

THE GRAZER

April 2018

Celebrate Earth Day! 4/22

*"The earth is what we all have in common."
Wendell Berry*

Our farmers are anxious for the snow to melt, and the mud to dry, so that they can begin to plow. Once the weather warms up, they will have very busy, long days, catching up to get plants in the ground. But the anticipation to get back outside is palpable!

Still no word on which Thursday will bring May's delivery. For those of you who've ordered items, I hope to have word the first week of May. Our SW Wisconsin CSA farmers (who send our May produce) have had slightly warmer weather, but Mother Nature has been teasing us all this year!

Though it's an unusually cold and snowy April, I'm heartened each day by the birds out my window.

Because the Mississippi River is in our backyard, we always have lots of birds around. Small species, and large ones too- owls, hawks, falcons, and majestic -but messy- eagles (they like to leave their half-eaten lunch in our yard).

Spring is the best season of all, when we witness migrating flocks travelling through. But this year, it seems the flocks are larger than usual. And, some birds that usually just pass on by, like the loons and swans, have decided to stay awhile in our part of the river. We've had a very large flock of gulls "parked" nearby for weeks, and each evening they caw in unison so loudly, that if it were summer and our windows were open, they'd keep us awake!

I like to think that this is must be a sign of an upcoming bountiful, blooming year. I am convinced that the birds are harbingers of good cheer, good harvests, and a beautiful garden season ahead!

To celebrate Earth Day this year, be a farmer! Consider putting a seed in an egg carton or paper cup to transplant into the soil outside when it's finally soft and warm. Make plans to plant a new tree, and/or prune an old one- in your yard or your neighborhood. It's a simple, hopeful thing to do. Find one new way to recycle, reuse, and conserve your household's energy.

A green meal is especially appropriate!— set aside this one day to really think about the "green-ness" of what you eat. It's also a good way to start getting ready for the CSA season! Give the earth a gleeful nod, and yourself a pat on the back, by eating local and seasonal food that's been grown in an environmentally responsible way.

And of course, spend time outside— there's lots of spring wonder to absorb and love out there! Liz

Eat Green Food For Earth Day!

Click on recipe links below for ideas:

[Taco Wraps with Broccoli Slaw](#)

[Green Veggie Frittata](#)

[Simple Spinach Pasta](#)

[Asparagus Salad with Poppyseed Vinaigrette](#)

[Chinese Cabbage Slaw with Spicy Cilantro Dressing](#)

[Quinoa Salad with Greens & Dried Fruit](#)

[Carrot, Cauliflower & Green Bean Pilaf](#)

[Veggie Pita Pizzas](#)

[Basic Stir Fry](#)

[Basic Asian-Style Stir Fry](#)

Waiting for planting-ready fields on our CSA farms...



Field drain tiling ready to be installed



A Letter From Your Farmers

April 16, 2018

We are working in the greenhouse these days. Last year we were in the fields already, and with the warming trend that's been forecasted, I'm sure it will be soon that we're out there again this year too! Planting season is upon us.

While it may be cold outside, if the sun is shining, the greenhouse plants need to be watered every day, which we do by hand. When it's 40° outside, and sunny, it can be over 100° in the greenhouse! When this happens, we actually need to open the doors.

At night when the sun goes down, the wood stoves are still needed these days to keep the plants warm.

In our family's greenhouse, we have about 600 tray flats of vegetable seedlings, including early plants like orange, purple, white, and Romanesco cauliflower, rainbow chard, broccoli, kale, fennel, and pac choi. There are also plants like peppers and tomatoes, that need to get started now because they're slow to grow, and will require hot summer days later in order to bear fruit. Some families have even larger greenhouses than ours, holding thousands of trays. Most of us also have hanging baskets. You can imagine how long it takes us every day to hand water all of the plants!

We already have a large variety of birds at our feeders, including Red Finches, who are new to our farm this year. The animal babies have started arriving too! The first were twin kids (baby goats), and they're already fat and oh so cute. The sheep are lambing, and we have seven little wooly babies making a happy frolic.

This winter we adopted two tame rabbits. Well, do you know the saying, the more the merrier?! One day, we noticed that the mama had pushed her water bowl from the pen into her cozy sleeping box. It seemed strange, but upon investigating, she had a nest full of little fuzzies! We're not sure how many yet, as it seems rabbits are more touchy about folks peeping in at their little ones.

Are you getting ready for your first TASTE of spring? It will soon be time for your first boxes filled with our farms' earliest tender, sweet vegetables. We are sharing in the anticipation of the season ahead!



Amish Household Tips From Your Farmers

Cleaning:

- Burnt food in your cooking pan? Add 2 Tbsp. baking soda, and enough water to cover bottom of pan. Bring to a boil, remove from heat, cover and let sit for 2-3 hours before scrubbing clean.
- Water saving tip (you may find this handy when camping): lay crusty casserole or roasting pan upside down on the grass overnight. The dew will loosen most of it.
- To clean stovetop: moisten area with lemon juice, then sprinkle with baking soda, and scrub
- To wash windows: mix 1/8 c. apple cider vinegar to 2 gallons warm water. If the windows are really dirty, add a squirt of dish soap.
- Quick shine windows: wipe with wet newspaper, then rub dry with crumpled dry newspaper.
- Drain cleaner: dump a good handful of baking soda down the drain. Add 1/2 c. white vinegar, cover the drain tightly for a few minutes, then flush with hot water, or use a plunger.
- For stained laminate countertops, saturate paper towels with bleach; lay on countertop. Let sit for 20 minutes, remove, and wash with hot soapy water.
- Remove candle wax from fabric by placing a paper towel over the spot, then ironing over the stain. Wax will absorb into paper towel.
- Toilet bowl cleaning: Sprinkle with baking soda, dampen with vinegar, and scour with a brush. For stubborn stains, wet area, then rub with a paste made from borax and lemon juice; allow to set for 2 hours, then scrub.
- Remove gummy label spots by rubbing area with butter, or peanut butter
- To clean small neck bottles or the hummingbird feeder, add 1/8 c. popcorn kernels, and some soapy water; shake vigorously.
- Add a little white vinegar to laundry rinse cycle (instead of fabric softener)

Misc.

- Heat your cast iron skillet before adding oil
- Xanthum gum (about 1/4 - 1/2 tsp. per 1 c.) in whole wheat bread dough helps it stick together. Add a little liquid lecithin to dough for softer bread.
- Try eating sauerkraut for canker sores
- If you burn your tongue from a hot bite, sprinkle sugar on the area, allow it to sit and melt; pain will subside
- Stained hands? Rub with lemon juice.
- We use a little apple cider vinegar in our rinse water when rinsing our hair
- Air freshener: Leave juiced lemon, or lemon rinds out on the counter
- Give the Christmas cactus a teaspoon of castor oil once a week in October and November to urge it to bloom in December.