

# Fair Fields News

Volume 3, Issue 3. July 16, 2014

## On the Farm

The last couple of weeks have been relatively cool and wet on the farm. This has had some up sides and downsides for us. The leaf vegetables, which tend to bolt in hot dry weather, have been loving the cool. We also haven't had to worry about setting up our new irrigation system, a blessing this time of year when we are very busy with everything else. Crops that are not enjoying the weather include all of our hot crops, like tomatoes, zucchini and peppers, and especially the basil. You may have noticed some brown spots on the basil we have been giving out. This happens anytime the nighttime temperatures reach 11 Celsius or

less, which has happened several nights in the last two weeks. We hope to see some warmer weather soon, or at the very least nighttime temperatures in a more seasonal range.

The strawberries alas are done. It was a good season, better than we hoped for, and next year's plants are looking healthy and happy. On the fruit front we are looking forward to melons and then raspberries. There is already cantaloupe on the vine and the raspberry canes are looking amazing.

We have started giving out fresh garlic and will soon give fresh onions as well. These will be

full of flavour and should be kept in the same conditions as most other fresh vegetables. We keep them in a bag or container in the fridge. Our main garlic harvest will happen next week, after which it will take about 2-3 weeks till it is cured. During the curing process the outer layers dry out creating a protective skin for the flesh within. After they are cured, garlic and onions like to be kept in a cool, dark and dry place. Early onions are more sweet and mild, without the same pungency they develop in storage. Garlic tends to be pungent and spicy right from the start. Enjoy it!

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## This Week's Harvest

- ◆ **Beets**
- ◆ **Cabbage**
- ◆ **Cauliflower**
- ◆ **Chard**
- ◆ **Cucumber**
- ◆ **Flowers**
- ◆ **Fresh Garlic**
- ◆ **Green Onions**
- ◆ **Green Pepper**
- ◆ **Herbs**
- ◆ **Kale**
- ◆ **Lettuce**
- ◆ **Salad Mix**
- ◆ **Turnip**
- ◆ **Zucchini**

## Herbal Infusions

As mentioned in the last newsletter, we grow a wide variety of perennial culinary herbs. Lemon balm is one of those delicious herbs you will see at the pick-ups most of the season. Often we use lemon balm in hot tea mixed with other mints. When the days get hot, it is lovely to have lemon balm iced tea and there are many variations depending on your taste. Lemon balm iced tea

is non-caffeinated and it is very hydrating.

### **Lemon Balm Iced Tea with Lime**

1. *Make a big cup or pot of strong lemon balm tea with a large handful of fresh leaves and boiling water (add honey now if you like it sweetened).*
2. *Let it cool on the counter and then add ice and/or put in the fridge.*
3. *Add sliced lime and strawberries, blueberries or any other fruits you like.*



Enjoy!

## Ideas for Cooking with Fennel

We have noticed that many of you are not enthused with fennel. Is it the licorice flavour, or maybe the crunchy texture?

Or, maybe you find it odd looking, like its geeky friend kohlrabi?

We hope it is just that you are unsure of how to prepare it. If so, we have some great ideas for incorporating it into less weird things like pizza, pasta and salad.

Fennel adds a delicious crunch and herbal sweetness when served raw. We love it

sliced and dipped in a nice olive oil with some salt. It is perfect this way after a meal, as a palate cleanser and digestive aid. Sliced very thin into salads it goes well with cucumber, greens, radishes and turnip or with Mediterranean vegetables like tomatoes, eggplant, peppers and radicchio.

If raw fennel is not your thing, you could try roasting or grilling it. Both of these cooking methods help caramelize the fennel, emphasizing its natural sweetness. Cooking also seems to subdue the licorice flavour.

Fennel can be a little tough and stringy, so we recommend lightly steaming or par-boiling it before grilling to help moisten and soften it up. We often grill extra when cooking it and then have the leftovers on pizza or in pasta later that week.

Roasted fennel also makes a very good puréed soup, especially with pear or other pomme fruit.



## 2014 CSA Potluck

We have decided on a date for the CSA potluck, **Saturday August 30**. Last year we held the event in September, which ended up being rainy and cool to start. This year we hope the earlier date will increase our chances of good weather and a good turnout.

Still to sort out are the exact times and one or more workbee activities for those who wish to build an appetite, come early and work on a group project with us and other members. We will have those details in the next newsletter, and hope with this early notice that those of you wishing to come can plan it in.

Last year's potluck was a relaxed and intimate affair, with some really good food and homemade beer and wine.



## Volunteering at Fairfield's

We have had several inquiries about the possibility of visiting the farm and working with us in the fields. We very much welcome visitors and are somewhat flexible as to times that can happen. If you would like to come up and lend a hand, please contact us by phone, (519) 665-7982 or email us at [devanpenney@gmail.com](mailto:devanpenney@gmail.com)

Our biggest need for help is during harvests or group weeding sessions, however, we will take the help whenever it comes, with the exception of Sunday, a much needed day of rest for all of us at the farm.