

Jenny-Jack Sun Farm

"good food news"

As the middle of August approaches, summer field offerings slow considerably, still graciously producing but at a sluggish, near bedtime pace. It's understandable. For months these plants have been a fruit bearing punching bag, knocked hard by pests, fungal disease, heat, inconsistent watering; all the sweeping vulgarities of a vulnerable existence. And now their fatigued features are beaten, bruised and bloody like the indecent face of a boxer braving it out through round 10. We are still managing beautiful harvests but are drifting into a transitional season where sparsity trumps bounty. Our market selection will look limited as expiring summer crops make way for the early greens and roots of Fall, but that is the way of things; change is slow and limiting but must be endured for renewal to inoculate the season and for its abundance to truly holler out from the fields announcing arrival.

For now, we are fomenting this changing of guard by pulling out haggard-looking rows of tomato plants once richly adorned in acidic, globed jewels symbolizing the season. We grow these famous love apples beneath both of our big, plastic-wrapped high tunnels every year. They conveniently act as oversized umbrellas, preventing overhead precipitation from ever showering the plants. Rain spreads fungal activity which is a major disruption to fruit health and longevity. The tunnels also provide a controlled, warmer environment enabling our tender, spring-planted transplants a more coddled entrance into an unforgiving, wild world not the least bit interested in being sweet and fair. Essentially, we have two 100' long overprotective parents that attempt to soften the recurring and caustic blows from a gun-sliding reality, and they work admirably well. The challenges presented with these watchful wraps are that they are stationery, untouched by the sanitizing, outside world weather, and unaverse to effectively and efficiently growing cover crops. These can be major problems for a soil receiving the same babied, targeted tomato plants year after year after year. The fear is that the bad bacteria and fungus living in this annually visited soil, that would love to humiliate and digest the majestic, macho tomato plant, concentrates, benefitting itself from a parental embrace of plastic shelter.

Our solution thus far has been soil solarization; a technique utilizing a clear plastic tarp stretched and sealed across designated growing beds harnessing the sun's solar energy in the top few inches of the soil. The heat buildup just a few inches below the plastic cover can reach highs of 150 degrees, eradicating shallow dwelling insects, soilborne fungal and bacterial pathogens, nematodes, and weed seeds. We leave the plastic down for about 4 or 5 weeks through early September when the temperatures begin to cool, so it is imperative that both high tunnels are quickly cleaned and replaced with a plastic tarp before mid-August or else the back-breaking installation work is unwarranted. Tardy timing eliminates the ideal end result voiding all the hustle and muscle required for the job. The one major cost associated with solarizing, other than labor and plastic, is the killing of beneficial insects and microbes. This is a notable loss that we try to remediate by spraying a product called Innocucor, an "environmentally sustainable soil amendment containing a consortium of naturally occurring microorganisms," and inoculating the baked soil a few times a year with compost and worm castings. We feel tomatoes are a vital, energizing piece of our farm, and while solarizing is an added layer of inconvenient labor, it is worth the time and minor loss to sustain that integral part of our summer season.

Wednesday On-Farm Market

What to expect this week on the table: Carrots, Malabar Spinach, Summer Crisp Lettuce, Squash/zucchini, Okra, Yard Long Beans, Eggplant, Sweet peppers, Hot Peppers, Garlic, Onions, No EGGS, **NO microgreens from Jean this week.** A few watermelons from Mica Hill Farm in Shiloh!

Farm made items: Comfrey-Aloe Cream, Elderberry Tincture, Ginger Tincture, Turmeric Tincture, Holy Basil Tincture, **Jacksauce (fermented hot sauce) is back!**

Farm Pork: Sliced, smoked ham, link & patty sausage, ribs, neck bones, bacon, lard, Chops
White Oak Pastures beef marrow bones and roasts, **Comerford Farms**(Lagrange) ground beef
ALSO, Sue Batistini **IS BACK with her delicious breads and snacks.**

Turntime Farm (Ellerslie): Pasture-raised whole Chicken, www.turntimefarms.com for more info!

This market tends to be small but festive; folks shop while catching up with old friends, exchange recipe ideas, talk with the farmers and chef, and stroll through the fields where all the produce is grown. We would be honored to be a part of your weekly good food grazing routine.

Pictures of the Week



A post-tomato solarizing high tunnel



Brothers and Sisters chowing down on green tomatoes pulled from the high tunnel clean out. One of the many reasons our pork tastes so good.

Where to find our produce and products:

Our produce may be found at:

Market on Broadway in Columbus from 9-12 on Saturdays

On Farm Market Wednesdays from 9-12

We have a 120 member CSA with drop-off locations in Lagrange, Columbus, and On-farm.

You can also find our produce on the menu of Food Blossoms Catering out of Hamilton.

Take good care,
Chris and Jenny