

Fair Fields News

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On the Farm

Everyone can probably agree we just had a long, cold winter. We feel lucky we had not already planted our orchard, something we plan on starting this fall.

With the prolonged winter weather, the snow was off the fields late. The spring following has also been cool. We have been lucky to catch up on most field work, however everything is growing just a little bit slower this year, accounting for our later start date of June 18th.

A few crops have made it through the winter in flying colours including the garlic, strawberries and raspberries. We have already seen signs of red in the strawberry

patch, which is laden with flowers and green fruit. We have a much better stand of garlic this year. It is strong, thick stemmed and getting ready to flower and send up scapes.

One casualty of the winter were our bees. We have started with two new nucs, and they look good. So far.

In addition to the bees we have three new team members, Lillian., Gill and Lewis. Lillian (or Lily or Lil) was born last October and will be helping with taste testing the new vegetables. Lewis, our new puppy, is already protecting the garden from roving bands of deer and ground hogs.

Our first intern, Gill, is working with us and Blackshire Gardens for the 2014 season. Having worked on organic and biodynamic farms for the past 3 years, Gill is excited to be working with soft fruit production and furthering knowledge of vegetable CSA production. Gill is looking forward to meeting you all and strengthening her ties to the Guelph and Grey-Bruce communities.



This Week's Harvest

- ◆ **Arugula**
- ◆ **Green Onions**
- ◆ **Head Lettuce**
- ◆ **Herbs**
- ◆ **Rhubarb**
- ◆ **Salad Mix**
- ◆ **Spinach**
- ◆ **Strawberries**

New Crops for 2014

This year we will be offering two new items, raspberries and fava beans. We planted two 150' rows of raspberries last spring. These rows have expanded well into two full beds of plants that we hope will bear a good crop of berries late this summer and fall. We don't have a great sense of what our overall yield will be, as

the canes are still getting established. What we can tell you is that starting the end of August or beginning of September and continuing through till the last frost, we will be offering raspberries as a weekly item.



Last summer we also experimented with fava beans. These beans look like small lima beans, can be eaten fresh or dried and have a delicious sweet, nutty flavor. We still have a lot to learn about growing, picking and storing these beans. However, the small planting we had last year grew well and tasted delicious. We look forward to shar-

ing this treat with you later this season.



New Infrastructure

If you are around the farm this summer you will notice some changes on the property. We have been busy this spring starting work on a wash station, an irrigation system and a moveable hoop-house.

For the last two seasons we have been processing produce in the shade of the house. This year we have added a cement pad with a lean-to roof. This will keep us dry and keep us and the vegetables out of the sun during late morning through evening harvesting.

We received components for our new irrigation system last week. With a simple drip system off the house pump we managed to keep our plants watered through the last two summers. At this point our

garden is big enough that we need a separate pump devoted to irrigation.

We will also add a run of sprinklers to our drip system. Drip irrigation systems are very efficient in terms of water use, but take longer to set up and get in the way of harvesting and cultivation. Going forward, we will use drip on some longer term crops and crops that don't like their leaves wet. The rest of the crops we will switch

to sprinklers for ease and efficiency.

The movable hoop-house we are building is essentially an unheated greenhouse on runners or skis. This means it can be dragged to new locations to enable worked soil to rest or to cover and extend a crop already planted in the field. We hope it will allow us to start our season earlier and guarantee large crops of tomatoes and cucumbers.



Working Shares, Volunteer Opportunities & Visiting the Farm

This year we have informally introduced Working Shares. The basic premise behind the shares is that members can make a contribution of 10 or more hours of work on the farm and pay \$100 less for their share. We offered it informally to a few former members, as we wanted to have a trial run. If everything goes well we will open up this option to all of our members next season.

For those working shares looking to complete their work hours or for anyone who wants to come see the farm and help out, we will be accepting help during the following times of the week starting June 24:

Tuesdays 6 - 8:30 pm

Fridays 6 - 8:30 pm

Wednesdays 9 - 11:30 am

Saturdays 9 - 11:30 am

Please contact us by phone or email to let us know when you want to come.

We also hope to have some work-bee opportunities and a CSA potluck later in the summer.

And of course, if you are in the neighbourhood and want to drop by, please pop in and say hello!