



# BLUE GOOSE NEWS

JUNE 19 - 21, 2018 – WEEK 3

## *From the Farmer...*

Unfortunately, produce farmers are plastic dependent. We harvest our vegetables into plastic tubs and crates. We package them in plastic bags. We deliver them in plastic boxes. We even lay plastic it in our fields. Because our climate has a short growing season, the plastic crop cover provides extra heat, especially to such plants as tomatoes, peppers and eggplants. It also saves many hours of hand weeding, which nobody around here is volunteering to do! But at the end of a season it all has to be thrown away because it is not reusable.

There is a black plastic that is made from corn and decomposes at the end of the season. However, the product itself is very thin and costs 3 times more than the average crop cover. In my rocky soil it just seemed to tear too easily for me to bother with. But I have found no other viable way to grow many of my crops without using black plastic.

This year, though, we are experimenting with landscape fabric in the fields as a renewable plastic. I have been using this fabric in the high tunnels year-after-year for several years. Just this winter I thought of trying it in the fields. Why not? I'm not sure why I didn't think of doing this sooner, but it already has shown good results to my crops in the fields. One of my concerns for this product is how to get all the plant material off the top of it before it has to be rolled up at the end of the season. I imagine that can be handled with a weed eater and a large push broom. We just cut and cleared the entire crop of lettuce because we sold all of it. And as you can see in the photo to the right, nothing has to be cleared off the top but a few dead leaves. Another concern I have is that it has to be laid down by hand. There is no machine that can assist in putting it down, but with the hands of all 5 of my sons I should have enough help! Maybe this might be faster since I won't have to keep hooking up and unhooking my tractor like I do to lay the black plastic.

So far my experience is positive and I hope to be reusing this landscape fabric every year allowing me to completely stop buying the alternative plastic. I may thrust all of my thoughts and energies to growing my vegetables, but I do care about the environment in which I grow these great crops.

Have a great week,  
Scott & Chrissy Farabaugh

## IN THE BOX THIS WEEK

Beets OR Turnips  
Garlic Scapes  
Green Onions  
Kohlrabi  
Lettuce  
Summer Squash  
Swiss Chard

## NEXT WEEK'S BEST GUESSES

Broccoli  
Garlic Scapes  
Kale  
Lettuce  
Summer Squash

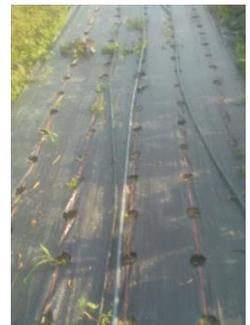
Zucchini and Yellow Squash plants growing through the landscape fabric.



Beautiful rows of luscious lettuce in the landscape fabric before the harvest.



Rows of lettuce gone after the harvest... leaving the landscape fabric behind.



## IN THE KITCHEN



### HOW TO CHOP RED BEETS

Red beets are the ruby gems of summer. We know the deliciousness of the root, but it is true that the greens are edible, too. The leaves can be a bit more pungent, but when cooked are easily incorporated into any leafy green dish. Greens and roots must be separated as they cook differently. The most common way to prep beets is to wrap them in foil, roast them, remove skins, then cut into rounds, sticks, cubes. For a change, remove the skins with a vegetable peeler first, cube them, then roast. The texture and flavor are wonderful this way.



### HOW TO CHOP SWISS CHARD

Swiss chard is another of those veggies where nothing goes to waste. Leaf and stem are edible. First, separate leaf from stem. The stems are crisp like celery and can be chopped the same way. The leaves can be stacked, rolled up into a log, then sliced into ribbons for easier cooking. Or just chop leaves at random into pieces.

The stems take longer to cook than the leaves, so keep this in mind when cooking chard.

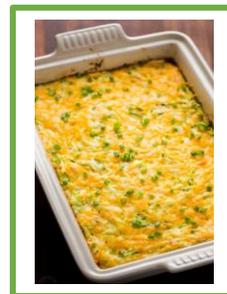
And though chard may be eaten raw, it is more palatable when cooked.



## ~ HAPPY EATING ~

### CHEESY ZUCCHINI CASSEROLE

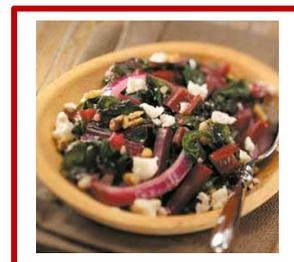
- 1 C sour cream
- 1 t baking powder
- 3 C grated zucchini
- 2 C chard, chopped (stems removed)
- 1 kohlrabi, grated
- ½ C green onions, minced
- 4 eggs
- 2 C cooked white or brown rice
- 3 C shredded Colby Jack (or your favorite cheese)
- 1 t Italian Seasoning (or your favorite seasoning)
- 1 ½ t salt
- ½ t pepper



Preheat oven to 400F. In a large mixing bowl, mix sour cream and baking powder; let stand 10 minutes. Put grated zucchini in a colander in the sink, stir in 1 t salt, then let stand 10 minutes; stirring a few times then squeeze out excess liquid with your hands. Add drained zucchini, chard, kohlrabi, green onions, and eggs to sour cream mix; stir well. Incorporate rice, 2 C cheese, seasoning, remaining salt, and pepper. Pour mixture into greased casserole dish. Sprinkle remaining cheese over top, plus extra green onions for garnish if desired. Bake uncovered for 40 minutes. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving. YUM!

### SAUTEED SWISS CHARD WITH ROASTED BEETS (or Turnips)

- 1 bunch swiss chard, chopped
- 3 green onions, chopped
- 1 garlic scape, minced
- 1 bundle beets
- 4 T olive oil, divided
- 3 T lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 C feta cheese, crumbled
- ½ C walnuts, coarsely chopped



Prepare beets to be roasted: remove greens (save for another dish if desired), peel skin, cube beets into 1-inch pieces, toss with 2 T oil in a baking pan and season with salt. Bake at 400F for 35-40 minutes, until tender and gently charred; turning once or twice while baking.

Meanwhile, heat remaining 2 T oil in a large pan over medium-low heat. Add chopped chard stems, green onions, and scapes; saute for 2-3 minutes. Add chopped chard leaves and simmer, covered, about 5 -8 minutes until wilted. Remove from heat. Stir in lemon juice. Add roasted beets, feta, and walnuts. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Enjoy this colorfully pretty presentation of a dish!

*NOTE: You may easily substitute the beets using turnips. Our turnips do not need to be peeled, but do remove greens. Roast them the same way as beets, checking on them after 25-30 minutes. Also, red wine or raspberry vinegar may be substituted for the lemon juice, and pistachios may be substituted for the walnuts.*