

Farm News

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Around The Farm

With a significant amount of rain in the forecast, we spent much of the weekend preparing. Part of that job was gathering the dry beans, dry corn and the seeds we hope to save for planting next year. Over the past few weeks we've been gathering the mature beans onto tarps for drying out in the fields. After they have all dried, we'll stomp on them to release the seeds from the pods and winnow them in large baskets to remove all the chaff. It's difficult to get them totally clean but we do pretty well. The corn also has to be dried out and then is stored in a dry, rat-proof place until it's removed from the husk and put through a mill to make flour or polenta. We only plant little bits of dry corn and beans for ourselves each year since we're not really set up to process large amounts of these crops. It sure is fun though.

Another big project we've been trying to get done before the rains come is getting the fields ready for cover cropping. Each year we plant a mixture of grains and legumes into our fields which would otherwise be bare in the winter. These fast growing plants protect the soil from erosion, nourish the soil by adding organic matter and nitrogen and they also look beautiful. This is a great time to plant cover crops because the days are still relatively warm and they'll have a chance to establish before it gets too cold. All of our fields which we're finished cropping, will be getting planted to cover crop in the next week or so (hopefully before Wednesday!).

With the rain and the cooler weather we'll probably be harvesting the last of the tomatoes this week. When it rains heavily on tomatoes they have a tendency to develop cracks which will quickly result in rotting tomatoes. Brief as it was, the tomato season has been pretty good overall. Eggplants are on the decline as well and this might be the last week of our eggplant harvest. As the summer crops decline, the fall crops are thriving and coming to maturity. This week we'll be picking more broccoli, carrots and Chioggia beets. Chioggia are a milder variety of beet which are striped white and red on inside. We'll also be harvesting radicchio, which looks a little bit like a red head of lettuce. It's dense, slightly bitter, and great mixed in salads. Like the escarole, it goes especially well with pears or apples and toasted nuts. Another way I like to prepare radicchio is to cut it into thick slices (leaving

the root end intact to hold the wedges together) and dipping the slices in olive oil and frying them in a pan until seared on each side and slightly soft. I then sprinkle with salt and maybe more olive oil or a splash of balsamic vinegar. This is an unbeatable crowd pleaser for those adventurous eaters. Lastly in your boxes you'll see more beans, corn, red peppers, lettuce, cilantro and maybe the first of our cauliflower. Enjoy the food and the rain.

Cooking the Harvest

Salmon nicoise salad with black olives

- 10 pitted Kalamata olives, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped shallot
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped garlic
- 1 teaspoon anchovy paste
- 3 tablespoons red-wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped basil

For salad:

- 3/4 pound small Yukon Gold or boiling potatoes
- 1 (1 1/4-pound) piece salmon fillet (preferably center-cut; about 1 inch thick) with skin
- 3/4 pound green beans, trimmed
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 ounces baby arugula (4 cups)
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, cut into quarters
- Handful of small basil leaves
- 4 lemon wedges

Prepare a gas grill for direct-heat cooking over medium heat. Whisk together dressing ingredients in a bowl. Cover potatoes with water in a 4-quart pot and season well with salt. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, until just tender, 15 to 20 minutes. While potatoes cook, season salmon with 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Oil grill rack, then grill salmon, covered, turning once, until just cooked through, 8 to 10 minutes total. Cool slightly, then gently break into large flakes. If desired, reserve skin for crumbling over salad. Transfer potatoes with a slotted spoon to a bowl. Add green beans to boiling water and cook, uncovered, until crisp-tender, 4 to 5 minutes. Drain and transfer to an ice bath to stop cooking. Halve potatoes while still warm and toss with 2 tablespoons dressing. Toss green beans, cherry tomatoes, and arugula with enough dressing to coat, then toss with potatoes. Divide among plates with salmon and eggs. Sprinkle with basil (and salmon skin, if using). Serve with lemon wedges and remaining dressing.