

Feelin' It

From John

Well here we are passed the half-way point of the season. It hardly seems that we are already through 10 weeks. For us that means we have been going at it for almost 6 months. August is always the time when the months of toil start catching up on you. I was joking with Lidia the other day that 'it's not the work that's slowing down, just we are.' Luckily though, we are getting close to the time when things really do start slowing down. All of the greenhouse work is done, we are down to just a few more plantings of lettuce to transplant and the seeding is winding down too. There is still some weeding but mostly we harvest and my favorite part of the season, putting the farm to rest for winter. Our soil works hard for us all season and it feel good to spread compost and get it all covered up with a cover crop and allow it to rest until spring. But we still have just a few more weeks until we can start to let up off the throttle a little bit and take it a little easier. The best evidence that we are still in the heat of the summer might be my failure to get a newsletter out last week. I have never failed to get out a newsletter before but last week seemed to be one of the longest of the season. Each newsletter takes between 4 and 6 hours to get written and sent out. I usually spend about 2-3 hours on the column, 1-2 hours on the other content and at least 1 hour more for editing. That's a pretty good chunk of time to carve out when an 80 hour work week is considered short. I feel pretty bad about it but last week was a week that I just couldn't get it all together. With the coming heat wave I knew that we had to get out in front of the heat and get water to all the crops. Actually, I know I would have to make two circuits around the farm last week, plus doing the same for my day job at Gardens of Eagan. Luckily the clear skies and big moons allowed

ON DECK

Next week will mark the end of the sweet corn season but other summer staples will continue. We will start seeing fall crops make a return such as beets, chard and maybe even some collards. Garlic, onions and potatoes will be in steady supply.

me to get out and work by 3am for at least a few days to get the irrigation set up and running and shutting it down well after dark. It's a wonderful gift to be able to irrigate and save crops in times like this, but it's still grueling to try and work around 20 acres of vegetables and even some cover crops that have been struggling in the heat and get all of your other work done too. Last week was also the week marking the anniversary of losing my big brother to cancer. It is a difficult week to write to begin with and after my rather depressing article about the state of our pollinators I didn't want to write another bumper of a column. I generally lean into my primary coping mechanism which is to throw myself even deeper into my work. I keep track of all kinds of numbers in my head, one of which is that we work about 12 hours a day on average for 7 days a week with just one day off every 50 days. Taking but one day to relax after every 600 hours of work, it becomes unavoidable that the grind starts really catching up to you after about 2000+ hours of work over the past several months. We will keep the pace up for about two more months and then start keeping more regular 'bankers' hours from November through February. This year we plan on taking about five weeks off all together with two weeks in New York to visit my family and three more weeks in Brasil, two of which we will spend with Lidia's family and the other just to ourselves where we plan on doing nothing at all but relaxing at the beach. Although if history is any indicator, aside from our beach week when we do completely unplug, we will still put in 15-20 hours a week at the computer. But this work is generally pretty nice since it is going over our records and planning for the following season and getting

ready for any speaking gigs we may have lined up. On vacation we also usually hit the gym five days a week and run every day to keep our bodies moving to work out all the kinks a season of farming puts into you. You may be able to tell that we can already smell the salty breeze of the sea calling us to mark our spot on the sand under an umbrella and to take a load off. In the meantime there is still much work to be done and the time to relax will be upon us before we know it!



Well at least Lidia thinks the dirty sweaty look is pretty hot. I just feel plain dirty and hot looking forward to the chance to 'wash off my tan.'

News and Notes

- We don't get holidays off and forgot that this weekend was Labor Day, so we will not be doing our Potluck this weekend however we are still planning a work day for this Sunday and a Potluck for next Sunday. Read below for more details!
- We will be having a workday from 9am-1pm this Sunday, September 1st. We will try and get the onion harvest done and afterwards have some beer and pizza or maybe throw a little something on the grill. This will be low key, so bring a chair a blanket to sit on.
- Sunday September 8th we will have another work party from 9am-1pm focusing on the potato harvest. Afterwards there will be a Potluck from 1pm-4pm. The potluck is open to everyone whether you harvest potatoes or not. So make your prize dish and head down to the farm.
- Please RSVP to farmers@fbt.ag if you plan on attending either workday and/or the potluck to help us plan accordingly.
- For all events, parking will be near the brown shed at 5875 290th St W, Northfield. MN 55057

Featured Item

This week we just want to celebrate the grill. When it's 90 out and the AC struggles to keep the camper cool, who wants to fire up the stove? Plus we don't have a lot of energy to prep and cook at this time of the year and with the grill we can make fantastic meals with virtually zero effort and zero prep. Here are some ideas that all pare together phenomenally. Heat the grill to Med-High heat. Throw on a whole unpeeled onion and grill for 15-20 minutes a side or until soft, do the same with a pepper or an heirloom tomato for 10 minutes a side. Slice eggplant into 1/4" thick slices, coat each side with olive oil and a little salt and pepper and grill for 3-5 minutes a side. Use whole new potatoes or larger ones cut into 1 inch cubes and put them in a foil boat, add some butter, onion, salt, pepper and rosemary. Close the boat and throw it on the grill for 45 minutes. These zero effort specialties will pleasantly surprise you on their own or with a protein of your choice.

Recipe of the Week

Grilled Eggplant and Tomatoes with Dinger-Miso Dressing

INGREDIENTS

- 1 inch piece ginger, peeled, sliced
- 1/4 cup white miso (fermented soybean paste)
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds, toasted
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
- 1 eggplant (about 1 lb.), cut into 1-inch wedges
- 4 firm ripe plum tomatoes, halved lengthwise
- Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

- Blend ginger, miso, vinegar, sesame seeds, 1 Tbsp. oil, and 1/4 cup water in a blender, adding water by teaspoonfuls if mixture is too thick, until creamy. Set ginger-miso dressing aside.
- Prepare grill for medium-high heat. Rub eggplant and tomatoes with remaining 2 Tbsp. oil and season with salt and pepper. Grill vegetables until charred and tender, 4-6 minutes per side. Serve vegetables with ginger-miso