

Community Supported Garden at La Vista

THE WEEKLY WEEDER

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COMING INTO THE TIME OF FROST

A farm or garden never escapes the weather. In fact, once we plant, sow, weed, trellis and support our crops, everything else you see is a reflection of the



weather. A healthy plant is healthy because of the weather. A diseased plant is often diseased because of the weather. How a crop tastes is a reflection of the weather. Soil development is ultimately driven by the weather, all things being equal.

It seems like yesterday

we were dealing with heat and on-again-off-again rain. But it's been more than a month and a half since the temperature hit 90°F. Now we are officially in the frost season, and the BIG QUESTION is when that first frost will occur. We flirted with a frost in the forecast over the weekend, but escaped it for now.

Frost is the big event of Autumn. Overnight everything changes. Obviously, frost signals the end of all our warm season crops like tomatoes, peppers, squash and beans. Other crops, however, are improved. I don't know exactly why, but the cabbage family improves with frost. Carrots and parsnips improve with frost. Even leeks improve with frost, although the particular conditions we face in our climate necessitate harvest of leeks way in advance of frost. Frost signals the coming of the end of the growing season, for better or worse.



Before the first frost it's critical that all our crops are established and healthy.

WHAT'S IN YOUR SHARE?



– Swiss Chard

– Beets

– Lettuce

– Celery

– Peppers



– Hakurei Turnips

– Bok choy

– Cilantro

– Salad Mix

– Radishes



– Collards & Kale

– Broccoli Raab

– Spinach

– Tomatoes

– Squash

and U-Pick green beans and herbs, as long as they last

WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

Easy Kale and Tomatoes

from: *From Asparagus to Zucchini*)

Recipes like this are easily converted to vegetarian by replacing the meat with tofu, beans, or simply leaving it out.

- 1 large bunch of kale, stems removed and leaves coarsely chopped
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- water or tomato juice
- olive oil
- salt and pepper



Place kale, tomatoes, and onions in pot with just enough water or tomato juice to keep them from burning while it cooks. Cook over medium heat until kale is tender, about 20 minutes. Add a little olive oil, plus salt and pepper to taste, before serving. This is also



Spinach, for instance, can easily survive and even sweeten up after a frost, but it won't grow much after it's been frozen. Carrots, too, won't grow after a freeze, although they will sweeten up. This is why we rush to get all of our planting and sowing done before the middle of September, or even much earlier, as is the case for beets, turnips, rutabaga, and carrots.



It's also important that our crops not get too cold. The kind of frost we like is just below freezing, but if we get into the low-to-mid twenties, or if temperatures hover at around the frost point for an extended time, then even our hardy crops will suffer. This is why we use the white row cover you will see in the fields, which warms and protects the crops underneath by a few degrees. We've already covered the more sensitive lettuces, bok choy, and salad greens, some of which still have some growing to do. Row cover is a fact of life in the fall. Managing row cover is not our favorite task, but it extends our season by protecting our crops, and we like that.

When will be the first frost? No matter what or when, you will see and taste it reflected in your food. The seasons change and the type and taste of the food we get changes, too.



great with chopped dried tomatoes or home-canned tomatoes instead of fresh.

UPCOMING EVENTS

** Our next workday will be our Garlic Planting Saturday, November 7 at 9 a.m., weather dependent
** Annual Harvest Party, Sunday, Nov. 15, 2009, 4 - 6 p.m.



LOOKING AHEAD

Carrots and scallions will return again, soon, as will cabbage and Chinese cabbage.



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The ***Community Supported Garden at La Vista*** is one branch of the **Oblate Ecological Initiative**, a ministry of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The other branch, the ***Ecological Learning Center***, offers seasonal celebrations, retreats, presentations, discussion groups and a week-long Earth Literacy course. For more information visit www.lavistaELC.org.

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