BROOKFIELD FARM SHOPTALK

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June 20, 2020
Distribution Week #3

WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK

Getting Heavier!

Zucchini & Yellow Squash: It is time to eat zoodles of zquash! A mix of green (zucchini), yellow (multipik), green-tipped yellow (zephyr), and flying saucer yellow (patty pan), squash to get the season off to a heavy start.

Scallions: Spring Onions, Green Onions, Bunching Onions, or whatever you want to call them. They are a good substitute for onions and leeks (which aren't ready until August & September). Use the entire plant to spice up a stir fry or dress a salad. Also, great grilled!! Very mild. We should have a good supply of these through mid- August. This variety has a purple bottom - fancy!!

Green Kale: Nutritious and delicious, this crop is tender and delicious in early summer - good raw or cooked - we have lots!

WHAT'S ON THE WAY

CHINESE CABBAGE
BABY BUNCHING BEETS
FENNEL

BULK PRODUCE

GREEN KALE: $2 / LB
LETTUCE: $2 / HD

to purchase bulk produce:
in the farm shop:
just come on in and see the farm shopkeeper

in the Boston area:
visit our website:
https://www.brookfieldfarm.org/bulk-produc

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE FARM

To The Pipes!!

After some almost-decent-barely-enough-rain last week, we saw the forecast and knew what was in store for us: after a brief hiatus, it was time to get back to the pipes and move some water.

The week started with some cold weather which slowed down plant transpiration (and strawberry ripening), so we focused on harvesting and cultivating and finishing up spring projects (covering the compost piles, reskinning the hay house, etc).

On Tuesday we set up pipes through the parsnips to get them them to germinate, and by Wednesday the temps soared into the upper 80s and we settled into our general work life - harvest, irrigate, pull weeds - rinse and repeat. With very little moisture in the air we can keep our plants very happy as long as we bring moisture to their roots (plant diseases almost all thrive on leaf wetness). So when Marlee got the drip irrigation going in the zukes, and then the weeder crew pulled all of the nutsedge, Ben was able to lead a crew to a burgeoning bumper crop of new squash by Friday morning.

We know the drill (remember 2016?!); When the water stops falling, stay ahead of the pipe moving game. Right now Ben is pulling double-duty, running the harvest in the mornings, and orchestrating the water flow in the afternoons. Like all farmers in a drought - he's getting tired, but many of the plants look simply incredible.....with the exception of the the East Field at Small One's Farm. This field doesn't have a big water source. So we are limited to using drip irrigation, which is how we always water the eggplants and peppers (they look happy). But the Kale, Collards, and Cabbages looked very thirsty by Tuesday and Karen encouraged us to rig up some drip for the kale and collards, which seemed to do the trick. I thought the Chinese Cabbage was close enough to harvest that it wouldn't need any water. WRONG! By Friday, it was obvious they were in trouble, so I changed plans, scrounged some more drip lines, and Anna and Marlee battled the dust to get those almost-heads something to drink. The jury's out on that one - we'll keep you posted. Okay, gotta go move some water.....

We hope you enjoy the harvest,

Your Farmer,
Dan (for Karen, Abbe, Ben, Jake, Joseph, Marlee, Serena, and Anna)

Summer Squash Frittata with Goat Cheese and Dill

2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 lb summer squash or zucchini, grated (~ 4 c)
2 garlic scapes, minced
Salt and pepper to taste
8 eggs
2 oz goat cheese, crumbled (about 1/2 c)
1/4 c chopped dill

Recipe from The New York Times

Heat 1 Tbsp oil over med heat in a heavy skillet. Add zucchini and garlic. Cook, stirring, until zucchini begins to wilt, ~ 3 min. Season with salt and pepper, and remove from heat. Beat eggs in a lg bowl with goat cheese. Stir in zucchini and dill. Heat the remaining olive oil in the skillet. Pour in the egg mixture & distribute to fill evenly over the surface. Turn the heat to low, cover and cook 10 min. The bottom should have a golden color. Meanwhile, heat the broiler. Uncover the pan and place under the broiler until the top browns very slightly and puffs under the broiler). Cut into wedges. Serve hot, warm, or cold.

HOW WE FARM

The Spray Rig

I always feel a bit strange when the spray rig is riding around the farm like it was on Friday. It just seems odd to be running the sprayer around an organic farm. The sprayer stands as one of the ultimate symbols of conventional farming - disparaging comments about "nozzle-heads" spraying the crops to protect from weeds and bugs. But, using biological materials and applying them through water is practically as old as farming (think manure slurry applied to crops in ancient China, etc), and spraying continues as an important part of organic farming as well.

This week marked an important milestone on the farm - the emergence of the young larvae of the Colorado Potato Beetle (CPB). The striped adult beetle has babies (larvae) which grow and have a voracious appetite for potato plants. If we did nothing they would surely eat our entire crop. We deal with the beetle first by crop rotation. By moving our potatoes (and other related plants in the Solanaceous family - tomato, eggplants, and peppers - the "deadly nightshades") each year we make the beetles search for our plants instead of having their dinner table set for them. Then we scout the fields. If the populations are significant (more than 10% of our plants have larvae) we control them with a bacteria called spinosad. This is a natural bacteria which was originally found in the Caribbean by a vacationing biologist at an abandoned rum distillery, and is now multiplied in fermentation tanks. When eaten by the potato beetle larvae, it causes them to lose the ability to eat (then they starve and die). It is specific to these larvae - so no other insects are killed in the process. It also breaks down into harmless elements after a few hours. So when we find our populations in the potato (and eggplant) field to be above the threshold, we will spray the bacterium on the plants. We may have to do this again a week later and then the solanaceous crops are usually all set.

