



## Notes From The Field - Kelly Carey, Down to Earth Organic Farm Reflections on Mid-season at "hump" time.

It is the end of July and that means a lot to organic vegetable farmers on the eastern shore. At Down to Earth Organic Farm, it marks the midpoint of the harvest season in the field. Our first seedlings and peas start in February but we don't harvest our first crop until the second week of May. This means a lot has been in the ground, harvested and is long gone; it means a lot is being harvested right now; and it means fall crops are being seeded weekly.

The last few weeks of July and the first few weeks of August tend to be hump time for farmers. First of all, it is incredibly hot and humid and we have more to do during this time than other times. We are mowing and tilling in finished crops. We are harvesting the bulk of the summer crops including tomatoes, beans, peppers, eggplant, and various greens. We are also seeding fall crops to make sure they harvest at the correct time. All the while weeding, feeding and caring for what is already in the ground.

These few weeks are what makes the summer for me. No matter how much sleep I get, I am still exhausted. No matter how much seeding we do, I know there is more to do next week. No matter how much weeding we do, we know that next week we will be weeding what we seeded last week. It seems never ending for a few weeks, but we know it ends; and it usually ends sooner than we want it to end! Every once in a while I daydream about December and January when my day consists of finishing this book so I can start that one. Then I remember that in between books I will be wishing for the end of July when there are fresh veggies everywhere and I have more to do than I can imagine.

I love it because we are picking my favorite veggies - tomatoes, eggplant, and lima beans. And we are seeding my other favorite veggies - winter squash, broccoli, and kale. Its so great to watch tomatoes turn red or orange or green or purple and kale and cabbage pop out of the ground and to go and pick a lima bean and shell it and eat it right there in the field.

My farm hand and I get dirty and tired and sweaty all day long. And we laugh and joke and goof off all day long. Because we know this is the time that we planned for in January and worked towards for five months. Its so hot there is not enough water in the water bottle - however, there is plenty in the hose to squirt each other and keep ourselves going for one more day. We get a lot of work done and have a blast doing it.

Because we know in January we will crave a 98 degree day of hauling pound after pound of tomatoes, picking lima beans for a few hours and maybe even hand weeding a row or two of carrots. These are the days.

- Kelly

*Down to Earth Organic Farm*

### Special Offer to CSA Members

Hello Jay,

*Thank you for your support as we build our CSA. Your advice is really appreciated.*

*We have a special for CSA members. Blades Orchard is offering CSA members **Canning Peaches for \$15/box**. This is between 20 and 25 pounds of peaches. We ask that members **bring a container** to carry their prize peaches home. We do have a fruit box that members can borrow. **We require a \$10 deposit for the boxes** when the peaches are picked up.*

***Note:** The peaches in the box will be multiple varieties and are considered seconds (a little less pretty than the retail peaches). They are delicious, and we look forward to sharing them with everyone.*

*Sincerely,*

*Lynda and Stephen Blades*

*Blades Orchard*

*Caroline County*

*As previously noted, Blades Orchard products are not organic, instead using Integrated Pest Management, in an effort to minimize the chemicals used and to use environmentally friendly products. -Ed.*

During the amazing peak of tomato season last year, we took advantage, and, in one evening, processed several gallons of the amazing "love apples". The gallon zip-lock bags, filled with the blanched and skinned tomatoes, all the air removed, laid flat in a stack for freezing, lasted all winter and into the spring while the new crop formed on the vines.

One of the 1-1.5 inch thick packages can be used as the base for many stews and soups, but one of my favorite uses is as the starting point for pasta sauce that may include almost any fresh vegetable you may have around. We don't seed or attempt to reduce the liquid from the tomatoes, so starting with the frozen package means you need other ingredients to give body and texture to the sauce. On the theory that the liquid from the tomatoes is rich in the nutrients and taste that make this fruit say "summer-time" in your mouth, I use the package just as it is, or you can, of course, start with fresh tomatoes.

The other ingredients are somewhat fungible. Herbs are essential, and Verna and I are in agreement that the basil makes the dish. I pile it on. Garlic is another must-have, and, since we are partial to food that causes a bit of a commotion in your mouth, our bumper crop of jalapeño peppers comes in handy. One secret to adding body without calories is using fresh squash - yellow or zucchini - grated - to the mixture. Our herb garden contributes onion or garlic chives, pineapple basil, and parsley, and the banana peppers have been particularly good this year.

## Fresh Vegetable Pasta Sauce

- 3 cups fresh or fresh-frozen tomatoes
- 1 medium zucchini or yellow squash, grated
- 1 medium chopped onion
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 5-6 cloves of garlic to taste
- 1 cup chopped fresh basil leaves
- 2-3 banana peppers and/or 1 green pepper, chopped
- 2-3 chopped jalapeño peppers, remove seeds as desired to moderate the hotness.
- 1/2 cup fresh or reconstituted dried mushrooms

## In Your Share\* This Week

**Squash  
Cucumbers  
Tomatoes  
Eggplant  
Peppers  
Garlic  
Cantalopes or Watermelon**

\*Share makeup is best estimate at publication time.

Note: For preservation tips and additional recipes, visit the CSA website at <http://www.providentorganicfarm.com/>

- Pasta (spaghetti noodles, rigatoni, tortellini, fusilli, penne )
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Salt to taste

In a large wok or skillet, start with the chopped onions. Sauté in a little oil, along with the peppers. Add the pulped and peeled tomatoes and bring to a simmer. Chop and shred the herbs and add to the mixture, along with the mushrooms and grated squash. Use a garlic press or finely mince the garlic. Simmer until the flavors are well-mixed, and add salt and pepper to taste. If the sauce is too watery, mix in a little masa flour or cornstarch to thicken. You want it to have enough viscosity to cling to the pasta. Cook the pasta according to package directions. This sauce is particularly good with tortellini. Top with grated parmesan or Romano. The grocery stores are stocking some new varieties of organic pasta, including some rice-based types whose texture is a bit more robust than the more traditional brands of dried pasta. - Ed.

**Preparation & Cook Time:** 45 minutes.

## Message from Mike Wilczynski, W.FARMS

I will be taking your orders now for the September harvest. We will have halves and quarters available. The **half pork** is estimated weight of 100 lbs and the **quarter pork** is estimated weight of 50 lbs. All butchering is custom cut to your specifications, vacuum sealed, and labeled by cut, and is U.S.D.A. inspected. This includes any curing and smoking. All orders require a deposit, with the balance due when you receive delivery of your pork.

Contact: SIMPLEMANSKI@AOL.COM  
CELL: 443-235-0277