

FIELD *notes*

UCSC Farm
Community Supported Agriculture
Ninth Harvest: 8/10/10 & 8/13/10



What's in the box?

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Lettuce, *Romaine, Tin Tin*
Salad Mix
Spinach, *Crocodile*
Broccoli Raab, *Sessantina Grossa*
Basil, *Aroma 2*
Beets, *Red Ace*
Carrots, *Nelson*
Cabbage, *Farao*
Beans, *Gold Rush and Bronco*
Strawberries, *Seascape & Albion*
Plums, *Satsuma*

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Crop Updates

from Liz Milazzo, Field Production Manager

While many parts of the country and world have been experiencing the hottest temperatures on record, we have had an extraordinarily cool summer. Low of fifty-five, high of sixty-five -- that's where our weather has been hovering the last couple of weeks. Chance of drizzle or patchy fog in the morning, clearing in the afternoon. Thank goodness for the afternoon clearings! What all this adds up to is great success with the cool weather crops, and lots of waiting on our "summer" crops. We will be having lovely broccoli and cabbage over the next month, lots of carrots and spinach, but unfortunately the tomatoes are not ripening with any speed. The sweet peppers are coming along (green fruits at this stage), but it looks now like we won't be harvesting eggplant this year, just too cold.

It has been a very humbling year in terms of gopher activity! Our best guess is that the population boom is attributable to the long, wet spring --and not getting to the trapping early enough. On the farm, we use "Cinch" brand metal spring traps (available at Probuild and on-line), and have been setting as many as 15 a day for several months now.

We will machine dig Yukon Gold potatoes week after this, and Yellow Finn potatoes in September. In addition to being a great labor savings, our single-row potato digger helps us really clean the field of tubers so we can effectively rotate the crops from one year to the next. When we hand dig, every little potato that we miss comes back to greet us next spring! We stop irrigation on the potatoes several weeks before digging to help the skins "set" and prevent damage in the digging. Yukon Gold reliably produces a 60 day crop of evenly sized, large tubers with an attractive yellow skin and wonderful flavor. Yellow Finn are also excellent in flavor, later maturing, higher yielding, and excellent keeping. They are attractive at a 100 day harvest, but the skins don't look so nice when dug early.

We are beginning to summer prune the blueberries now that they have finished fruiting. We appreciated hearing from many of you how much you enjoyed them. We have 1/10th of an acre planted in January of 2004 as a variety trial in concert with Co-op Extension. Yield data was collected in 2007, 2008, and 2009 on 15 varieties of highbush blueberries (13 varieties southern highbush, and 2 varieties northern highbush.) Blueberries need to grow in acidic conditions to be able to properly uptake sufficient iron and nitrogen to thrive. We maintain a low soil pH via injection of organic vinegar into the drip irrigation each week, enough to lower the pH of the water to between 4.5 and 5. That is accomplished with 1 part vinegar per 900 parts irrigation water.

Please enjoy the cool weather veggies!

Cabbage, while extremely low in calories, is a good source of many minerals, particularly potassium, and it is relatively high in vitamins A and C. Green varieties tend to have more vitamin A than red varieties and crinkled (Savoy) types tend to have more vitamin A than smooth types. Cabbage is grown and eaten in almost every country in the world. Fermented cabbage dishes were among the earliest preserved foods.

Cabbage goes with and into a myriad of menu items. Try steaming chopped cabbage for 5 minutes with a minced onion and then adding it to mashed potatoes. Or steam cabbage wedges 5 to 10 minutes and serve topped with butter or margarine and tamari, or olive oil, a splash of red wine vinegar and salt. Cabbage can be added to soups, stews, salads, omelets and rice or potato dishes.

