

Fair Fields News

Volume 6, Issue 5. August 3, 2017

On the Farm

All of our garlic has now been harvested. It looks very good, especially compared with last years harvest. Some of you may remember we had issues with nematodes last year, and were concerned with their impact on this year's crop. We are happy to say that choosing a new location and buying new seed has worked well for us and we see little evidence of nematode damage. The garlic also shows very little sign of rot, despite the extreme moisture we have had this spring and early summer. By the end of this week the garlic will be cured and so you should be able to store it normally starting next week.

We have worked in our buckwheat cover crops. It is important to do this before the buckwheat sets viable seed, as it can easily become a weed problem itself! It always pains me a little to mow it down and disc it in. When working in it the large amount of insect and bird life that emerges is overwhelming

Chard

Part of the same family as spinach and beets, chard is a highly nutritious leafy green vegetable. While beets are grown for their roots and spinach for its leaves, chard is grown for its stalks and leaves.

Chard comes in many varieties, with green, red and purple leaves and many different colours of stalks.

and I can't help but feel sorry for removing such valuable habitat. It is sometimes hard to accept that even sustainable and ecologically conscious agriculture involves a certain level of destruction...

This week we seeded our last tray in the green house, lettuce for mid to late September. With over two months of vegetables left to come out of the garden, it always feels weird to be finishing up the seeding for transplants at the end of July.

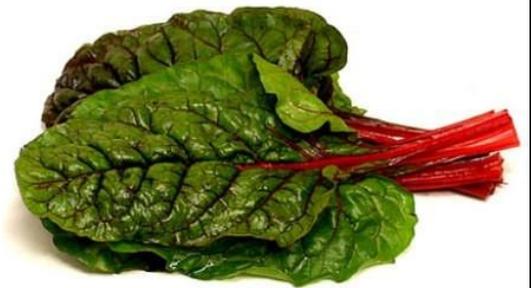
Our seeding is slowing down and our weeding schedule is as well. We will continue to weed through till some time in September, however, the work will be less frequent and less arduous than it has been for the last couple of months. Now our focus moves to preparing ground for next year, harvesting and eventually to repair, maintenance and construction work.

We have finished plowing and have disced the ground

for next years garden. Our next step will be to cultivate it several times to break and loosen up the soil, kill annual weeds and pull up the roots of perennial weeds, especially twitch grass. The manure compost we will use to add fertility to the field should be delivered by early next week and spread on the field shortly thereafter. We will then plant an oat and pea cover crop, to absorb any leachable nutrients from the compost and cover the soil for the fall and winter. The oats and peas will die over the winter, leaving the field ready for planting early next spring. The soil looked really good when plowing and discing, so we are excited to get into the field next year and grow some good veggies!

Harvesting

- **Beets**
- **Beans**
- **Carrots**
- **Cabbage**
- **Celery**
- **Chard**
- **Cucumber**
- **Garlic**
- **Lettuce**
- **Herbs**
- **Kale**
- **Peppers**
- **Tomatoes**



We used to grow a mix of varieties, called 'Rainbow Mix' or 'Blend', but have since switched to a single variety, 'Red Ruby'. This is because we were having troubles finding an affordable source of organic seed blends.

Often going by 'Swiss chard,' the plant is actually more common in Medi-

terranean cooking. Young chard leaves are good fresh in salads, while the more mature leaves, the ones we give, are better cooked. We often use chard as we would use spinach, in pastas, curries, soups, quiche and other egg dishes, or just steamed with butter and lemon or oil and vinegar. The stems are tougher and take longer to cook than the leaves, so we often separate

the two and add in the leaves near the end.

Chard is a good source of vitamins A, C and K and also contains smaller amounts of vitamin E, magnesium, manganese, iron and potassium (Wikipedia). While cooking does reduce the vitamin content, as with all vegetables, it still retains a significant amount when cooked.

Fair Fields Cut Flowers

Fair Fields has been growing cut flowers for the CSA for five years now. Our first year we started with a simple planting of zinnias, snapdragons and sunflowers. We continue to grow these stalwarts each year. In addition, we always like to grow sweet peas, cornflowers and asters.

The first Fair Fields intern, Gillian (now Stone) Stewart introduced us to amaranth, cerinth, hyacinth bean and other unusual varieties, which we have continued to grow. Each year we experiment with new flowers, some of which become part of the regular offering and others which we decide aren't for us. In the last few years we've added salvia, statice, anchusa and cosmos as regular items.

Last year we grew dahlias and gladiolas for the first time. I was not a fan of gladiolas but Devan knew that many CSA members liked them so I grew them, reluctantly. Now I'm a convert. We grow dahlias, gladiolas and sunflowers in the fields because they take up too much space in the flower garden. But we cut these for our on-farm pickup and also for our Guelph and KW members. Look out for them!

This year's new flowers included Tithonia (Mexican sunflower), Dianthus (*aka* carnations), Godetia, Gomphrena,

Orlaya, Verbena Bonariensis, Stock, Didiscus and perennial lupines. The didiscus and lupines have not fared well and I don't think we'll grow them again, at least not in the cut flower garden.

It's hard to pick favourites, but I am really enjoying several varieties of celosia, Scabiosa, and nigella at the moment.



Celosia comes in two main types, a feathery bloom and a cockscomb. I prefer the feathery "plumosa", but the cockscomb, shown above, can be showstopping.

We are trying to grow a variety of bouquet foliage and filler plants now. Cerinth is one of these, but we also grow Bells of Ireland and for the first time this year, Limelight Spray Millet.

Hyacinth Bean and amaranth can also add lovely foliage to a bouquet.

Basil, dill and mint also make nice — and fragrant — fillers.

Devan's mother Jennifer is the flower farmer at Fair Fields. Because Devan and Jordan are focused on growing vegetables and fruit, they may not be able to identify some of the more unusual flowers we grow. However, we will be developing a cheat sheet for all CSA members in the near future, with pictures, names and descriptions of flowers we produce.

In the meantime, we invite CSA members to bring their own vases or jars to the weekly pick-up to make up a pleasing bouquet for yourselves. CSA members who cut their own flowers on-farm should feel free to ask Jennifer to identify flowers and/or help with creating a bouquet if they see her during a Tuesday or Saturday pick-up.

And CSA members who are coming to the potluck should be sure to bring a big vase and to pick themselves a big bouquet. Jennifer will be available to give tips on ways to make a beautiful bouquet and make it last as long as possible.

Fair Fields CSA Potluck

This year's CSA Potluck will be **Saturday August 12z**, from **2—7 pm**.

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

We are welcoming 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. There will also be some games set up on the lawn.

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 Jordan