

Otter Hook Farms

...
Traditional Family Farming



Week of July 28, 2009, Harvest Week 8

This week's share includes: New Potatoes, Beets, Parsley, Broccoli, Lettuce, Napa or Savoy Cabbage, Summer Squash, and Green Beans

Our plans for next week are much the same, minus the lettuce, and adding cucumbers, and maybe green tomatoes, hot peppers and eggplant

Broccoli Pesto Pasta Recipe

You can certainly add a handful of basil to this for more traditional flavor - you'd still get the added nutritional perks from the broccoli. And by all means, feel free to cook your broccoli in a skillet with a bit of salt, olive oil, and water. This way you won't lose as many nutrients in the cooking process - the boil and drain method takes more nutrients out of the final dish.

*1 medium head of broccoli (about 3 cups), cut into very small florets
1/2 cup walnuts, toasted
1/3 cup Parmesan, freshly grated
1 clove of garlic
juice of 1/2 a lemon
1/4 teaspoon + fine grain sea salt
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 pound (8 ounces) dried whole wheat pasta (bite-sized - fusilli, penne, etc)
3 handfuls of spinach or chard, well chopped
handful of oily black olives, pitted
more Parmesan for serving*

Bring two pots of water to a boil, one large, one medium. In the medium pot you'll cook the broccoli, the large can be used for the pasta.

To cook the broccoli, salt the boiling water and add the broccoli. Cook for just twelve seconds. Drain immediately and run cold water over the broccoli to stop the cooking. Reserve a few of the small broccoli trees and puree the rest in a food processor along with the walnuts, Parmesan, garlic, lemon juice and salt. Drizzle in the olive oil while still blending. Taste, adjust with more salt or lemon juice if needed and set aside.

To cook the pasta, salt the boiling water generously and add the pasta. Boil until just barely tender. Drain, transfer the hot pasta to a large bowl and stir in the spinach, it should wilt. Gently stir in about half of the pesto. Taste, add more pesto to your liking. Served topped with olives, the reserved broccoli florets, and a dusting of Parmesan cheese.

Makes about 6 side servings.

Well, it seems that sharing the late blight article with you last week was timely, since just last Thursday we realized that we had some of it, too. Chris has been cutting out the infected parts on the tomato plants daily, and last Friday, he weedwhacked down our potato plants, which were infected. On Cornell's website, we found out that potatoes are a host plant for this disease, and mowing them down was the suggested action. We were lucky to have gotten them in early; at least the early and mid-season varieties have some size to them – the late season potatoes will be small.

With the amount of damage to the tomatoes so far, and the continued disease that Chris has been removing, we are not sure whether any of the tomatoes will live long enough to ripen. Any good green tomatoes have been kept, and, if nothing else, you'll get those in your shares. We are really saddened by this news – this makes two years in a row that the weather has ruined our tomato crop; this year we hedged our bets by planting 600 plants in four different places on two completely separate pieces of property. For anyone who is not a gardener...this should have had you sitting in piles of tomatoes, at about 20 plants per share. Actually, we overplanted everything this year (we planned for 60 shares, not 30), which is the only reason the share has had fair amounts of anything. We should be getting at least double the amount of green beans and summer squash that we are, and several of our successions of root crops that should be coming to maturity now rotted in the ground, so next week's beets and the following week's carrots will be all we have of those unless the rain stops long enough for us to get the ground tilled and seeds planted.

We have mentioned several times that the weather had us behind in succession planting – exactly what that means is this: it's been raining for two months. The ground has to be dry to rototill. We need to re-use space in the garden (like where the peas were) to plant more greens, lettuce, turnips, beets and carrots to have these items into the fall, so planting without tilling is not an option. Since we haven't been able to till and plant, there will be gaps and shortages of the above mentioned crops beginning next week, when we won't have lettuce. If we can't plant within the next two weeks, it will be too late to do it, as the plants need about 60 days to reach maturity.

On a more positive note, our cucumbers are in flower, so we should start to have them next week, and we have some small peppers and eggplants coming along nicely that you'll start to see over the next couple of weeks. The squash are starting to produce more abundantly, so you'll have a few more of those in the shares, and we have more broccoli coming on already – we really wanted it to be for September, but I think we may have put in a shorter season variety than we meant to. If these send out as many side shoots as the spring ones did, we'll all be eating broccoli well into the fall, anyway!