



PRAIRIE SUN FARM

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Makin' Hay

We want to grow grass for hay. There are 4 acres of our 8 acres that are certified organic that have been fallow since we got it certified. We tried to plant cover crops on it but we were never successful because it was either too wet, we didn't get it planted at the right time or we didn't really know what we were doing. It is also quite a large area when you've got a 12 foot wide disc, a harrow or drag that is much smaller and a rototiller that is less than 5 feet wide. It is an area about 400 feet by 400 feet. When we first tried using the rototiller to get it ready for planting it took about 10 hours, not very efficient. So we decided to plant it with a hay mixture. We even bought a plow to turn over the weedy mess it had become. Unfortunately we didn't know how to use a plow and a neighbor had to come over with his big field cultivator to fix the bad plow job. We finally got it planted last fall, but unfortunately it was too late, we didn't get any rain and nothing germinated. Nothing came up this spring either but a lot of foxtail which is not a grass we wanted. So it looks like we're going to have to replant it, again. We even bought some haying equipment, some well used 1950's & 60's equipment but it was all in working order. At least until Dan got a hold of it. We did get about 30 bales out of our meadow along the wetland between the first and second breakdown. We tried baling some stray before the 3rd breakdown. But how else are we going to learn about farming if we don't try? We don't have a lot of money invested in it. Luckily the John Deere baler, although it's 60 years old, was popular and you can still get parts for it. We will take hay off of our 4 acres someday. We're just not sure when at this point.

WEEK 8 BOX CONTENTS

Tomatoes: Cherry tomatoes are a mix of gold, yellow, red and purple varieties. Slicers are a mix of heirloom and hybrid varieties.

Golden Beets: The beets are rich, golden-yellow and very sweet. A beautiful beet that won't bleed like red beets.

Beans: Green or Yellow.

Lemon Basil: Nice basil flavor with a hint of lemon.

Savoy Cabbage or Broccoli: We have extra green summer cabbage this year. We thought we lost this planting to frost so we planted extra. Also, a few broccolis were ready to pick but not enough for all boxes. More next week....

Summer Squash/Zucchini: Time for zucchini bread?

Cucumbers: Some people will get the last of the greenhouse cucumbers with the thin skin. The rest will get the field slicer cukes.

Sweet Peppers: Ivory or green peppers this week. Some are starting to turn red, yellow and orange so we will have those soon.

Hot Peppers: Jalapeños. Most people think of jalapeños as being very hot, but actually it varies depending on the growing conditions. The heat is concentrated in the seeds and veins.

Onions: Italian red tropea variety. These are not storage onions so keep in your frig.

Cauliflower: There are many ways to enjoy cauliflower raw or cooked. In a salad or with a dip or mac n' cheese or in soup. Store in a plastic bag in the frig.

Eggplant: Eggplants creamy flesh soaks up any flavor. It's best to grill, roast or broil.

Farm News

Last year we harvested garlic on July 7th and the first potatoes on July 22nd. We just harvested our measly 58 bulbs of garlic last weekend and it will probably be another week or two before we have potatoes in the box. The garlic has to cure for a few weeks also before it will be ready for the box but we've got enough for 2 weeks. It's fresh salsa time with the tomatoes, onions and peppers in the box this week. The cilantro isn't quite ready to be harvested but it will be coming soon. Did you get to try the fennel from your box last week or the week before? We had our favorite shrimp with fennel and onion dish last weekend and the fennel is the best it's ever been. Everything seems to be quite tasty coming out of the field right now. The flavors of summer are finally here. The onions and peppers are great for fajitas. The lemon basil is great on fish. Golden beets are a treat. And who doesn't like a hearty red tomato or a few cherries to pop in your mouth. Yum! It may be a little late this year but it is definitely worth the wait.

From the Kitchen

Chicken & Eggplant Stir-Fry September issue of Rachael Ray Magazine

Ingredients

1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, thinly sliced
5 tbsp. canola oil
1 small eggplant, cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ inch pieces
3 jalapenos thinly sliced
4 cloves garlic, minced
1/3 cup white wine
1/4 cup soy sauce
1 cup basil leaves
4 cups steamed rice

Instructions

In a large skillet, cook chicken in 2 tbsp. oil over medium-high until golden, 4 minutes. Transfer to plate. Add eggplant and 2 tbsp. oil to the skillet; cook to soften, 3 minutes. Stir in remaining oil, jalapenos and garlic; cook 1 minute. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water, wine, soy sauce, chicken with its juices and $\frac{2}{3}$ cup basil; simmer 3 to 5 minutes. Serve over rice with remaining basil.