



# News from the Farm



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## When The Nose Knows

THIS hot weather brings concerns about safe handling of our foods, whether on the farm or in the kitchen.

The nose is a confusing tool, especially when the mouth is involved. Steaming broccoli smells offensive, yet tastes wonderful and heaven knows that sauerkraut cooking can send you right out of the house and onto the street. How about Limburger Cheese?

So can your nose be trusted to detect whether food is good or bad?

"It's a learned response to know whether food is spoiled," according to Dr. Alan Hirsch, director of the Smell & Taste Treatment and Research Foundation. "Does cheese smell so bad because it's spoiled or is that the way cheese is supposed to smell?"

Three or four percent of our genes, Hirsch notes, are related to smell. The amount is indicative of the importance of smell to

the evolution of our species.

"We had to be able to smell if food was bad or not. Otherwise we would get sick and die from it," said Hirsch.

The senses can discern some obvious signs of decay. So, first, use your nose. Food spoilage organisms, including yeasts, molds and bacteria, can give off odors warning you that they are present. Then observe the color and texture of the food. Off colors, unusually slippery or slimy surfaces, or an unexpected fuzzy appearance are a signal that something is not right, too.

But our senses are not equipped to detect pathogenic bacteria. This sort of organism causes disease, sometimes generically termed "food poisoning." As food handlers, we all must use our "nose," but also our eyes to determine if food is safe to eat.

I may sound like a CD with a scratch in it, but



keep working surfaces in the kitchen clean, properly cook and store foods, wash hands frequently, especially between handling uncooked meats or fish and vegetables or fruits. These good practice to reduce pathogenic bacteria and the possibility of contaminated food.

And there is one more sense to use when you are preparing and serving food... common sense. If you have any doubt, a dollar's worth of suspicious food is a small loss compared to the specter of food poisoning.

### Special points of interest:

- When The Nose Knows
- What is in your share box this week?
- Tomato Time
- And now... Meet the Basils
- Questions and Answers
- Recipes using this week's produce

## What is in your share box this week?

New potatoes  
Basil  
Cured Garlic\*  
Baby leeks  
Lettuce head  
Tomatoes  
Cucumbers  
Dill

Baby Beets with greens  
Fresh onion

**A few notes:** **New potatoes** are freshly dug and their skins are thin and very tender. They must be refrigerated in a humid environment. Scrub, but do not peel.

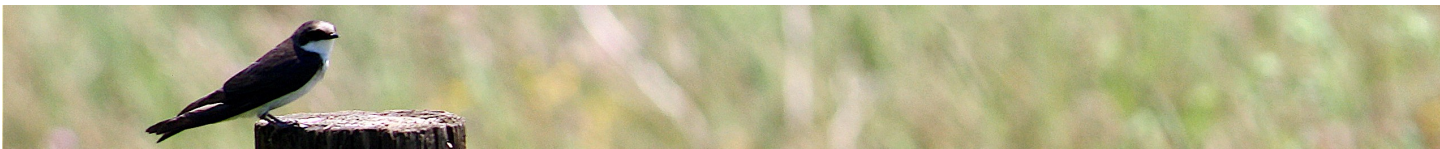
**Cured Garlic** is dried until the

skins are papery. Will keep several months in the fridge door in a loosely covered container.

Keep **baby leeks** as you would green onions. Be sure to slit lengthwise and carefully wash between layers.

\* Featured Produce for the week





## Tomato Time

ALTHOUGH I am writing this article before we really move into the tomato season, last week's share boxes held a "harbinger of 'maters to come" and I thought this a good time to tell you about our tomato crop.

Tomatoes are seeded in flats during the end of April and beginning of May. When days are warm, we bring the flats outside to harden off, but return them to the greenhouse overnight. They are ready for transplanting when they reach 3" - 4" tall and have husky stems and dark green leaves, in 4—6 weeks.

Fence posts are pounded into the soft loam and as the tomato plants begin to stretch upward, we use the "Carolina Basketweave" method to support them. Baling twine is woven back and forth along the

rows from both sides, in between the plant stems, to provide support. Tomatoes held up off the ground form more perfect fruit and less spoilage occurs.

This year we are growing 30 different varieties of tomatoes. We have great demand for our heirloom varieties Cherokee Purple, Amish Paste, and Striped German. Also very popular are the Italian plum tomatoes for making sauces and canning. This year we have a new to us heirloom variety, too, Paul Robson (a black slicer) that comes highly recommended.

If you are planning to do any canning this season, please place your order with us early so we can be certain to set aside enough to fill your request.



Staked and tied, our tomato crop in July is already bearing early blossoms and fruit-lets. We nip off the early fruit to encourage heartier growth for the main crop in August.

## And now... Meet the Basils

Like Mutt and Jeff... Bonnie and Clyde... Peanut Butter and Jelly... Meet Tomato and Basil, if you haven't already.

We have 4 types of basil this year. Our favorite, classic pesto basil, Genovese, will be ready for some harvesting very shortly. This variety is sold out at our market stand every Wednesday, sometimes as soon as the bags are set out on the table. Other varieties this year are Ms. Lemon, Amethyst, and Thai.

