FARM NEWS

July 13-16, 2009

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Around The Farm

Last week we got a lot of our plantings in for the fall and that will hopefully continue through this week. We've still got lots of planting to do including our second rounds of melons, cucumbers and squash, cabbage and broccoli for the fall, lettuces, and more fennel and scallions. It's a critical time for us here since these late plantings are very time sensitive. If these long season crops aren't planted by mid/late July the days get too short and there won't be enough day length to allow the plants to mature.

Thankfully we'll have time over the next few months to continue planting lots of short season crops like cilantro, radishes and arugula. I know Jessica, our greenhouse diva, will be happy when most of the baby plants are cleaned out of our greenhouse zone. She's been doing a great job keeping everything healthy and watered well but it sure does take a lot of time and energy. Thanks Jess!

Rachel, another of our amazing interns, has been doing an awesome job irrigating the farm for the past week while Jeff (our usual sprinkler intern expert) has been away. Watch out Jeff, she may be able to wrangle those sprinklers faster than you by the time you get back! Of course none of us are competitive here on the farm…

Coming down from the upper fields Sunday evening, I spotted a group of about 15 turkeys (3 adults and the rest juveniles) in our greens field. I got Fin, our dog, all fired up, and we chased them out but unfortunately they had already destroyed half of our lettuces, some may recover, others are a total loss. Oh, the beautiful, perfect baby butter crunches were heartbreaking with their cores all ripped to shreds. John and I were dreaming of turkey dinners. Hopefully they won't come back.

In your boxes you'll see more fennel, carrots, summer squash and cucumbers along with some other surprises. Enjoy it all! Here's some more fennel inspiration.

Reminders

Please help us to keep the pickup sites clean to respect our site hosts and make it easy for everyone to find their shares.

Remember to break down your veggie boxes and stack them neatly, and don't stack empty fruit boxes on top of full ones. Thanks for your help!

Cooking the Harvest

Fried Fennel Slices

from *The Savory Way* by Deborah Madison

1-2 Fennel bulbs
2 slices firm white bread
1 egg
1 heaping Tbsp. chopped fennel greens
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Clarified butter or other high heat oil

Wash the fennel, then pry off the thick outer leaves if they are tough/scarred. Slice each fennel bulb lengthwise into pieces about 1/3 inch thick, leaving the core attached. You'll end up with a cross section of the bulb. Remove crusts from the bread and make bread crumbs from the pieces in the food processor or by hand. Beat the egg, add the fennel greens and season with salt and pepper. Dip each piece of fennel into the egg and then into the bread crumbs. Use one hand to dip into the egg and one to dip into the bread to keep the eggs from filling with crumbs. Heat a generous amount of clarified butter or oil in a cast-iron skillet or other heavy pan. When it is hot enough to sizzle a crumb of bread, add the fennel and lower the heat to medium-low. Cook slowly so that the fennel is done just as the crumbs have turned a golden brown. Fry on both sides and serve hot, with a lemon wedge or spoonful of mayonnaise flavored with a few drops of Pernod or garlic.

Fennel, Mushroom and Parmesan Salad

from *The Greens Cookbook*, by Deborah Madison

1 clove garlic
2 teaspoons lemon juice
1 fennel bulb
2 strips of lemon peel, minced
¼ teaspoon coarse sea salt
4 to 5 tablespoons olive oil
8 oz. fresh mushrooms, wiped clean
Salt and Pepper
1/8 teaspoon fennel seeds, crushed in mortar and pestle
2-3 ounces Parmesan shaved into paper thin slices
1 tablespoon Italian parsley, coarsely chopped

Pound garlic and salt in a mortar until completely smooth. Stir in lemon juice, lemon peel, fennel seeds and olive oil to make a tart, lemony vinaigrette. Thinly slice the mushrooms, carefully dress them with a few tablespoons of vinaigrette and season them with plenty of fresh ground pepper. Lay a damp kitchen towel over them to keep them from browning- set them aside for 1 hour to marinate. Trim the fennel bulb and cut it into quarters. Remove most of the core, then slice it lengthwise, very thinly, leaving the pieces joined together. Dress it with most of the remaining vinaigrette and half the herbs, and season with salt and pepper. Add the rest of the herbs to the mushrooms. Layer the mushrooms, cheese, and fennel on each plate and spoon remaining vinaigrette over the top.