

THE TIPI TIMES

August 5, 2010, week 13 (green EOW)

Tipi Produce, 14706 W. Ahara Rd., Evansville, WI 53536, 608-882-6196, tipi@ticon.net, csa@tipiproduce.com

THIS WEEK'S BOX CONTAINS:

Yukon Gold potatoes, 3.5 lb
Parsley
Watermelon, Red or Yellow
Tomatoes, slicing or plum, 2 lbs
Red Bell peppers, 2
Broccoli or Cherry Tomatoes
Walla Walla onions
Lettuce
A few small cucumbers
Zucchini/Squash, about 1.5 lb

NEXT WEEK'S BOX WILL PROBABLY CONTAIN:*

Melon, tomatoes, peppers,
beets, cucumbers and more

Many of you paid us with checks dated August 1. I will deposit those checks on August 13, after I return from vacation. Be prepared.

FARM NEWS - I sat at the desk in our packing shed recently and noticed how cluttered it is. It's not surprising. This desk is the hub of all activity during the summer and many items accumulate there. The accumulated items are a good snapshot of daily life here at the farm.

Coffee cups - We start our day at 9 a.m., a comically late start for a farm, but one that works for our crew members who commute from Madison. Even at 9 a.m., many folks need their morning coffee to start the day. Every day begins with a morning meeting to outline the jobs for the day. Our most experienced workers organize the 15+ farmhands into groups and everyone gets started.

Sunscreen - We encourage everyone to use it, so bottles are everywhere. Folks pass them around during morning meeting, and some end up on the desk. We use about 2 gallons of sunscreen each year.

Water bottles - Each farmhand has their own distinctive water bottle.

Field maps - I've prepared detailed maps of the farm showing where each crop is planted. Some crops are obvious. Everyone knows where the zucchini and tomatoes are located. But mention edamame soybeans and you can see the wheels turn in everyone's heads. "Soybeans? Soybeans? Where are they?" They resemble green beans enough to be overlooked. Our farm is big (76 acres) and maps are useful. They have become invaluable as our business has grown and experienced workers take on more responsibility. For example, our

crew does most of the transplanting without Steve's participation. It is essential to be clear about where the new crops should be planted! As our farm has grown, Steve has shifted some of his field responsibilities to Randal Ten Eyck, an experienced farmer. Steve and Randal huddle over the map, deciding where to till or cultivate. Again, clarity is essential.

Plastic flags - We use these for marking new fields or areas for harvest.

Plastic flag with a telephone number written on it - Apparently someone couldn't find a scrap of paper?

Irrigation fittings - We had a three and a half week stretch without rain during July, and began irrigating the fields. One crew member (Dennis Fiser) is helping Steve run the drip irrigation system this year. We use three different irrigation methods, so there are lots of spare parts around. There are also pipes snaking all over the farm. Fittings accumulate at the desk because it's a good place to plan the irrigation layout with field map in hand. Irrigation is important enough that we've dedicated one of our three pick-up trucks to it. The truck bed is filled with coils of plastic pipe and many more fittings. Our other two pick-up trucks are used mainly for harvests, along with tractors and wagons.

Gloves - Two Hmong women who work for us like to protect their hands. Working in the soil quickly roughens your skin. We've promised them a daily supply of surgical gloves.

Tools of the trade: pens, indelible markers, box labels, our harvest log, calendar, stamps and a stamp pad for labeling produce by harvest date, calculator, staple gun, rubber bands, knives, file for sharpening knives, wrenches, hammer and other tools, etc.

4 x 6 cards - Steve writes each task on a 4 x 6 card and pins it to the bulletin board on the wall. After many years of this, Steve now thinks in 4 x 6-sized thoughts. Any task can be described on a card of that size.

Chickling vetch - There's a dried bouquet of chickling vetch in one of the coffee cups. This is a new cover crop we grew this spring. It was a lovely surprise when it bloomed in beautiful shades of purple and electric blue. Crew member Maggie Schley gathered a bouquet on her way back to the buildings. Maggie's farmed for many years (14?) but little surprises like the vetch are still a delight.