Basil can be started in greenhouse flats, like tomatoes, but needs a little less time in the greenhouse before being hardened off for transplanting.

To harvest basil, we pick a dry day and do not harvest in extreme heat. Basil is tricky to keep fresh and does not get rinsed because it tends to develop black spots where the water sits on the leaves.

We transport the harvested basil in open, airy flats. Just before sale, then we pack dry leaves in clear plastic bags, but do not close the bags tightly. This extra care helps keep the product fresh for you.

Basil leaves add delightful spark to hot buttered pasta or a summer salad beyond as the traditional ingredient in pesto.



## Questions & Answers

Q. Will you have apples this fall? I recall some mention of the possibility in an earlier newsletter. .

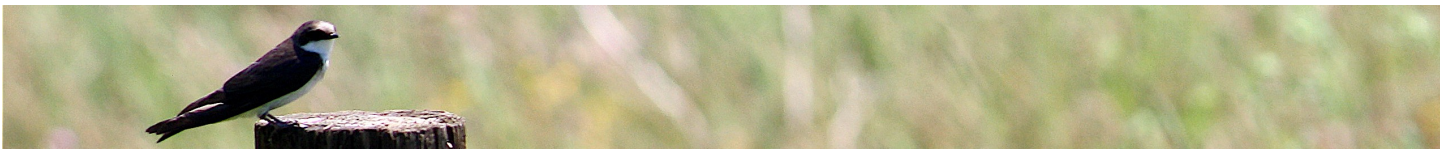
A. Wishful thinking. Another late spring frost took most of our blossoms. The trees look very good for such young stock, but virtually no apple crop because of the frost. We are checking for another local source for organic apples and will be able to offer some if a quality source can be found.

Q. You mentioned a scarecrow in a newsletter and I am wondering if they really work or if that's just a myth.

A. Absolutely. If you were a bunny and

YOU saw the owl posed atop the scarecrow stand in the photo opposite, YOU would beat feet for safer territory. This molded plastic, life size owl, has single-handedly guarded the cabbage patch since the first attack of the bad bunnies in May. We highly recommend the investment in one of these molded plastic scarecrows if you, too, have bad bunnies eating your gardens. Place them in a very conspicuous place and then move them around a bit occasionally for the most effective deterrent.





## Featured Produce — “Cured” Garlic

WE distinguish garlic first by whether it is fresh (uncured) or cured. Cured garlic is the bulb with the paper-y skin, whereas fresh garlic is more similar to a green onion, without the paper-y skins.

By far, China grows and ships the majority of garlic in the world. A member of the lily family, garlic has almost magical beneficial properties. In cuisines that use large quantities of garlic, the positive health benefits are actually startling. Mediterranean and Asian cul-

tures are consistently noted for a lower incidence of heart disease. A steady addition of garlic to our diet helps lower cholesterol and blood pressure, fight infection, and reduce inflammation.

Entire books have been written about this “stinking rose,” as it was termed in Medieval days. However, in just a couple of sentences you can learn, to increase the benefits of garlic by chopping or pressing it and letting it sit for about 5 minutes before showing it the pan.



Garlic bunches curing in the barn. Before we can pack them our they must each be individually stripped of dried foliage, clipped top and bottom and the outer paper-y skin removed to the clean inner layer.

## Roasted Whole Garlic

*Not just for garlic-a-holics, this method of preparing garlic results in a mild, almost sweet, nutty spread for Italian bread, crispy crackers, or thinly sliced whole grain breads.*

- 2 whole heads garlic
- 1 T. extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 t. salt
- dash white pepper

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Remove

some of the papery skins from the garlic heads. Cut off the top 1/2" to expose the cloves. Place garlic on baking sheet and drizzle with the olive oil; sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Cover with foil and bake at 375° F for 55-60 minutes until garlic is soft and golden brown. Squeeze onto crackers or let cool and store in refrigerator. Try on baked or steamed potatoes, burgers, or with roasted whole roots vegetables.



## Spanish Garlic Soup

*Sure to cure a cold or a hangover, this savory dish is closely related to French Onion Soup.*

- 10 garlic cloves, peeled and sliced.
- 5 c. beef broth.
- 1 c. dry sherry.
- 1/4 c. extra-virgin olive oil
- French bread, sliced and toasted.
- Grated Parmesan cheese.
- Salt and pepper.

Sauté the garlic in the olive oil until it turns golden. Heat the beef broth with sherry. When the broth reaches

the boiling point, add garlic and the olive oil. Season with salt and pepper to taste; then simmer for about 30 minutes. Strain out the garlic and reheat.

Sprinkle toasted French bread slices generously with Parmesan cheese, then place them in a 425°F (220°C) oven for about 3-4 minutes.

Put the hot toast in the bottom of soup dishes; then pour the soup over top.

### *A Word About Our Newsletter Header Photo*

*This little fellow is in a rare moment of rest atop a wooden fencepost in the orchard. He is a barn swallow. Our barn swallow collection keeps the mosquitoes and flying pests away from the orchard and market garden by catching them in mid-air. Each swallow can consume as many as 200 mosquitoes per day.*

