

THE BUSY BEE

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Where We Are Headed

By John

Writing this newsletter each week is an interesting task to undertake. Some weeks aren't very good and it can be difficult to be positive, other weeks I am just really worn out and it can be really hard to come up with something to write about. Sometimes I have lots of things to say and decide to save it for another day, or even year for that matter. Having been around CSA for as many years I have seen the tendency for content to repeat itself year after year, though sometimes this is necessary as new members are welcomed to the farm and need a bit of orientation. This is one of those weeks where there are about ten things I want to talk about. I will try to touch on a few of them if possible (I prefer to write living letters so I don't know exactly where they will go and what they will say, but I generally don't like to go back and change them all that much). I think this week I want to focus on where we are going. You hear a lot about what is going on now or what will come in a few weeks. But when does that leave time to talk about our vision for the future? Sometimes we can feel so overwhelmed with what we need to do today, tomorrow and should have done yesterday, that we lose sight of the long view. This being our first year we fully expected to be overwhelmed, to work ridiculous hours and to struggle with the challenges that come with being a business owner. Whether a farm, a tech company or a fast food franchise it doesn't matter. All nascent businesses will have the same risks, emotional and financial investment, worries concerns and hopes. Generally in this phase

ON DECK FOR NEXT WEEK

We don't think there will be much of a changeup next week. No big surprises but there will be more varieties of tomatoes to come and the peppers will continue to become more flavorful as well as sizeable.

the quality of life goes out the window, no more date nights, movies, concerts or bars, no more hiking, biking, reading or napping. I don't mention this to elicit any empathy, sympathy or any other something-athy. Going in we knew that starting up meant going all in and we have no regrets. We also know that we are not alone. This past weekend we went to a young farmer mixer at Spring Wind Farm in Northfield, which was sponsored by the Greenhorns. The Greenhorns are a really great organization, which has been active on the coasts for a few years now and are now trying to become more active here in the Midwest. Their only mission is to advocate for, educate, connect, guide and support young farmers. If you would like to learn more about them please visit their site at www.thegreenhorns.net. On Saturday they brought a large group of young people just like Lidia and I together to network share ideas, share the fruits of our labor at a potluck dinner. It gave us a real pickup to chat, laugh and commiserate with people that can relate so closely to us. It was a lot of fun listen to music; we even got to do some square dancing. It has been almost two year since Lidia and I went out dancing, which is something we had done at least a few times a month in the past.

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It made us really think about our quality of life. Listening to some music and dancing made us realize that we need to take some of it back. Not much, but we agreed that we are going to carve a little bit of life out for us. We have a dream of where we want to be in 20 years, and we will get there. But when we get there we don't want to look back at the path we took and realize that we blew by the little things that make life truly rich, never having made the propitious memories we want to carry with us into our old age. Well, it looks like I never got to the point of where we see the farm going. I guess that will have to wait until next week. For now, I am going to think about taking my girl dancing

Featured Item

This week we are featuring fennel, often referred to as finocchio in Italian cuisine. It is traditionally considered more of a winter crop, though it seems well suited to growing in the spring, summer and fall at our latitude. You may recognize it's licorice like smell at first though when roasted the flavor become soft and sweet. It is also delicious raw, in a salad with arugula, cucumber, squash, zucchini, and/or oranges. Fresh fennel will stay fresh for 7-10 in a plastic bag in your fridge.

Final Thoughts

We have a lot of people we would like to thank this week for pitching in extra help over the past few weeks. But we would like to single out our dear friend Julio this week. He has been a perennial force at Gardens of Eagan for the past 13 years and a good friend to us for the past 2. On many nights he has come over and cooked dinner for us. Sometimes he shows up in the field when we are working late with food for us to eat. This week he stayed with me in the shop fixing our farm truck late into the night. There isn't space to go into our vehicular woes. But being without our truck wasn't an option. When Julio should have been sleeping he was helping to make sure our truck wasn't down for long. We are blessed to have a friend like him.

Recipe of the Week

Roasted Fennel Tomato Sauce

- 2 fennel bulbs, cored and sliced
- 2 large onions, peeled and sliced
- 4-6 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon chili flakes
- 2 tablespoons whole fennel seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- About 1lb of hand crushed tomatoes
- 1/2 cup shredded Parmesan
- 1 pound short pasta

Preheat the oven to 450°F. Combine the fennel, onion, garlic, oil, chili flakes, fennel seeds, salt, and pepper in a roasting dish and roast, tossing once or twice during cooking, for 15 minutes.

In the meantime, bring a pot of salty water to boil and cook the pasta until al dente. Reserve some pasta cooking water.

After 15 minutes of roasting, stir in the crushed tomatoes, combining well. Roast 5 to 10 minutes more, until the fennel is tender and starting to brown.

Drain the pasta and toss with the roasted vegetables and Parmesan, adding some pasta cooking water if necessary until the sauce is loosened and coats the pasta. Serve immediately



Two Day Old Cornish Game Hen