

McDougal's Farm LLC

What's Growing On!

June 21st, 2018

Farm News

On Monday it looked like the only things going into this week's box, were daisies and bull frogs. After five and half inches of rain, 40 mph winds and hail, your farm looked a bit beat up and soggy... but no structural damage, thank goodness. The sweet corn that we were so excited to see pop up, now sits under water, so we will see how long it can hold its breath. Some of the onion sets and sweet potatoes slips are also wading in water up to their necks....we think they both will be ok if the water soaks away quickly. Plants get their oxygen from little pockets of air trapped in the soil and if all those pockets are filled up with water too long, they drowned even though their heads may be above water level. Plants have a different perspective on things...it would be like us doing a handstand in a lake with our feet sticking out of the water. It's all fun until we run out of air.

In the beginning of the week we could have took the kayaks down most of our ditches...thank goodness Jerry was an excavator before he became a farmer. All our over-run, runs off to ponds that will hold it on our property for a dryer day. It's been two days now and things are already looking better...verdict is still out on the sweet corn.

These unpredictable Springs have us asking ourselves if we should put up a high tunnel. They are pricey (about \$7-10,000.), so we definitely would need a fundraiser to make it happen. There are grants out there for this kind of thing but in the ten years we have been doing this, we have never accepted a single government grant. Not sure if it is pride, paranoia or the small print, but we walk away every time. Right now we have 3 small hoop houses that limit your first Spring boxes to mostly greens, spinach and green onions because of their narrow design. A High Tunnel, (is much wider, holds the heat differently and looks more like our large greenhouse but with dirt floors) would allow us to put broccoli, kohlrabi, beets and even small carrots into some of the first boxes. This would also lessen the stress of making ends meet to fill those boxes the first three weeks and maybe extend our season longer. So what are your thoughts on this farm members? Do we stay with truly eating with the season? Or update with a fundraiser?

Special thanks to Holly and Mary for helping us dig ramps this week in the mosquito infested woods AND staying till the end. You rock!

Jerry and Maydene

What's in the Box

This week's box has a touch of Asian. In it you will find Bok Choy (heavy white stalks) more recipes at mcdougalsfarm.com, bunching greens or Tokyo Bekana, a bag of spinach, romaine and ramps, also known as wild leek. Ramps are similar to garlic but have a very crispy, apple like texture. They can be chopped and added to soups, salads, put on pizza or a roast! Ours will go into lasagna or on top of a taco salad. They are amazing in a creamy potato soup. Though chefs seek these out for their flavor, the small white bulbs that grow only in Mother Nature's most fertile soils, are packed with Vitamin A, Vitamin C, and the minerals Selenium and Chromium. When our non-rooting pigs, rooted up the whole pig pen, it was for the selenium found in the ramps...smart pigs. Ramps also keep well in the refrigerator. The Hakerei turnips meant to join this Asian box didn't make size in time...maybe next week:)

NOTES FOR FOLLOWING RECIPE: We made the following recipe but started with thinly sliced pork steak browned, seasoned and simmered with the ramps (6-8), instead of the garlic cloves. Besides the Tokyo Bekana we also chopped and added our Bok Choy, a few sliced carrots still from last years stores and some green onions. We also substituted Braggs Liquid Aminos for the soy sauce and served it on a bed of Jasmine rice...have fun with it. Mushrooms added to this would be the bomb. Hint: always cook your meat first then add your firmest veggies (like carrots) next to the pan, ending with the chopped leafy parts (that's right, use all the goodness)

Sautéed Tokyo Bekana, with Sesame, Ginger & Soy Sauce

4 tablespoons light sesame oil or olive oil
2 tablespoons white hulled sesame seeds
4 teaspoons peeled, minced ginger or ½ tsp. ground ginger
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 pounds Tokyo bekana (or any Asian green)
2 tablespoons soy sauce, divided
4 teaspoons rice vinegar

In a wide heavy sauté pan or wok over medium heat, warm the oil. Add the sesame seeds and stir until they pop and become fragrant. Add the ginger and garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Add the greens and 1 tablespoon soy sauce, raise the heat and cook, covered, for 1 minute. Uncover and sauté for 1 or 2 minutes more, until the greens are tender but still bright green. Stir in more soy sauce and vinegar to taste, and serve immediately.
Serves 4 as a side dish.

Wild & Wonderful Ramp Chowder

- 2 tablespoons bacon fat or other healthy cooking fat (butter, coconut oil, etc)
- 1 cup ramps roughly chopped, 1/2 cup bulbs & 1/2 cup greens

- 3 large russet potatoes peeled & diced, roughly 4 cups
- 4 cups chicken broth or vegetable broth
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

- Sea salt to taste

With Dairy:

- 2 cups heavy cream
- 2 cup sharp cheddar cheese

Dairy-Free:

- 2 cups coconut milk
- 1/4 cup nutritional yeast

Optional Toppings:

- crumbled bacon
- shredded cheese
- ramp greens

1. In a Dutch oven or other heavy bottom pot, over medium heat sauté ramps in bacon fat until soft.
2. Add potatoes and chicken broth, simmer (covered) for 20 minutes or until potatoes are cooked through.(NOTE: taste your broth while heating and season with sea salt, ideally the liquid that the potatoes are cooking in should be well salted, perhaps a little tiny bit over salted)
3. Reduce heat to low. Add heavy cream and shredded cheddar cheese, stir well to combine. Cook over low heat until everything is well incorporated, do not boil.
4. I prefer to let this soup sit for a little while, maybe 30 minutes to an hour then gently reheat before serving. The flavors deepen and it will thicken up a little more. If you prefer an even thicker soup, you can blend 1-2 cups of the soup in your blender until smooth then add it back into the pot.
5. Feel to garnish individual bowls with toppings of your choice: bacon, shredded cheese & ramp greens are my favorite. Enjoy!