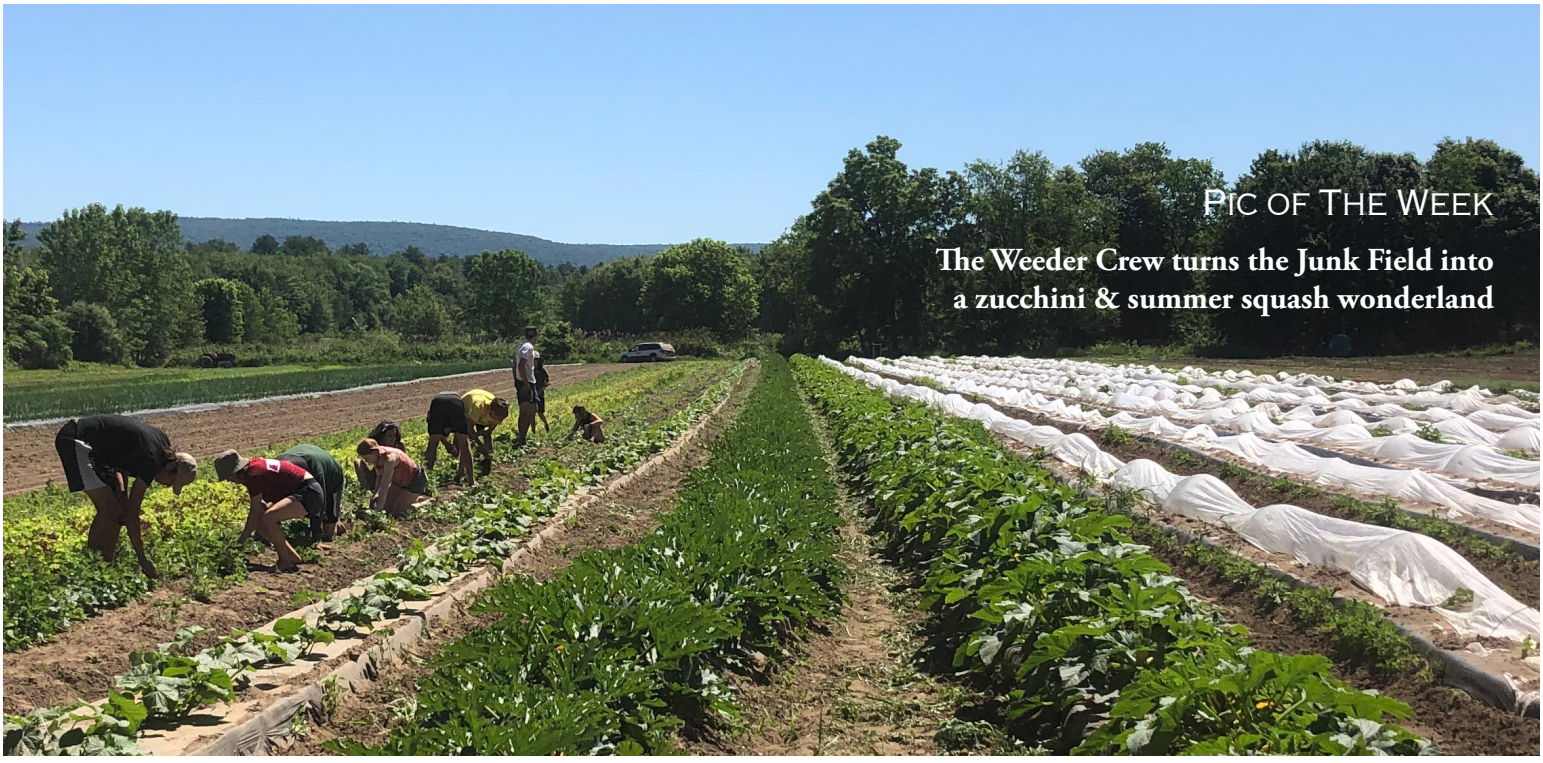
The other milestone we have reached this week is that many of our plants have grown and are now standing tall in the field. This is the time for us to use horn silica. Introduced by Rudolf Steiner in the early 1920s (as part of what later became known as "Biodynamic Agriculture), this substance helps plants photosynthesize and convert nutrients into plant tissue. It is quartz crystal that is crushed and put in a cow horn. Then the horn is buried in the ground during the summer months. When the horn is dug up, the silica is diluted in water and stirred for an hour. That material is then sprayed on all plants that are more than 4" tall. In the spring we usually spray one other Biodynamic preparation (horn manure) which helps to stimulate the life-giving element in the soil.

So the next time you see one of us running the sprayer through the fields, hopefully we'll know, that you know that we're just helping our plants along a bit, using materials that are at worst harmless, and at best perhaps a bit useful.

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

4th of July Distribution

On-Farm Distribution will remain *unchanged*
Saturday July 4, 8am -1pm



PIC OF THE WEEK

The Weeder Crew turns the Junk Field into a zucchini & summer squash wonderland