



Medford summer school group planting celery following a farm tour on June 20.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As we are packing another week of hard-to-get-clean greens coming from our field due to those heavy rains a week ago now, we joke about the dirt contributing to our immune systems. After a few gritty bites of spinach, we wondered if it could be true. Does eating dirt actually improve our health?

A quick search on the internet and apparently there is a movement called the "Eat Dirt Movement." Yes it is real and apparently people are curing a whole host of health issues simply by eating dirt and the soil-borne organisms within. These organisms enter our bodies both from unclean food and unclean hands. They aid the body in absorption of specific nutrients and antioxidants and apparently it is changing people's lives. Recent research has shown that exposing children to a diverse range of microbes early in life, particularly those found in the soil where they live, reduces their risk of allergies and asthma and strengthens their immune system. Admittedly, we already suspected this to be true but never read the research.

When a school group was on the farm on Wednesday, we mentioned that most herbicides kill the micro-organisms in the soil rendering it life-less and no longer able to breakdown nutrients or make them available to the plant. Growing sustainably, we need our plants in prime condition to fight off diseases and pests, so our soil has to be in peak health for us to make a living. Not-to-mention chemical residue in our food deteriorates our body's microbiome, which breaks down our nutrients during digestion not unlike what happens in soil. When you realize how many illnesses are linked to inadequate gut bacteria, this should be a serious concern. Perhaps most importantly, our microbiome plays a role in our immune system. It is lesser known that it also influences gene expression. The scientific understanding of biological functions is becoming more and more complex every day!

So the take-away we are pondering today is that the latest and greatest "superfood" is in fact dirt. The five-second rule is in effect to make sure we are allowed to consume that pound of dirt annually. And your dirty greens are providing food for thought.

Capitalizing on the latest superfood,

eric + rebecca

IN THE SHARE

Cucumber

Radish

Garlic Scapes

Spinach

Red Tinged Winter Lettuce

Rainbow Swiss Chard

Scallions

Fern Dill aka Dill Weed

Broccoli *small shares only*

Snap Peas *large shares only*

Cherry Tomatoes *large shares*

FARM DINNER

There are only 20 seats left at the farm-to-table dinner on Friday, July 13. If you would like a seat, please let us know asap.

FRESH CHICKEN

Our pastured/non-GMO broiler chickens will be available in mid-July. Our chickens spend their days relaxing on free-range foraging on insects and greens. This meat is so much more flavorful than store bought. We supplement with local, non-GMO certified grain.

If you are interested in purchasing our farm fresh chicken, we will have about 100 birds to sell. Birds will be processed whole with the neck unless you let us know differently. Giblets available upon request. Reply to a farm email or call Rebecca at 715-905-0431 for more information or to order.

FARM-TO-FORK

This week, find our food at:

Hill of Beans, Ogema

Forest Springs, Westboro

Uncommon Ground, Medford

CUCUMBERS

As was the case with the last week's peas, we have a small planting of early cucumbers in the high tunnel that have started producing. There will be larger numbers coming in a few weeks when the field cukes catch up. For now, we will share with you what we have even if it is only one.

The two shorter, smooth-skinned varieties are Manny and Socrates. Both are parthenocarpic meaning they do not require pollination and will have seedless fruit if grown under insect excluding covers. The longer, dark green variety is called Tasty Green, a slender Asian burpless variety with sweet flavor. We choose varieties that mature quickly and have powdery mildew resistance, a disease that has impacted us in the past.

For us, cucumbers are one of those vegetables that has such an incredible flavor fresh from the field, we don't buy it from the store in the off-season as it can't compare.

RED-TINGED WINTER

Each variety of lettuce is a bit different than the last and we would love to hear back from our members what you think of the flavors and textures. Are some sweeter? Others more bitter? Longer-lasting or better for tossing?

This week we have the last variety from our second succession planting. It is called red-tinged winter. As the name implies, it is really great at growing in cold weather. In early May when we seeded this planting, we were reflecting on the cold spring one year ago. What a difference!

The reason we love it is for the crisp, airy texture almost like an iceberg-type but in a leaf lettuce. It has nice loft. As with all of the greens coming out of our field right now, remove from the stem and wash extra well as it is very dirty.

Savor the season

BROCCOLI

SIDE SHOOTS OR HEADS

We have only a few heads coming from the Organic Seed Alliance trial plots, but side shoots are starting in the high tunnel broccoli you received week one and two. Whatever you receive, remember to check for green cabbage worm up in the florets, especially if you are entertaining guests. An overnight in a plastic bag and/or soak in salty water can help drive them out.

If you are fortunate enough to receive shoots, please don't discard the stems or leaves. A quick taste test will reveal just how much sweeter the stems are than the florets. But they might require an extra minute of cooking.



SWISS CHARD

Chard is the edible leaf and stem portion of a plant very closely related to the beet. In fact, the part of the plant above the soil looks identical. The only difference is that there is no round, edible root. This means chard is very healthy for you, loaded with vitamins A, K and C and 13 different antioxidants! Don't skip this one folks.

We eat a lot of chard fresh on salads and in wraps, but we also recommend sautéing chard in butter with a little salt and pepper. If you have to mask the flavor to get your picky eater to try it, finely chop and add to veggie rice, orzo or barley pilaf with some fresh garlic scapes.

CHERRY TOMATOES

These are tasty. What more can we say? The yellow variety is sun-gold and the orange/red variety is a cross of sungold x chocolate called sun-chocola. We decided we had room to tend one tray of tomatoes way back in February in hopes of super early fruits and alas, it has worked out well. As they sat in the living room window over the winter, only one plant succumb to a nerf gun in mid-March.

DILL WEED/FERN DILL

Dill is a unique plant in that both its leaves and seeds are used as a seasoning. Dill's green leaves are wispy and fernlike and have a soft, sweet taste. Dill's name comes from the old Norse word dilla which means "to lull." This name reflects dill's traditional uses as both a carminative stomach soother and an insomnia reliever.

Fresh dill should always be stored in the refrigerator either wrapped in a damp paper towel or with its stems placed in a container of water. Since it is very fragile, even if stored properly, dill will only keep fresh for a few days. Dill can be frozen, either whole or chopped. Dill can also be dried and stored in airtight containers.

HAVE A VEGGIE QUESTION?

Odds are if you've got a question, someone else probably has to same one. Don't be afraid to ask!

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