

McDougal's Farm LLC

What's Growing On !

September 5th, 2019

Farm News

When the calendar flips to September, we start pulling up, tear down and planting winter cover crops. The cucumbers and the cucumber fences were the first to go this week. They had a good run this summer. The temperatures this weekend sound like they will be cool... forecast predicts low 40's for overnight lows. If temperatures drop any lower, we may have to bring in the remaining tomatoes from the field and store them inside. Ripening on the vine is always best, but with 600 plants and no way to cover...well, freezing on the vine is just too painful to watch. They will get a trailer ride in if necessary. The other two crops that are the first to take a digger when the weather gets cold, are the peppers and the flowers. The peppers will get a trailer ride in as well...but the flowers, now in their full glory, will just get a wish of good luck.

The cold may put an end to some of the tender things in the field, but the cold does activate a chain of events inside the plants and produce that gives us some sweet rewards. All summer long the plants have been making more glucose (energy) than they really need. They store all this extra energy away in form of starch. When the days get shorter and the temperatures get cooler, plants start converting all those starches back into useable energy.... sugar!....in short, sweeter squash, sweeter kale, sweeter carrots etc., more *energy* for us. Perfect for Fall time chores when the to-do list is long and the days are short...I guess there is always the option of eating our *energy* now and putting it in *our* "storage area" for later, but somehow unlike plants, once ours is put there, it tends to stay there...especially when it turns cold outside.

We started pulling onions last week and we are still working at it! Best onion crop ever! These will all be spread over tables with high ventilation to dry. This is called *curing* and helps the onions store longer. The garlic pulled a few weeks back, is *cured* now. The largest bulbs will be used for seed and will be replanted before September is over... if all goes as planned....Mother Nature loves it when we talk like we have a "plan". Must be her job to keep us humble.

It sure has been a beautiful season so far, thank you for sharing it with us.

Have a great weekend

Jerry and Maydene

What's in the Box

This week your box has a touch of Fall. In your box you will find the last of the **cucumbers**...probably ugly:), **Red and green kale**, **Gold potatoes**, **leek**, **onions**, **garlic**, **a thyme bouquet**, **Sweet Basil**, **cherry tomatoes**, **tomatoes**, **romaine**, and the last of the **cauliflower**...thank goodness.

Freezing cauliflower: wash, cut into bite size pieces, drop into boiling water for 4 minutes. Quickly remove and drop into ice cold water. Let sit until cooled. Drain and pack into freezer bags removing all the air. Label and date.

Potato Leek Soup from Jennifer Segal-Once Upon a Chef

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 4 large leeks, white and light green parts only, roughly chopped (about 5 cups)
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed
- 2 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and roughly chopped into 1/2-inch pieces
- 7 cups low sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 cup heavy cream
- Chives, finely chopped, for serving
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1. Melt the butter over medium heat in a large soup pot. Add the leeks and garlic and cook, stirring regularly, until soft and wilted, about 10 minutes. Adjust the heat as necessary so as not to brown.

2. Add the potatoes, broth, bay leaves, thyme, salt and pepper to pot and bring to a boil. Cover and turn the heat down to low. Simmer for 15 minutes, or until the potatoes are very soft.

3. Fish out the thyme sprig and bay leaves, then purée the soup with a hand-held immersion blender until smooth. (Alternatively, use a standard blender to purée the soup in batches; see note.) Add the heavy cream and bring to a simmer. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. If soup is too thin, simmer until thickened. If it's too thick, add water or stock to thin it out. Garnish with fresh herbs if desired.

4. **Note:** If using a standard blender to purée the soup: be sure not to fill the jar more than halfway; leave the hole in the lid open and cover loosely with a dishtowel to allow the heat to escape; and pour blended soup into a clean pot.

Kale Caesar Pasta Salad

- 1 pound farfalle (bow tie) pasta
- 1 pint small tomatoes such as grape or cherry
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 bunch kale stemmed and chopped
- 1 16 ounce bottle Creamy Caesar Dressing

- 4 ounces Parmesan cheese grated
1. Bring a pot of water to a boil and season with kosher salt. Cook the pasta according to package directions or until al dente, rinse, drain, and cool. Place in a large bowl and set aside.
 2. Meanwhile, preheat an oven or toaster oven to 400° degrees. Place the tomatoes on a small baking tray, drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and toss lightly. Season with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper and roast until the tomatoes have softened and started to burst, about 12-15 minutes.
 3. Stem and chop the kale into small pieces and add to the pasta with the cherry tomatoes. Pour about half of the bottle of Caesar dressing onto the salad and toss gently, adding more dressing if desired. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and season with freshly ground black pepper. Refrigerate for an hour before serving.

Kale Chips

- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 -2 teaspoon salt (this makes them pretty salty- you may want to reduce the amount, then sprinkle the chips with salt a)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 bunches kale, rinsed with stems removed

Directions

1. Cut kale into 2 to 3 inch pieces.
2. Mix vinegar, oil, and salt in a large bowl then add kale and mix by hand.
3. Try to get all the leaves covered.
4. Place on baking sheets (I like to use parchment paper for easy clean up) and bake at 350 F until they are crispy.
5. After about 20 minutes, if it looks like they are not sizzling a bit or getting a little crispy, turn up the heat to 400°F.
6. Time for baking varies depending on the size of your chips and desired crispness.
7. The outer edges cook quicker than the pieces from near the stem.