Measuring tape and spray paint - These have been useful tools while we plan the new underground water system around the buildings.

Empty whipped cream bowl - Simone O'Donahue made pie and whipped cream to thank the co-workers who helped her move.

Posters for music and art shows - Farm work is social. Crew members become friends and begin socializing outside of work, so there's lots of talk about upcoming shows each weekend. Flyers are posted on the bulletin board, especially if a crew member is playing in a band. There's a postcard pinned up now for Starlight Tews' photography exhibit at the Madison Overture Center's Playhouse Gallery. A bunch of us went to the opening reception, some dressed up, some still in farm clothes. Starlight creates amazing, intricate radial photographs. Go check out the exhibit (before Sept 19). The work is beautiful (<http://www.starprintz.com/default3.asp>). Disclaimer, Starlight is Steve's ex-wife.

A stuffed animal - We find toys and other bits of trash around the farm, the legacy of getting leaves from the nearby city of Evansville. The city crews gather leaves in the fall and bring them to our farm. A few toys are caught as the leaves are collected at the curb. It would be heartless to leave them abandoned in the field, so they migrate back to the packing shed.

Carved zucchini - Are you tired of zucchini yet? Our crew is. They've begun carving them with scary faces and tucking them in the rafters of the packing shed. Someone carved an anguished face on a zucchini and stuck it in a coffee cup on the desk. The zucchini sprouted black mold and became especially scary.

There are other random items (clothes, broken hacksaw blades?) but I think you get the picture. And, yes, it is time to clean up the desk. *Beth*

VEGGIE NOTES. Yukon Gold potatoes - These organic potatoes are from Doug Rouse of Meadowbrook Farm. Yukons are yellow-fleshed and slightly sweet. They are a good all-purpose potato.

Buttermilk Summer Squash Soup Recipe, Serves 6 - 8.

<http://www.101cookbooks.com/archives/buttermilk-summer-squash-soup-recipe.html>

Adapted from the 101 Cookbooks recipe journal by Heidi Swanson who writes "I happened to have a bit of buttermilk to use up here, and I like the creamy tang it brings to the soup, but feel free to add a splash of creme, or half & half, or a swirl of creme fraiche instead if that's what you have. If you like a deeper green soup (and some bonus nutrition), add a handful of chopped spinach toward the very end - a minute or so before pureeing." *Beth's notes; This is a mild soup that everyone in our family likes. We tweak it to our taste, with feta cheese (me), Mediterranean herb mixture (kids) or a spoonful of spicy salsa (Steve). I think the soup is better with more buttermilk.*

a generous splash of olive oil or (3T.) knob of butter
3 large shallots, chopped (*or substitute a small Walla Walla onion*)
a couple pinches of fine-grain sea salt
pinch of crushed red pepper flakes (*or substitute smoked paprika*)
3-inch sprig of rosemary
1 1/2 pounds yellow or green summer squash, cut into 1/2-inch thick slices/chunks
3/4 pound potatoes, un-peeled, cut into 1/4-inch thick pieces
3 medium cloves garlic, chopped
3 cups lightly flavored vegetable stock or water
2/3 cup buttermilk (*or more to taste*)

garnish with: fresh herbs, toasted almonds, a generous drizzle of olive oil/ melted butter, and/or some crumbled feta

Heat olive oil/butter in large thick-bottomed pan over medium heat. Stir in the shallots, salt, red pepper flakes, and rosemary. Saute until shallots are tender - a couple minutes. Stir in the squash and potatoes, and cook until the squash starts to get a bit tender - a few minutes. Stir in the garlic, remove the sprig of rosemary, and then add the stock (or water) to the pot. Bring to a boil and then reduce the heat to a simmer, stirring occasionally until potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes.

Puree with a hand blender. If you like a silkier soup feel free to pour the soup through a strainer. Slowly whisk in the buttermilk, taste, and adjust the seasoning - adding more salt if needed. I like this soup topped with a bit of crumbled feta, some toasted almonds, a drizzle of olive oil, and a small pinch of red pepper - but it's perfectly good straight with no fuss on top.