



Boánn's Banks

Sustainable Agriculture Along the Broad River

June 29, 2002

This Week at Market

- Lambs' Quarters
- Carrots "Red Core Chantenay" and "Kuttiger"
- Rutabaga "Joan"
- Beets "Albina Verduna"
- Blackberries

Beet and Apple Sauté

- 6 medium beets, cooked until tender
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 shallots, minced
- 2 tart green apples, peeled, cored, and thinly sliced
- Salt and pepper
- 1/3 cup apple-cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup toasted walnuts, coarsely chopped

When the beets are cool enough to handle, slip the skins off and slice the beets about 1/4 inch thick. In a skillet, heat the butter. Add the shallot and cook for about 2 minutes. Add the apple, sugar, salt and pepper, and vinegar; simmer, uncovered, for about 10 minutes, or until the apples are tender. Add the beets and cook for another 3 minutes. Sprinkle with walnuts and serve.



Buttermilk, Beet, Cucumber Soup

- 5 medium beets, cooked until tender
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 cucumber, peeled, seeded, and diced
- Salt and pepper

When the beets are cool enough to handle, slip the skins off. Slice the beets and puree them in a food processor with the chicken stock. Stir in the buttermilk, lemon juice, and cucumber. Season with salt and pepper. Serve chilled.

Hello! Another month has come and gone, and things are staying busy at the farm. It's nearly time to get the beds ready for the fall crops of greens, roots, and flowers, even while we're nurturing along the summer plants.

The tomato plants are filling in nicely, though it will still be a few weeks before we have any for market. Creating a sustainable, natural farm from scratch made for a late start this year, but the effort will be worth it for the years to come. It looks more and more likely that the large hot pepper crop we'd hoped for won't materialize this year, as the seeds we planted several weeks ago are only just not sprouting, but they may be the only large casualty of our late start.

They state Department of Agriculture met with us this week for several hours. The end result is we are now licensed to sell eggs in the state of Georgia. We could go on for pages about the

restrictions imposed on the small local egg and dairy farmer by the state for the benefit and protection of the enormous agri-business corporations, but instead we'll just say that we will make the extra effort to bring you the farmstead products that our ancestors safely enjoyed for thousands of years, produced in a manner that's healthy for us, the animals, and the environment.

Our young hens are now producing nearly a dozen eggs a day, so we'll begin offering eggs at market next week. Let us know if you want to reserve a dozen for you.

In other farm news, the sunflowers have broken the ten foot high mark. It's not unheard of for this heirloom variety, Russian Mammoth, to hit twenty feet! Thanks for coming to market this week. Eat well!

-- Chris and Eric Wagoner
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Featured Vegetable

A beet, *Beta vulgaris*, is this week's featured vegetable, but like many of our offerings this is no ordinary beet. The variety is Albina Verduna and it is unusual in two respects. First, it's pure white, inside and out. Second, it's an edible sugar beet. The white color means you can use it in recipes you might not otherwise for fear of staining everything red. The high sugar content, twice that of ordinary beets, means you can use it or its juice in recipes instead of refined sugar.

Beets have been grown since classical times. Its original name, Beta, comes from the root's resemblance to the second letter of the Greek alphabet, elongated and tapering. It was originally cultivated for its greens (Swiss Chard, not Swiss at all, is the same species), but by Roman times the root was commonly eaten.

Sugar beets were developed over the centuries in northern climates where natural sources of sugar were scarce. By the 18th century, means of mass-producing beet sugar (the same sucrose found in sugar cane) enabled sugar to become a cheap household item in Europe, Canada, and the U.S. You can make sugar in your kitchen from these beets. Thinly slice them and steep them in near-boiling water for about an hour. Press the pulp to release any juices. Boil the water and juice until it reduces to a syrup. You can use this as is, or try to create your own crystals by pouring the syrup in a shallow tray and sprinkling in a small amount of finely ground sugar. It is difficult to get conditions for crystallization just right, but children may find "growing their own sugar" a fun project.