

Fair Fields News

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On the Farm

The strawberries are slowing down. We have had a great run this year, not yet missing a picking day, and with the highest quality I've ever had. We are now looking forward to getting to some other farm work! On the construction side, we would like to continue building the perennial herb beds and work on our barn renovation. The garden needs a good weeding and we have to get a covercrop in for our garlic ground.

Speaking of garlic, we will start harvesting fresh garlic for your shares in the coming weeks and will have cured garlic sometime in August. It looks very healthy so far and we are keeping our fingers crossed that we have avoided picking up nematodes (a small worm that does big damage). They are what decimated our garlic crops for two years running and it was a relief last year to find no sign of them.

Some of you may have noticed the lack of pak choy and tatsoi in this year's shares. The problems we were having with

aphids in past years led us to try something new. We have always seeded into trays in the greenhouse and then transplanted into the field, however, they were picking up aphids in the greenhouse, so this year we tried seeding directly into the field. This seemed to fix the aphid problem, unfortunately we had germination problems and so didn't get many plants either! We will see if there is anything we can do to insure better germination next year.

We do on the other hand have fennel this year! Last year the deer and ground hogs ate about 95% of our fennel transplants. The same critters also made holes all through our row cover, helping to ruin most of our early brassicas, like broccoli and cauliflower. To avoid these problems, we have put up a temporary electric fence. It goes all the way from the orchard, around the garden and back to the barn. So far we have seen no sign of either ground hogs or deer. Keep your fingers crossed.

The electric fence has allowed us to plant sweet corn this year. The fence

will keep out racoons, which can make short work of a small sweet corn patch! We are looking forward to having fresh corn on the farm, particularly as we have struggled to find no-spray or organic sweet corn in the area.

We have started cutting and baling hay. My neighbour Don used to take hay of our land. As he moves towards retirement he is cutting back on his field work. It is good timing as we are still hoping to have horses this winter and will also try to sell some hay to make up for lost CSA income.

As it is the first time we are doing hay on this farm, we are happy to have the help of my uncle, Jim. Born in Whitehorse, Yukon, Jim has recently retired from Purolator and moved to Hanover. He studied agriculture at Ridgetown College, while working on a farm with my other uncles that bred Black Angus cattle. In his youth he was part of baling and putting away over 50,000 bales of hay! An old hand you might say...

Harvesting

- Arugula
- Beets
- Cabbage
- Chard
- Fennel
- Flowers
- Green Peppers
- Head Lettuce
- Herbs
- Kale
- Peas
- Salad Mix
- Scapes
- Spinach
- Strawberries
- Zucchini

Fair Fields Open House and Potluck

We will be hosting an open house and potluck for Fair Fields on **Saturday August 4th**, 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 CSA 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.



Recipe Ideas

We will be giving fennel for this week and next. For many people fennel is a love hate



vegetable, as it has that characteristic anise or black licorice flavour. We find the flavour really different when it has been cooked versus raw. Cooking, especially grilling or roasting, helps bring out the sweetness and subdue the licorice flavour. After it has been roasted it is easy and tasty to throw into pizza, pasta, cold salads, soups and more.

Roasted Fennel



If you are into the licorice flavour and the crunch we recommend slicing it thinly into salads. This is especially good with fruits like peaches, apples, pears and citrus. Fennel helps with digestion and its fresh licorice flavor helps cleanse the pallet. For this reason, it is also great at the end of a meal, sliced and dipped into olive oil with salt.

Bacterial Wilt in Cucumbers

Some of our greenhouse cucumbers are suffering from bacterial wilt. This disease can kill a plant in 7-14 days and we are seeing some of our precious greenhouse cucumbers succumbing to it.

Bacterial wilt is caused by the bacterium, *Erwinia Tracheiphila*. This bacterium overwinters in adult cucumber beetles. When they emerge in the spring and start feeding on cucurbits, they infect this year's growth.

The only two ways I know of to deal with bacterial wilt is by using plant varieties that show resistance to the wilt, or by keeping cucumber beetles from feeding on your plants.

Unfortunately, there are not many greenhouse cucumber

varieties with high resistance to bacterial wilt, so we are left to try and deal with the cucumber beetle.

This year we tried using kaolin clay. This clay is made up of fossilized sea creatures and so has a lot of sharp flakes in it that irritate insects and deter them from feeding and mating. While it definitely kept the cucumber beetles from doing as much damage, they were still able to feed enough to pass the wilt.

Next year we will try to use neem oil, as I have been reading that it is supposed to also be a deterrent. We already use neem oil in our orchard and on seedlings to deter aphids, moths and several other insects.

A more effective and far more expensive solution, is to build netting into our hoophouse doors, windows and roll-up side walls. This would exclude the cucumber beetles from the hoophouse entirely. We have avoided doing this so far, as we also have our tomatoes in our hoophouse and we worry that reducing airflow would be very detrimental to their health. This leaves the ultimate solution of building an entirely new hoophouse just for the cucumbers. Our last hoophouse took a lot of labour and about \$3000-4000 worth of materials, so we are a little reluctant to take on this project unless we plan to sell a lot more cucumbers...



Still Looking for Members

We are still looking for members for the 2018 season. As in past years we are not quite at our membership goals and would be happy to take on prorated members. If we can keep getting a couple of members per week we will reach our membership goals by mid-July.

For new members starting partway through the season,

we offer prorated shares roughly proportional to the number of weeks left of pickups. Shares are usually weighted a little heavier towards the end of the season as the overall value of produce rises throughout the summer peaking in late August or early September. This year, however, we have started with a bang, so the

value should be fairly constant throughout the season.

If you think of anyone who may be interested let them know. Also, if you feel comfortable, posting on social media or to any distribution lists you are a part of, please pass our information along. We did a little more marketing this year, however, our member's enthusiasm

through word of mouth continues to be our best form of advertising.

Thanks again for your continued support. Without you this would not be possible and it would also be a lot less fun!

Devan