

THE BUSY BEE

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The Slog

By John

This has been an interesting week to say the least. The weather really kept us on our toes since Saturday when Keri, the Bloomington Farmers Market manager had us start packing up a bit early to get us out before the first bout of nasty weather hit. Sunday was actually quite pleasant here at the farm and Lidia and I had the chance to get a lot of weeding and transplanting done as well as a few other odd jobs that were nagging. Looking at the weather report by Sunday night had us worried and in a near panic by Monday morning. We new we were in for a slog this week but the high wind and hail warnings sent us into row cover overdrive. It was just this past Friday that we started pulling off the floating row covers on many of our crops to give them a little more room to grow. Monday morning it all went back on plus we scrambled for material to cover the lettuce and new transplants in case of hail. Putting row covers back on under ideal conditions is never fun. I can honestly say that in my years of farming I have never heard one person attest that they relish this job. Under pressure in the rain and mud it is the sort of job that makes you think 'I think I might go back to school and be a banker.' But we got it done, and the hail never came. Murphy's Law being what it is I am still glad that we scrambled to get it done. We have so many gorgeous crops in the field for you that there is just about nothing we wouldn't do to protect them. It makes me think back to about 5 or 6 weeks ago when a really nasty storm snuck up on us unawares one

ON DECK FOR NEXT WEEK

We love scallions and scapes, but get ready for fresh onions to be in the share soon. We will have spring cabbage ready and the first carrots with be coming on strong with a little sunshine.

Saturday afternoon. Realizing that there wasn't much we could do, I stood with the lettuce (beer in hand) and kindly asked the dark clouds to pass around us. When the clouds replied with hail and high winds, I asked them to just move along quickly. Aside from a few holes here and there in some of the young greens we came through unscathed.

Much like the storm from a few weeks back, we have come through this week OK. We are a bit off schedule with planting and seeding now, but we have no complaints. We were looking at upwards of 3 inches of rain, hail and gale force winds. We wound up with a little over an inch, no hail and strong but undamaging winds. Given what could have been, we feel that it was a victory. I can even say there were a few silver linings in all of it.

When it is too wet to do anything but harvest you have to relax a little. I like figuring goofy numbers and a week or so ago I looked at our work schedule and deduced that if we made \$10 an hour and kept up the pace we have had for the past 8-10 weeks for a whole year, we would net about \$120,000 this year. Oh, if only to be paid for even half of the hours. Do the math and you can imagine that a few rainouts wouldn't seem so bad. I think we

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Pasta with Garlic Scape and Basil Pesto

watched about 10 episodes of Prison Break. For those of you that don't know, it's not a very good show, I can't even say that we like it much. It's a pretty well acted and decently written show, about as predictable and complex as you might expect your typical network, primetime action drama to be. OK, so it's terrible, but this week we queued it up on Netflix and it was sublime. Lidia in her recliner, me in my chair with my feet on the ottoman, the dog curled up on the rug, all three vegged out (seems a malapropos wording) without a thought in our simple little minds. But now the weather is clearing and the ground will begin again to dry and its right back at it, but it's OK we love the sun on our backs. Get out the sunscreen, summer is here.

Featured Item

This week you will find garlic scapes in your share. They are what would become a garlic flower and produce actual seeds (as opposed to the bulbs which we normally plant). We break them off so that the plant will send its energy to the root and grow a bigger bulb rather than producing seeds from a flower. They are delicious and can be used just like you would use garlic in your favorite recipes. One scape is equal to a couple of normal garlic cloves. They will keep all week in a bag in your fridge.

- 4 to 5 garlic scapes, roughly chopped
- Large handful basil leaves
- 1/4 cup almonds, toasted in a dry skillet until slightly browned
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 pound linguine or other pasta

Combine the garlic scapes, basil, and half the oil in a small food processor or blender. Process or blend until the leaves and scapes are finely chopped, then add the nuts and remaining oil. Process or blend until nicely pureed.

Remove to a bowl and stir in the cheese. If necessary, add more olive oil to create a loose paste. Season with more salt if needed.

In the meantime, bring a large pot of salty water to boil and cook the pasta until al dente. Drain, reserving 1 cup of the pasta water, and toss with the pesto. If necessary, add some of the pasta water to create a creamy texture. Serve with more grated Parmesan cheese

Final Thoughts

We are looking down the road and are thinking about food preservation. If the scheduling works out we want to provide pickling cukes, dill, green, onions, garlic and a few other things together in 'pickling packs' so you will have the essentials for some home pickling. Salsa too. Lidia and I are avid canners and want to help our members do the same to enjoy the harvest all year. We will offer tips and recipes and are trying to work out the logistics of a canning party (it's a lot of cooks in the kitchen). If you don't have one we recommend a pressure or water bath canner and jars (we like wide mouth quarts and pints). More to come soon!

News and Notes

- We beginning to plan a member event were we can get together, share our favorite dishes (maybe do a little work) and socialize with our little farm community. We will provide more details as we have more details
- The wet cloudy weather slowed things down a bit this week but everything survived, so we are still in great shape.