

Version:1.0 StartHTML:0000000196 EndHTML:0000002799 StartFragment:0000002455
EndFragment:0000002763

SourceURL:file:///localhost/Volumes/SERVER/EDITORIAL/9-06-11/COLUMNS/barefoot%20farmer.doc @font-face { font-family: "Times New Roman"; }p.MsoNormal, li.MsoNormal, div.MsoNormal { margin: 0in 0in 0.0001pt; font-size: 12pt; font-family: "Times New Roman"; }table.MsoNormalTable { font-size: 10pt; font-family: "Times New Roman"; }div.Section1 { page: Section1; }

Gardens ebb and flow throughout the season. Each week is slightly different than the last one or the next one. Our CSA business requires providing a steady stream of produce, which can be a bit tricky. I have developed a few tricks to insure that 150 families are happy each week.

Version:1.0 StartHTML:0000000196 EndHTML:0000005913 StartFragment:0000002459
EndFragment:0000005877

SourceURL:file:///localhost/Volumes/SERVER/EDITORIAL/9-06-11/COLUMNS/barefoot%20farmer.doc @font-face { font-family: "Times New Roman"; }p.MsoNormal, li.MsoNormal, div.MsoNormal { margin: 0in 0in 0.0001pt; font-size: 12pt; font-family: "Times New Roman"; }table.MsoNormalTable { font-size: 10pt; font-family: "Times New Roman"; }div.Section1 { page: Section1; }

Successive planting works well for beans, summer squash and cucumbers. The first planting in mid-May is now history, it has been mown, plowed and replanted into a fall kale patch. A second planting of beans and cucumbers has also bit the dust, but those yellow squash keep coming. These are planted at the beginning of June.

In mid-July we plowed up the early lettuce and planted again. By the end of August the squash and cucumbers are putting our fruits, helped by a good mulch, but they need a rain. The beans will make soon, and in the meantime we're picking bushels of the purple pole beans, a Macon County heirloom given to us by Ed and Margaret Hix many years ago.

The typical summer weather, dry as a bone, makes gathering a few tons of vegetables hard to do in late August. Thank goodness for the vining crops. Cantalopes, or muskmelons, fill each basket in early August, followed quickly by watermelons. The former have no shelf life. We grow a very old one called Green Nutmeg, that Thomas Jefferson used to raise.

Watermelons, on the other hand, will hold for a month or more. So, we grow ten times more of them, and send 150 in each week during this "dry" period. We have extras to sell and give away at the shop in RBS.

Gardens

Tuesday, September 6, 2011

Another vining crop that ripens now is Winter Squash. They come in all sizes, shapes and colors, so we can offer a different one each week. We also have extra of these at the shop. If you'd like to try a Butternut, Acorn, Sweet Dumpling or Spaghetti squash, we can fix you up.

Tomatoes and peppers are in abundance now. I've put up 50 jars of sauce and want to do more. Okra is in season, too, and the herbs dill and sweet basil are still coming on strong. Our customers also get a bouquet of zinnias and sunflowers to brighten up their kitchens. They really brighten up the garden here.

Potatoes, onions and garlic are all in storage and go in the baskets every week. A late heirloom sweet corn came on, called Country Gentleman. The kernels are not in rows, but scattered across the cob, which gives it the nickname Shoepeg corn.

We are sowing crops now, in dry dusty dirt, for the fall garden. Besides kale, this includes turnips, radishes, bok choy, Chinese cabbage, mustard, collards, and other frost-hardy greens. The parsley, swiss chard and celery from early spring plantings look rough now, but will perk up when the weather cools down.

I'm having no luck getting lettuce to sprout, but I am going to try a new trick. The problem is the soil is too hot. So I plan to make some tray's of soil and put them in the air-conditioned cooler at the shop and see if I can coax them out of the ground. Then we'll have to transplant them into the garden later.

If you have ever wanted to see these gardens that I write about, and that you may see on the Volunteer Garden now, please come by now or sometime soon. The log cabin sits on a knoll overlooking the Long Hungry Valley, about a mile south of Highway 52, on Long Hungry road. Huge sugar maples shade the lawn, and everyone enjoys the peace, serenity and aromas wafting through the air. Life, like a garden, has an ebb and flow, and my future here is sadly uncertain.