
BURR OAK GARDENS, LLC

To forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves- Mohondas Gandhi

This Week on the Farm

Things have been busy here on the farm, so busy in fact that I did not have time today to check on a few of the crops that are still out in the fields. We had very low temps last night and I am hoping that some of the crops that are out in the field survived the cold temperatures. I will know tomorrow how well the diakon radishes and the Brussels sprouts fared with the temps hovering around 25 degrees for a few hours. If they look like they made it, you will start seeing those on the stand this coming week. They should be okay, but since I didn't get a chance to get out back today, I am not going to promise something that I don't know is ready/edible.

The carrots are slowly starting to put on size. If we had had a normal fall both of our plantings would be ready to harvest by now. As it is, the first planting is the only one that we will probably be able to get anything off of for the season. The second planting is extremely even, but all of the roots range from darning needle size to maybe pencil thin. Three weeks with lots of rain and very little sunlight did not help their growth rates.

We were able to get the black beans harvested this past week. With the help of some of our workshares we hand pulled about half of the planting. Then we harvested the rest just using the combine. The combine is unable to get close enough to the ground to cut the plants below all of the pods, so we ended up getting about half of the yield per row when using just the combine compared to the hand pulled rows. The kidney beans and the cannellini beans we didn't harvest because they had started to mold in the field. The wet weather prevented us from harvesting them on time, so it was a complete loss. That is farming though. We did learn some lessons that we can apply next year, mainly that we are going to plant less of each variety to be able to hand harvest everything. If we can get better yields per foot by reducing our overall footprint and have lower initial seed costs, then that is what we will do. I also was not impressed with the holding ability of the cannellini and the kidney beans. I want to grow the black turtle beans and then try to get ahold of the Jacob's Cattle beans again as they were very good producers when we grew them several years ago. They also made very good baked beans.

Tyler took time today to help around the farm. He got the parts to get our grain cleaner up and running so that I can sort the black beans. The beans are currently drying in our greenhouse and as soon as the grain cleaner is operational I will start bagging them up for sale. It might be a week or two before I have them ready.

I got the garlic planted on Tuesday. We are actually planting it in the field that had the dried beans this year. It was the cleanest field to plant into and we are actually going to try using the empty bean pods and dried up plants that the combine spit out to cover the rows of garlic. Usually we purchase straw to act as a mulch, but this was free and looked like it will have the right density to provide good insulation. I actually got the garlic in about a week earlier than usual, so I am feeling pretty good about that. Hopefully the winter is more mild than last year, or at least that the temperatures don't fluctuate as dramatically, so that we don't have issues with the garlic heaving out of the ground. Again, that is farming. There is only so much that I can prepare for, the rest is up to Mother Nature.



Cheesy Caramelized Onion Acorn Squash

2 small-medium sized acorn squash, sliced and seeds removed

2 tbsp olive oil

Pinch of salt and pepper

2 large sage leaves, chopped

1 large yellow onion, sliced

2 tbsp butter

*2 tbsp olive oil**

1 cup baby bella or white mushrooms, sliced

1/2 cup shredded parmesan cheese

1/2 cup shredded gruyere cheese

1/2 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese

Optional: 1-2 tbsp pomegranate seeds

Preheat oven to 400°. Slice acorn squash, discard the seeds and place in a large bowl. Drizzle with olive oil, salt, pepper, and sage leaves and stir to combine.

Place squash on a baking sheet and into the oven. Roast squash for 30 minutes, making sure to flip it over after 15 minutes so the squash roasts on both sides.

Meanwhile, heat butter and olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat, and add onions to the skillet. Once onions start turning translucent, reduce heat to a simmer and stir onions occasionally until they're caramelized. At this time, you should add the mushrooms to the same skillet and stir them occasionally as well until they're cooked.

Remove squash from the oven, sprinkled shredded cheese over top, and then place squash back in the oven for an additional 5 minutes or until cheese has melted.

Place cheesy roasted squash on a large plate or in a bowl, and top it with the caramelized onions. (From thealmondeater.com)

3-Ingredient Garlicky Potatoes

3 pounds large red potatoes, cut into 1 1/2- to 2-inch chunks

3 tablespoons olive oil

3 teaspoons garlic powder

1 teaspoon kosher salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1/2 medium lemon, seeds removed

Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat to 425°F. Place a rimmed baking sheet in the oven while it heats.

Place the potatoes, olive oil, garlic powder, salt, and pepper in a large bowl and toss to combine.

Remove the hot baking sheet from the oven. Transfer the potatoes to the baking sheet and arrange them cut-side down.

Roast for 15 minutes. Flip the potatoes over with a flat metal spatula and roast until browned and tender, about 10 minutes more.

Just before serving, squeeze the lemon over the potatoes and toss to combine. (From thekitchn.com)

Caramelized Cabbage w/ Bacon & Apple

4 slices of thick fatty bacon, cut in thirds

1 small organic green cabbage

1 large organic apple (Fuji or Granny Smith)

1 large yellow onion

Place the bacon slices in a large unheated pan. 12 inch cast iron is best.

Render the fat from the bacon by cooking slowly (no higher than medium heat). Don't crisp it.

While the bacon is cooking, core and peel the apple and cut into slices.

Slice the onion.

Chop and slice the cabbage any way you like, removing the hard triangular core.

Once the bacon has released its fat, add the vegetables and apple to the pan and cook over medium heat 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Now turn the heat down to medium low and cook another 10 minutes until some light browning has occurred and everything has reduced down and blended well. (From ondietandhealth.com)

On the Stand This Week

Potatoes- Store in a cool, dry, dark place.

Acorn Squash- Store in a cool, dry, dark place.

Butternut Squash- Same as acorn squash.

Carnival Squash- Same as acorn squash.

Savoy Cabbage- Store in the fridge.

Kohlrabi- Store in the fridge.

Turnips- Store in the fridge. Unlike turnips from the grocery store these are not waxed!

Rutabaga- Store like turnips.

Parsley- Store in a jar on the counter.

Celery- Store in a jar in the fridge.

Robust Popcorn- Store in a cool, dry place.

Scallions- Store in a jar in the fridge.