or top with grated Parmesan.

Kale chips are becoming a popular way of eating kale. Rub a little olive oil onto kale

leaves that have been washed and dried, and sprinkle with salt or other spices as desired. Roast on a baking sheet at 400° F for 8-10 minutes until crispy.

Raw kale is good in salads, but needs to be tossed with dressing and refrigerated for a couple of hours to soften.

The central rib on curly kale is tough and should be removed. Simply grab the stem with one hand and pull down along the stem with the other and strip the leaves off.

For More Recipes

Check our website for last year's newsletters, which have information and recipes for preparing: chard, beets, eggplant, radicchio, celery, celery root, winter squash, fennel, black radish and red cabbage.

www.fairfieldscsa.ca

Kale-onnaise

2 C packed chopped kale
1/2 tsp sea salt
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 C mayonnaise
Zest and juice of 1 lemon

In a food processor, combine the kale leaves, salt and garlic. Process until very finely chopped. Add mayonnaise and lemon zest and juice and process until smooth.

**From 50 Shades of Kale
Makes 3 cups**

Zucchini and Kale Bites

2 C roughly chopped kale
1/2 C toasted chopped walnuts
2 medium zucchinis, cut in half lengthwise
4 tablespoons kale-onnaise
1 C Parmesan cheese
2 tbsp minced fresh parsley
Olive oil for drizzling (optional)

Preheat oven to 400°F. Combine the kale and walnuts in a food processor and process until smooth.

In a large saucepan, steam the zucchini for 8-10 minutes, until it begins to soften but is still firm to the touch. Place the zucchini cut side up on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper.

In a medium bowl, mix the kale-onnaise, half the kale mixture, half the cheese and 1 tablespoon of the parsley. Cover each half of zucchini with a thin layer of the mixture and top with the remaining cheese.

Drizzle lightly with olive oil and bake for 20-25 minutes, until the cheese bubbles and starts to brown. Allow the zucchini boats to cool a few minutes, then slice into 2-inch chunks and sprinkle with the remaining kale mixture and parsley. Serve warm or at room temperature.

**From 50 Shades of Kale
Serves 2-4**