



This Week's Word From the Farm

Week of 7/14/08

What's In Your Box ?

- New Potatoes—German Butter Ball
- Shallots
- Garlic
- Green Beans
- Summer Squash
- Chard
- Baby Beets
- Salad Greens—Spicy Mesclun
- Carrots
- Cucumbers
- Bok Choi (optional)
- Basil (optional)

Dear Friends,

Insect pests have never been much of a problem in our crops at Riverhill Farm. Hopefully, you've all noticed that the produce in your boxes looks pretty good and doesn't have much in the way of damage from insects. We're happy to say that in the years we've been farming here, we've never yet had to take any measures against any pests or diseases. Although the farm is not certified organic through a third party organization like California Certified Organic Farmers, we comply with all the rules and requirements for organic certification in our production practices. Far from stipulating that no pest controls may be used, there are many natural pest control products that are certified for organic production. We've never had to use any of those, either.

Some of the reasons for this include the way in which the crops are grown. We amend the soil in the Spring to maintain a proper balance of nutrients which in turn generally produces healthy plants which are more capable of warding off serious pests and diseases. We practice crop rotation so that each year our individual crops (like tomatoes or corn or squash) are grown in a different location. This helps to avoid the buildup of crop-specific pests and diseases that tend to arise from growing the same crop in the same location every season. And, the diversity of crops growing at Riverhill means that there are not tens or hundreds of acres of single crops that can support large populations of crop-specific pests.

An even greater factor, though, is the health of the natural environment here at Riverhill Farm and in the surrounding landscape. Because of the relative isolation of the farm in relation to other farms, we do not have large populations of pest insects that tend to occur with monoculture farming. The native flora which surrounds the farm supports a large and diverse population of beneficial insects which prey on pest insects, keeping their populations in balance. The flowers we grow throughout the farm attract beneficial

insects to their pollen and nectar and encourage their continued presence at the farm. These beneficial insects also need protein to complete their life cycle, and most prey on pest insects as a critical part of their diet.

We enjoy growing food for you. We especially enjoy the fact that we are able to provide beautiful produce that is nutritious and that we can do that without the use of chemicals. We're proud to be doing our own small part in growing food for our community without leaving a legacy of environmental harm. Thank you for supporting local agriculture!

Recipes of the Week:

Pickled Beets

- 1 bunch (4 or 5) roasted beets
- 1/4 cup white vinegar, or rice vinegar
- 1 Tbsp sugar
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon dry mustard
- Salt and pepper

Remove beet greens and save for use in your favorite "greens" recipe. Wash beets and place in a baking dish with a splash of water. Cover tightly with foil and bake in a 375 degree oven for approx. 45 minutes, or until easily pierced with a fork. Uncover and allow to cool. Use your fingers to slip the peels off of the beets. Slice the beets. Make the vinaigrette by combining the cider vinegar, sugar, olive oil, and dry mustard. Whisk ingredients together with a fork. Add salt and pepper to taste. Combine beets and vinaigrette in a bowl and allow to marinate for a half hour at room temperature. We love these beets in salads or sprinkled with goat cheese and diced shallots as a side dish.

Ike's Gingered Greens – Many thanks to our friend Ike at our great local eatery, Ike's Corner Café!

Sauté 2 tablespoons each minced garlic and ginger until golden. Add your favorite greens (any combination of chard, beet greens, kale, mesclun, etc.) Sauté quickly and add salt and pepper to taste. Add a small amount of water (1/4-1/2 cup). Cover and cook for 2 to 10 minutes or until tender. Enjoy!