

Fair Fields News

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On the Farm

Despite the topsy turvy weather and temperatures we have been having everything in the garden is coming along fine.

We are happy to say that this year, the strawberries are doing well. There is a little bit of damage, especially on the earliest berries, but there are still plenty of good ones. Though still green, the later berries are looking nice and big already.

Next year's strawberry planting is starting to establish itself, but is experiencing some pest pressure. Some plants have been completely defoliated (had all of their leaves removed). We suspect this is due to the bare fields on the north side and until recently on the west, south and east sides of

the patch. With all the vegetation removed from the surrounding areas and our crop coming up nice and green, it was probably the obvious food choice for any leaf eater... Hopefully the strawberries will persevere for next year!

Rachael has been suffering from a series of allergic reactions. She reacted quite badly to parsnips when we picked them for the CSA a couple of weeks ago. Parsnip rash or phytophotodermatitis, is caused by contact with some plants, especially parsnip or wild parsnip, also known as giant hog weed. Contact with the plant, especially the leaves and stems, exposes the skin to oils with various strong compounds. Reactions include irritation and extreme sensitivity to light leading to

burning, blistering and discolouration... Who knew that the humble parsnip could be such a devil! Rachael's arms have started to clear up and I am taking note to make sure we all wear long sleeves and gloves when weeding and harvesting in the future.

With our plan to purchase draft horses this winter, we are starting to prepare a larger field (6-7 acres) that we will plant out to grain for feed. It will likely be sown to oats, though I am also considering spelt or spring wheat, and I will underseed a pasture/hay mix. This is the first time we are renovating a field not for garden use and it reminds me how much I enjoy working a field.

Harvesting

- **Arugula**
- **Asian Greens**
- **Green Onions**
- **Kohlrabi**
- **Lettuce**
- **Herbs**
- **Rhubarb**
- **Radishes**
- **Spinach**
- **Strawberries**

U-Pick Strawberries

We will be inviting CSA members to come pick their own strawberries on Saturdays from 2-7 pm. For members coming a long distance, please contact us for alternate picking times and we will try to accommodate you.

As with previous years, picking is free for all CSA members. For

friends and family it is \$4/quart (litre) or \$3/lb.

We encourage you to bring your own containers to pick into. One quart containers will also be provided (25¢/ea. for non-members).

We may also open to the public for u-pick if the crop is big enough, but are prioritizing picking for the



CSA and ourselves. If we do open to the public we will enlist your help in spreading the word.

Flags will be provided so you can mark where you

stop picking. This will insure we clear up all the ripe fruit and keep the picking good. Please ask us for clarification when you are here.

Kohlrabi Recipe Ideas

Kohlrabi is a great early spring and fall vegetable. It is from the brassica family, which includes broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and many Asian greens.

Cooked, kohlrabi can be almost sweet and a little starchy with a mild brassica flavour. Raw, it is crunchy and refreshing. It is wonderful in salads or on its own with a little salt and olive oil. Here are a couple quick ideas for kohlrabi recipes:

Roasted Kohlrabi

Ingredients

- 2-3 kohlrabi bulbs
- 1 tbsp. oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 tbsp. parmesan (optional)

Preheat oven to 450 f.

Cut kohlrabi in half and then in 1/4 inch slices. Toss with oil, garlic and salt and pepper.

Roast for 15-20 minutes, until it starting to brown.

Remove from oven and sprinkle parmesan on top. Roast for another 5 minutes.

Eat immediately...!

Kohlrabi Stir Fry

Ingredients

- 250g thread egg noodles
- 2 tbsp oil
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2cm piece ginger, grated
- 1 carrot
- 2 kohlrabi bulbs
- 1 fresh or dried chilli
- 1 bunch spring onions
- 3 tbsp hoisin sauce
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tbsp water

- 1 tsp peanut butter
- 2 tbsp peanuts, toasted & crushed

Peel and cut kohlrabi into thin sticks. Wash and thinly slice bunch onions.

Cook noodles according to instructions on the packet.

Heat oil in wok or larger pan and fry garlic, ginger, kohlrabi and carrot for about 3-4 minutes.

Add noodles and green onions and fry for an additional 2 minutes.

Add the rest of the ingredients, stir and serve.

Kaolin Clay

We have begun spraying kaolin clay this year. Kaolin clay, or kaolinite, is a type of silicate found in many parts of the world, including the eastern seaboard of the United States. It is one of the more common minerals and has many different uses from face masks and white wash, to medicine and water treatment (Wikipedia). In organic agriculture it is used to protect certain fruit crops from pests and sunscald.

We are spraying kaolin on our fruit trees and bushes, hops and beans. The product we use, Surround WP (wettable powder), is a re-

fined version of kaolinite that is ground very fine. The particles flake off as bugs land and walk over top of the plants or trees. These particles irritate many insects, especially the plum curculio (a nasty one in the orchard), to the point were they spend more time grooming and finding alternate hosts than eating your fruit. The clay coating also confuses moths landing and looking for places to lay their eggs. This prevents some of the worst pest from being born right next to your growing fruit.

Hopefully we will have enough applications throughout the summer to form a thick white reflective coat on the bark. If so, this will help prevent us from getting "southwest" or "winter injury." This occurs when warm days in late winter start to melt the sap on the sunny side of the tree. During the night time the sap re-freezes causing bruising and splitting in the bark. This can just about kill young trees and we almost lost two to it in our first winter.

Like all things we spray

kaolin is non-toxic and approved for use under Canadian organic standards. It is not harmful if ingested and you may even see residue from it on organic or IPM (integrated pest management) fruit bought locally. It appears as a dusty white film and easily washes off.

If you see Rachael or I out in the orchard with a backpack sprayer this summer, it is likely kaolin we are applying, with the hopes we will this year eat our first fruits from the orchard.

Happy spraying!

Opportunities to Visit the Farm

There are plenty of opportunities for you to visit the farm this season. As with past years we welcome volunteers to come and work with us transplanting, weeding, harvesting and with other farm tasks. Please let us know if this interests you and we will try to figure out some good times to get you out to the farm.

As our strawberries, and later our raspberries, come into full production we will be in touch to offer free U-pick to CSA members. Last year our strawberries were not producing well enough for this, but we hope this year will be more normal again.

We will again host a CSA BBQ on the farm this August, the exact date still to be determined. Last year we had a great turn out and very good weather, which made for a wonderful time. We hope you can all join us this year and help make it even better!

Finally, we welcome any-

one to visit the farm if they are in the area or passing through, just let us know ahead of time. If the timing is good we can go for a brief tour of the gardens and share a snack together.

We want people to feel connected to their food and where it is grown, so feel welcome!