From: *Fresh from the Farm & Garden Vol. 2*



Tomato Pollination *From The Gardener, Vol. 6 No. 2, Summer 1995 Holly Kennell, WSU Extension agent, King County*

Are the blossoms on your tomato plants at home dropping off without pollinating? Here's a note on tomato pollination from Washington State Extension: "Tomato flowers come complete with both male and female organs and are self-fertilizing. Pollen is shed with great abundance between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on dry, sunny days. Normally, the wind will pollinate the flower sufficiently. To ensure better pollination, gently shake or vibrate the entire tomato plant. The best time to do this is midday when it's warm, and the humidity is low. Optimum fruit set occurs within a very narrow night temperature range of between 60 and 70 degrees F. When tomato plants experience night temperatures lower than 55 degrees F or above 75 degrees F, interference with the growth of pollen tubes prevents normal fertilization. The pollen may even become sterile, thus causing the blossoms to drop. High daytime temperatures, rain, or prolonged humid conditions also hamper good fruit set. If the humidity is too low, the pollen will be too dry and will not adhere to the stigma. If the humidity is too high, the pollen will not shed readily. Pollen grains may then stick together, resulting in poor or nonexistent pollination."

Hawaiian Cabbage Salad

from: Fresh from the Farm & Garden Vol.2

Serves 8

- 4 cups thinly sliced cabbage
- 1 cup shredded carrot
- 1 cup minced sweet onion
- 2 cups pineapple chunks, fresh or canned
- juice of 1 lemon
- juice of 1 orange
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup olive, walnut, or hazelnut oil
- 1/2 cup toasted almonds or macadamia nuts, chopped

Toss all ingredients to combine in a large bowl. Chill for 1 hour before serving.

Pickled Radishes

from: Chow.com

Pickling radishes mellows their flavor so they're not as peppery as normal yet still have a great crisp texture, plus a sweet-and-sour edge.

- 1 bunch radishes
- 1/2 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon mustard seed
- 1/4 teaspoon coriander seed
- 1/4 teaspoon whole black peppercorns

- Rinse radishes and trim off their leafy tops. Holding the stem end, thinly slice radishes with a mandoline or a sharp knife. When you get close to the stem, stop slicing and discard the end. Place radishes in a heatproof, nonreactive bowl, and set in the refrigerator while making the brine.
- Combine red wine vinegar, sugar, water, salt, mustard seed, coriander seed, peppercorns, and bay leaf in a small saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Stir occasionally until sugar is dissolved.
- Remove from heat and let pickling brine cool for about 5 minutes. Remove radishes from the refrigerator and pour brine over them. Let cool at room temperature for 20 minutes; cover and refrigerate. Use to top burgers, sandwiches, or anything else that needs a little tarting up.

Traditional Strawberry Shortcake

from: Fresh from the Farm & Garden Vol. 2

Serves 8 to 10

Preheat oven to 425 degrees with rack in middle of oven.

Biscuits:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1 stick butter, chilled
- 2/3 to 3/4 cup half and half, milk, or heavy cream

Filling:

- 1 quart fresh strawberries
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2 cups whipped cream

To make biscuits:

- Using a food processor, pastry cutter, fork or fingertips, combine the flour, baking powder, salt and sugar.
- Cut butter into pieces and add to mixture. Cut in until mixture resembles coarse meal.
- With mixture in a large bowl, make a well and pour in milk or cream; combine with a fork until just mixed. Let dough stand for a minute and then turn out onto lightly floured surface. Knead 2 or 3 times until it holds together and is less sticky.
- Pat dough into a 6 x 12-inch rectangle about 3/4-inch thick. Cut into 8 biscuits with a floured 3-inch round cutter or cut dough into 8 to 10 rectangles.
- Transfer to a greased, foil-lined cookie sheet. Brush on a little more milk or cream and sprinkle with sugar if desired. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes until puffed and golden brown.

To prepare filling:

Rinse berries and drain well. Hull and slice berries into a bowl, sprinkle with sugar, and let stand at room temperature while shortcake is baking. Whip the cream with 2 or 3 tablespoons of sugar and a dash of vanilla, if desired, until soft peaks form.

To serve, split each biscuit and put bottom half on dessert plate. Spoon a little whipped cream on biscuit, then about 1/3 cup of berries, a little more whipped cream, then top with a tablespoon more berries and a dollop of whipped cream.