

Heat as the key to sustainability

The extreme heat we've faced poses many challenges for a farm, but it's also a blessing in how it reveals the work of Nature and teaches many priceless lessons on sustainability.

The hard part is that growing crops in this weather is a challenge that, in some cases, becomes futile as the heat continues. Early spinach and salad mix, which were looking fantastic in late July, have been lost in August. Radish and turnip leaves are burnt around the edges. Cilantro and dill seed remain dormant in the hot soil. I fret over these losses.

However, the heat of August is putting us in a fabulous position to face the challenges of the future. Remember last year? Remember the successive July heat waves and the drought? Last years extreme summer taught lessons that made this year much better. By going through the excessive heat last July, I learned how to irrigate more efficiently, to improve the timing and quantity of plantings, and to select crop varieties more likely to survive these extreme conditions.

During this past 3-week heat wave, I've watched the fields to see what works and what doesn't. As the temperature approached 100 degrees, nature could not hide. Many crops were just fine. Some crops weren't fine at all. Some crops were left on their own, in hot, dry soil and did fine. Some crops received frequent irrigation and did not survive. You don't get this kind of information in great weather. This information is gold.

Some crops work well together in this heat. For instance, trellised tomatoes throw late afternoon shade on the crops nearby. The leeks and celery are on the edge of the East Field, near the woods, where they don't see the sun until 10:30 in the morning. Hot peppers absolutely LOVE this weather.

If our climate is getting hotter and drier, then our farm must adapt. I take this information and adapt the future field design to work better in these conditions. I choose better crop varieties. I design an improved irrigation schematic. I learn to wait on some plantings and sow other crops much sooner.

Change won't happen overnight. A heat wave the likes we've seen recently will work its wonders as we move forward. It forces a continued diligence toward making farming work in a sustainable, vibrant fashion. With patience and respect for the elements, farming will adapt and thrive into the future.

Upcoming Events

Farm Work Day, Saturday, Sept. 1 at 8am
Shareholder Gathering, Sept. 9

Come learn and talk about what's
going on at the farm!

What's in Your Share

Tomatoes, Eggplant, Potatoes, Fresh onion,
Summer Squash, Cucumbers, Basil,
Peppers

Green Beans, Okra, Basil, Saucing
Tomatoes and Cherry tomatoes are
OPEN...

What's For Dinner:

Garden Vegetable and Pasta Salad

1 medium **eggplant**, unpeeled, cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ inch pieces
4 cups **summer squash/zucchini**, cubed and steamed
10 **cherry tomatoes**

$\frac{1}{2}$ medium **bell pepper**

8 oz. fettuccine, or linguine, cooked, room temperature

Basil Vinaigrette (*as follows*):

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup balsamic vinegar

1 Tbsp olive oil

*2 Tbsp finely chopped **fresh basil leaves***

*2 Tbsp finely chopped **parsley***

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp pepper

Mix all ingredients; refrigerate until serving time)

2 oz feta cheese

Heat oven to 400 degrees. Spray both sides of eggplant with cooking spray; arrange on cookie sheet. Bake until eggplant is tender, about 15 minutes. Cool.

Combine eggplant, remaining vegetables, and linguine in large bowl; pour basil vinaigrette over and toss. Sprinkle with cheese.

Looking Ahead

Fall greens and roots are germinating very well, finally!

Although the August heat will likely interrupt the flow of weekly abundance for a couple weeks, once the fall crops come on, we'll forget the heat ever happened! Count on greens, greens, greens in about 3 weeks, then sweet potatoes, celery, leeks...