



PRAIRIE SUN FARM

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JULIE AND DAN GEIGER WWW.PRAIRIESUNFARM.COM

10330 Highway 25, Watertown, MN 55388

Ja_geiger@msn.com 952-955-3570

Lessons From Nature

We were sitting outside Sunday night enjoying supper when we noticed 2 snapping turtles, one large one small, coming closer and closer to our table. At one point we got up not sure what the large one was going to do. The small one started digging a hole for her eggs no more than 20 feet from us. The large one wandered around not sure where to start digging. It didn't trust us that's for sure. These historic looking creatures have probably been climbing up this hill looking for soft, dry ground for centuries. Now there's a house in their way. We also had the binoculars out looking at the Trumpeter Swans on the lake with their little babies. Luckily they were still intact after the storms. We also had a family of killdeer hatch 4 young ones last week by the septic tanks in fresh wood chips. The mini killdeer look just like the adults and were soon gone from the nest. It's hard to imagine animals roaming around us outside during the storms we've had. The young deer are learning their way around now also, probably pushed out of the low ground due to the flooding. They must adapt to changing surroundings just like we do. As we've mentioned before, our farm is an ever changing landscape. No two years are the same. We continue to plant in new ground that hasn't seen a garden yet. We haven't rotated through our first 4 acres yet. So when the heavy rains came we learned some lessons. Oh that's where that culvert under Highway 25 drains to, right through the broccoli. We need to adapt our planting patterns to the 4+'' rainfall we seem to get yearly now. We'll learn. Nature will teach us. But we staked our gully washer on Sunday just to make sure we don't forget. We'll be planting grass there next year.

WEEK 2 BOX CONTENTS

Cucumbers: 2 possible varieties this week. Same small early cucumbers as last week and a long slender Dutch style. They are thin skinned, tender, sweet and seedless. They are not preserved with wax so eat them soon.

Leaf Lettuce: Red butterhead lettuce. It looked beautiful before the storm. Now it looks more like shredded lettuce....

Green onions: Also known as scallions. White and green parts are edible.

Radishes: Crisp with a sweet/hot taste. Some of the healthiest root vegetables you can eat. Full of vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants and are low calorie.

Baby Green Top Carrots: A rainbow of colors to enjoy. The flavor varies a bit with each color, but all are tender and sweet. Scrub clean and eat. No need to peel. Remove greens and refrigerate carrots in a plastic bag.

Kale: Red Russian or Winterbor variety. These also have some storm damage. Prepare either variety as cooked greens or chop and add to fresh salads.

Parsley: Flat leaf Italian. Not just a garnish. 10 sprigs contain 205 percent of your daily vitamin K requirement.

Mint: Spearmint is said to be good for your digestive system. Contains vitamins and minerals too.

Spinach: It was damaged by the storms so eat soon because it will not stay fresh as long. Still tastes great but might be better in a dip or cooked instead of raw this week.

Farm News

So much for being in the sweet spot, the torrential rains pounded us three nights. 0.8" Thursday, 2.5" Friday, then over 4" on Saturday night. Sunday morning our driveway had a river crossing it roaring out of the field. But we only lost a few plants. The tomatoes were in a good spot. The cover crops around the vine plants protected them. We had good cover crops established in some areas to minimize erosion. More lessons learned. We really need some dry weather and sun now. Thanks heavens for the hoop house. It held up well in the 42 mph wind. The plants in there were not affected at all. We feel fortunate when we look around at the neighbor's fields. They are eroded, corn is under water and the creeks and rivers are just starting to flood. The soil got hit hard in the areas corn and soybean fields. With these types of rains, that type of farming is not sustainable.

From the Kitchen

Quinoa Tabbouleh Salad

Ingredients:

1 cup quinoa, rinsed well
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt plus more
2 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 garlic clove, minced
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
Freshly ground black pepper
1 large cucumber or 2 small cucumbers, cut into 1/4" pieces
1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved (I didn't add tomatoes because they aren't in season yet)
2/3 cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
1/4 cup chopped fresh mint
2 scallions, thinly sliced

Directions:

Bring quinoa, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1 1/4 cups water to a boil in a medium saucepan over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until quinoa is tender, about 10 minutes (check package). Remove from heat and let stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork. Let quinoa cool

Meanwhile, whisk lemon juice and garlic in a small bowl. Gradually whisk in olive oil. Season dressing to taste with salt and pepper.

Add cucumber, tomatoes, herbs, and scallions to bowl with quinoa. Mix in the dressing and refrigerate. Season to taste with salt and pepper.