In the Share

- Green and Yellow Beans, 1 bag
- Sugar Snap Peas, 1 bag
- Cauliflower, 1 large & 1 small head
- Shell Peas, 1 bag
- Fennel, 1 bulb
- Summer Squash, 3 pieces
- Cucumber, 1 piece
- Lettuce, 1 head
- Chard or Collards, 1 bunch
- Choice of Herb, 1 bunch

Claire’s Comments

Gallons of Honey

I just wrote about the bees a couple weeks ago and I don’t want to drone on about them too much, but I have more news I thought you would want to know. We did our first honey extraction for the year on Tuesday evening. It turned into a very sticky late-night affair, but we now have 7 gallons of beautiful amber honey waiting to be bottled. Very exciting!

As you already know, we have 4 hives at the farm (though actually it is five now. Cinderella made a new queen last week and the old queen tried to swarm away. She did not get very far as she happened to have a clipped wing that makes it impossible for her to fly. We found her and her cluster of bees clinging to the underside of the hive and moved her into a fifth hive which we named Drizella (the name of Cinderella’s sister from the fairy tale.) Sarah and I also have a very active hive in our backyard. All these hives have been making honey so fast that we ran out of boxes – called supers - to give them for their honey storage. That meant we had to extract some honey to give them extra space. We took a total of 29 frames of honey off of the hives on Monday; extracted the honey on Tuesday; and gave them back the empty honeycomb on Wednesday. By Wednesday evening they were cleaning up the empty comb and already starting to fill it with fresh nectar. There is a reason they are called “busy bees!”

The extraction process itself went much better this year than last. In the past we have always done the extraction on my driveway. It is great to do it outside where there is plenty of space and it is easy to clean up. But last year was the first year that Sarah and I had a hive in our backyard, just a short flight over the house from the driveway. Within minutes of starting to uncap the honeycomb, our bees figured out what we were doing and came over to reclaim their stores. We had literally hundreds of bees flying around us, landing on the honeycomb, diving into the extractor, and even drowning themselves in the growing pool of honey. We made it through and had beautiful honey in the end, but we lost many bees in the process. It was a nightmare we did not want to repeat, so this year we moved into the garage and the backyard hive was never the wiser.

I did the uncapping – scraping the new, white wax off of the mature honey to release it from the comb; and Sierra ran the extractor. The extractor is a hand-cranked centrifuge with baskets to hold the frames of honey. It take a bit of practice to figure out how long and hard to turn the extractor so that it spins out all the honey but does not damage the delicate wax honeycomb. Sierra got the hang of it fast and we were done spinning out all 29 frames within about an hour and a half. By then we were sticky with dripping honey and had had our fill of sampling this incredible crop. But still we had to filter out all the bits of wax that had made their way into the honey in the extraction process.

In my opinion the filtering is no fun. Luckily, Sarah got home from work just in time to help us with this last step. We opened the honey gate on the extractor and watched a beautiful stream of honey flow out and into (continued on the back)
Recipe

It’s another fennel recipe this week. I have to admit, I am not a big fennel fan. However, I loved this dish. Sarah made it for brunch over the weekend and I knew I wanted to print the recipe for all you fennel doubters. Fennel seed is a key spice in most sausage (or fake sausage) so its combination with fennel bulb seems natural.

Zucchini, Fennel, and Andouille Pie

This recipe comes from the Madison Area CSA Coalition’s cookbook From Asparagus to Zucchini. Sarah used yellow summer squash and patty pan squash along with the zucchini. And since we don’t eat meat, she used the ground sausage style Gimme Lean soy sausage.

½ Tbs. butter, softened
3 Tbs. breadcrumbs
1 Tbs. olive oil
¾ cup onion, diced
¾ cup fennel bulb, diced
1 tsp. garlic, minced
2 cups zucchini, diced
1 link (4 ounces) andouille sausage (or Gimme Lean)
½ tsp. fennel seed, crushed
salt and pepper
3-4 ounce Swiss cheese
3 large eggs
½ cup milk
for garnish: diced roasted red pepper, chopped black olives, or chopped fennel leaves

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Generously grease a pie plate with the butter. Sprinkle breadcrumbs over buttered areas. Heat olive oil in skillet over medium flame. Add onion, fennel, and garlic; sauté until vegetables are partially tender, about 5 minutes. Raise heat to medium-high; stir in zucchini, andouille, fennel seed, and salt and pepper to taste. Sauté until zucchini is tender, 3-5 minutes. Spread mixture on platter; cool 10 minutes. Meanwhile, grate cheese; sprinkle two-thirds of it into pie pan. Beat eggs with milk in bowl. Stir cooled vegetable mixture into egg mixture; pour into pan. Sprinkle remaining cheese on top. Rim outer edge of pie filling with garnish of choice. Bake until set, about 30 minutes. Cool 10 minutes before serving. Makes 6-8 servings.

If you would like a copy of the Asparagus to Zucchini cookbook, please let me know. The retail price is $20, but you can get it from the farm for $15.

(continued from ‘Claire’s Comments)