

Dancing Works

From John

We have strung together a few really productive weeks putting the farm in a really good place. There are two main drivers at work here. First off, is getting some much needed rain. As I was printing the newsletter last week the first raindrops began to fall. It wasn't a lot but enough to help tide us over for a few days and buy us a little breathing room to get some other very important work done. This week I expect no less than one inch of rain which means we won't have to move pipe around for at least another week or two. July is a critical month for weed control (we say that about every month) and it seems like we might actually be starting to win the war even though we lost a few battles along the way. Getting on top of the weeds is probably the most difficult task for an organic farmer and staying there is harder yet. But the truth is that if you can keep clean fields through July and those really big summer weed flushes you should maintain control through the rest of the year. We have had good volunteer turnout over the past few weeks which has been tremendous for us. We know that coming out to the farm for a few hours and just weeding (sometimes by yourself) isn't a lot of fun. We hope you aren't too disappointed in your farming experience but you need to know how much it helps us and how deeply we appreciate the help you give us. The payoff for your labors will be a much more bountiful fall than was the spring and early summer. This is all good because we have much more work to do than just weed and irrigate. For instance, getting our truck up and running in the nick of time. We had been using our market van in the field for about two weeks as I waited for parts and some free time after bouncing the transfer case, gas tank (was already bad and needed replacing), the rear differential and some front-end goodies off a rock and sidelining the truck. With a couple

ON DECK

We won't see any major changes from this week. Some people will see the first peppers and tomatoes but probably not everyone just yet. There should be eggplant, cukes, head lettuce, onions, potatoes, corn, watermelon and green beans.

late nights in the shop last week I got the new transfer case in the truck, replaced the rear diff seal and jury rigged the front end back into some semblance of alignment until we get a few more parts. I also got the new tank and pump in place. Unfortunately, the new fuel pump was bad out of the box having an internal short in the tank somewhere. More unfortunate I didn't test it before reinstalling the tank and putting 19 gallons of gas in. That means I need to get another pump and pull the box off the truck to get access to the top of the tank without having to drop the tank again (it was empty when I removed it). Very fortunately however, our truck has dual tanks so that buys us some time. I hate seeing our van in the field and it is all but useless when wet, so it's of great relief to have our 4x4 back in action just ahead of the rain.

We also brought in the garlic crop on Sunday which looks really phenomenal, but learned a few valuable lessons here. Garlic can be a little tricky, farmers always save a percentage of their best stock to plant the next year. The seed we saved performed very well as we were able to make sure only to use large healthy heads. There were some other varieties we bought from another farm that performed quite poorly. This exemplified the importance of buying certified seed if comes from someone else's farm. Garlic is incredibly expensive and with our expansion plan we knew we would have to buy in more seed as we wouldn't have enough of our own to plant this fall. It is important to buy certified seed (especially for garlic and potatoes), because it has been tested throughout its life cycle and post-harvest for a whole host of diseases, fungi, bacteria and other potential problems such as

parasitic nematode. This is to ensure that you are buying clean seed that will produce and guarantee that you aren't importing the problems from someone else's farm onto your own. We also buy certified organic which can push the price to around \$20 pound, we felt like we got a steal at \$14 for organic certified seed. For 40 pounds it's a stiff bill but as we grow and expand it's a bullet we will need to bite until we level off our scale of production a few years down the road and can sustain our own seed supply. We should mention that we also buy certified organic potato seed that is also certified seed. We have a 'cheap' supplier at a \$1.20 per pound (2011 price). It always shocks us that these two crops account for between a third and half of our total seed bill for the year and neither one of them are crops that make much money. Luckily they are crops that we love to grow, eat and are vital to the CSA experience. Speaking of potatoes, we will be trying to dig the majority of our potatoes this week. This comes as quite a surprise as it seems to be a full five weeks earlier than usual. There are a couple of varieties still putting on vigorous growth, which I think are the Adirondack red and blue and possibly the French fingerlings. But the other varieties are ready to come out of the ground if we can get a tractor in the field after the rain (see how farmers are never happy, we always ask for the exact opposite of what we have). No complaints though, it will be one less really heavy thing to carry around in a few weeks when we have lots of other heavy things to carry around. With as great as things have been the past few weeks and with the blessing of rain it is looking like we will have no shortage of those heavy things to lift this fall.

News and Notes

- We have set a date for our member picnic for Sunday September, 9th. Save the date and we will fill in more details as the time approaches.
- Our mailing list for the e-newsletter hasn't been working, be looking for an email from us so we can re-aggregate a mailing list for those preferring the electronic version.

Featured Item

The heat may have broken but it always a good time for watermelon. We have Starlight which is a nice 10-12 pound melon with incredible sweetness at about 12% sugar content. It is a seeded variety as we believe seedless melons are not only boring but lack flavor and texture which is why we will never grow them. Watermelon will stay fresh for a week or so kept at room temperature and out of direct sunlight.



Garlic Curing in the Greenhouse

Recipe of the Week

Watermelon Frozen Yogurt Popsicles

Ingredients:

12 ounces plain non-fat or low-fat Greek yogurt
2 cups watermelon
Honey, Splenda or other sweetener to taste

Directions:

Puree watermelon in a blender or food processor. Strain with a fine mesh sieve into a bowl, removing all seeds and pulp. Add yogurt and blend well with a whisk. Add sweetener to desired taste, stirring to blend. Pour into popsicle molds and freeze for 4 hours or until frozen.

Note: If you don't have popsicle molds, small paper cups or ice cube trays with popsicle sticks will work fine. If you need fewer or more than 6 popsicles, just increase or decrease the ingredients accordingly.