

June 26 2013

Open in kid's garden: Snap peas (eat the whole pod), beets, carrots, small summer squash, lettuce. Remember, just a few per child.

Also open now: Chard crop 2. It is just past the first crop, on the right.

Closed to rejuvenate: Kale. (collards still open). We will be spraying some liquid seaweed and fish emulsion and letting it get bushy again. Everyone did a really good job of picking, which means that the main stem is intact and still enough leaves left to feed the plant so it can make a rapid recovery! Please don't sneak under the barrier – even organic fertilizer is not for human consumption. We will keep it closed at least 3 weeks, depending on how fast it grows back.

When will Basil be ready? Soon! Look for signs and check the crop list in the store.

In the Shares: snap peas for everyone. Do not shell – this type is meant to be eaten pod and all. It was pouring rain when we were picking the peas, so may have some blossom petals stuck to them – just rinse them off. Beets – the first crop has ugly leaves but good beets! When do we get carrots again? Next week!

Flowers soon! Buds are forming on some of the varieties, and depending on weather, will have enough to start picking soon (I think we should have an abbreviation for that, like we do with LOL, etc. “DOW” would mean “depending on weather” and save me a lot of typing) Anyway, want to talk about the picking coming up before it happens. How we pick makes a huge difference in how many flowers or leaves we get on a plant throughout the season. For flowers (and basil!), the best way is to pick the stem down to the top of a leaf node.

New stems will grow out from each leaf node, hence more flowers/leaves in the long run. This is true for most flowers like Zinnias, Sunflowers, Dahlias. On flowers, picking a stem about 8-12” is good, and pay attention to cutting above a leaf node. Kids learn this well, and its an interesting lesson in plant biology – they will come back and notice the new flower stems forming and then blooming. I've even heard young ones admonishing their parent for picking wrong!

When we get to basil picking time, snipping off little stems of basil above a node will cause the plant to get real bushy with lots more basil for everyone. Other plants are different – like the cilantro and dill for example. Cutting clumps an inch or two from the ground causes it to grow whole new clumps, as you can see happening when you look at it now. Eventually, it will flower, and then it is time to move to the second crop which hopefully will be ready.

Field News: I've seen a lot more people taking the time to enjoy walking the whole farm. The saying goes that corn should be “knee high by the fourth of July”. I think this means Iowa or somewhere, but we have it! The second crop of corn got transplanted only a couple of weeks ago, so it is only about 6”. Check out the tomatoes – they are growing so fast from week to week. It's “fun” (oh aching back!) to keep up with the pruning and tying. Takes about 6 hours per hoop house, and then have to do it all over again the next week. The summer squash is starting to set little squashes, and getting into it's heavy blooming phase, I suspect the winter squash and pumpkins will not be far behind.

So PLEASE, **no picking of blossoms on either the pumpkin or squash plants!** No exceptions! Bees are in short supply for farmers everywhere, and we need all the blossoms, even the male ones. Besides, there is no U-Pick sign, right?