

Fair Fields News

Volume 4, Issue 5. July 25, 2015

On the Farm

All on-farm members can now cut their own flowers in our cut flower garden. For Guelph members we will be bringing an assortment of cut flowers for you to help yourself to. We were a little late planting our flowers this year but the snap dragons, cornflower and yarrow are coming on strong and hopefully the sweet peas, zinnias and celosia will be along shortly.

We are finally receiving our much anticipated hot weather. This coming week it is calling for highs in the high 20's to low 30's, perfect for ripening tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers in the field. It will also help the melons really get going.

The hot crops are catch-

ing up and we are doing the same. We have finally tackled most of the weeds in the raspberries and next year's strawberries. Parts of the rest of the garden could use a little bit of work, but one more good week should catch most of those areas up as well.

We have had several inquiries recently from people wishing to join the CSA for the rest of the season. We do have a couple of spaces available still and would be happy to take on new members at a prorated price for this season. Please tell anyone you know who might be interested.

We have had a lot of help around the farm in the past couple of weeks.

Having friends, family and CSA members volunteer on the farm with us has been a real pleasure, as it gives us time to connect with each other, helps us get substantial amounts of work done and connects people with the food we and they eat. Nicole's and my parents, have been here regularly and are invaluable. My uncle Jim has also been of regular help, and his familiarity with tractors and farm work have been a bonus. We have even had relatives from England working with us. Kassia's (our intern) parents have joined us while visiting. Finally Vanessa Hudson, an on-farm member, has been out many times and gratefully declined our offer of the working share rebate.

Thank you volunteers!

Harvesting

- **Beets**
- **Cabbage**
- **Carrots**
- **Cucumbers**
- **Fennel**
- **Green Onions**
- **Green Peppers**
- **Head Lettuce**
- **Herbs**
- **Kale**
- **Radicchio**
- **Salad Mix**
- **Tomatoes**
- **Zucchini**

Working towards Draft Power

We are starting to feel the need for greater mechanization on the farm. For the first few years our membership and garden size were small enough that we could easily stay on top of things working by hand. That is now changing.

Two years ago we purchased a field tractor. Not having to rely on borrowing a tractor or hiring out for custom work, gave us a lot more

control over timing and completing our field work.

What we are missing now is draft power for doing row cultivation, hilling potatoes and other garden work. Draft power refers to an animal or machine used to drag or pull heavy loads. In our case our options are either a small cultivating tractor, like a Farmall, or draft horses. There are definite trade offs between working with tractors or horses. Tractors have the advantage of

not having a will of their own, not needing exercise, feed or housing when not in use and being cheaper to purchase initially. Horses have the advantage of being more enjoyable to work with, replacing themselves (breeding), creating fertility through their manure and not using as many fossil fuels.

We have been holding out for a time when we can incorporate draft horses into our farming operation, but it has not been easy.

The amount of initial investment, in time and money, has simply been too much for us to contemplate. We are now getting to the point where it is becoming both a priority and a possibility. We hope to begin preparing infrastructure for them this fall and winter, purchasing equipment and setting up pastures next season and finally purchasing a team next winter. With luck we will be using horsepower by the 2017 season!

Cooking with Radicchio

Many people don't recognize a whole head of radicchio, however, most people have probably seen it in salads. It is a common part of pre-made and washed salad mixes you would buy at the supermarket.

We grow two types of radicchio, the standard type and a taller variety called Treviso, that more closely resembles Belgian endive or a wide romaine heart. You may notice that our radicchio has more green than the classic all red radicchio you find in the grocery store. This is because most radicchio is blanched by leaving it in a water in the dark so it loses its chlorophyll.

As the name indicates radicchio originates in Italy, where it is common in a variety of cooking. Radicchio adds a nice flash of reddish purple to a salad as well as a bitter crunch. As it is a bitter vegetable, many people don't make it the central ingredient in a salad, however by balancing it with a sweet ingredient or dressing it can be just that. Common ingredients to mix radicchio with are apples, pears, nuts, arugula, kale or other brassica greens, sweet onion, fennel and sharp or aged cheese.

Other ways of preparing radicchio that help balance its bitterness include roasting or grilling. Both of these cooking methods help bring out its sweetness by caramelizing the natural starches and sugars. We like to cut it into quarters or sixths, tossing with oil, salt and pepper

and then slow grilling or roasting with other vegetables or alone. Once cooked, radicchio can be mixed into pizza, pasta, salad, frittata, grilled sandwiches or any number of things. In this form it is sweeter and so can be mixed with more salty and earthy ingredients like smoked or cured meats, spinach, potatoes, tomatoes and again sharp or aged cheese.

We hope you find sweetness in this bitter vegetable by trying something new.

Enjoy!



Farm Open House

This year instead of a pot luck with activities before hand, we will be doing a more casual open house.

We are planning it for **Saturday August 15th**, from **2—7 pm**.

We will be throwing some food on the **BBQ** during that time and enjoying it with some **salads** and my **homemade beer**.

We are welcoming our members, friends and family and encourage you to bring yours as well and enjoy a **tour of the farm** and some food and beverages with us.

Please **RSVP** if you think you will come so we can get a sense of numbers.

Hope to see you there!

Devan, Nicole, Lilly and Kassia