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Drinking water: Please do not let your kids (or yourself) drink out of the faucets in the field. This is well water, and is not chlorinated. There is city water at the

farmstore sink. Plus, the field faucets are hooked up to hoses off and on, and

the hose bibs are certainly not clean. This is a good thing to teach your kids, most of who never

really think about water out of hoses, now that most of us have an urban lifestyle. A lot of places have well water, parks, businesses, etc. So best to make sure your water comes from inside a building, or from your own water bottle.

Cleaning your produce: I've heard some people mention leaving their produce all together in a bag in their fridge. Produce (from here or at the store) should be washed under running water and then stored separately. Bacteria which is always present in nature, is not harmful in small amounts, but it happily multiplies when food is not rinsed off and is stored in a big pile all together. It also does not stay fresh as long.

Around the farm: Please do not pick blossoms off of anything, like the pumpkins or squash. We need those blossoms (even the male ones) for proper pollination, and have had problems in the past with all the plants around the perimeter of the patch not having any pumpkins on them, because of blossom picking. Those hard-working bees have to carry the pollen from the male flowers to all the female flowers, and they just go from flower to flower indiscriminately. If there are not enough male flowers, they run out of viable pollen in those areas where the blossoms have been removed.

Many of you are enjoying walking the farm and seeing the changes in crops from one week to another. The corn and tomatoes are probably the most dramatic. It's wonderful to see members exploring. Just please remember that if something does not have a u-pick sign on it, don't pick. Tomatoes are very tempting now that a few are getting ripe, but we need to have enough to harvest. I hate to have to rope off everything!!

How do we figure out tomato distribution? At first, there will not be as many to pick, and we may have some for the Friday harvest, but not the Wed, etc. We keep track of who gets what, and try even it out. But in a couple of weeks or so, there will be enough so we will be picking twice a week. It looks like this year will be a good production year for tomatoes!

What do with my tomato plants at home? "Calling a plant vegetative or generative is really just being able to tell where the plant's priorities lie. A vegetative plant is putting the products of photosynthesis towards growing more plant, whereas a generative plant is using its energy for reproduction. Whether you realize it or not, you are probably already influencing whether your crops are growing in a vegetative or generative manner" – *From Growing for Market July 2013*

To put this more simply, a tomato needs to go from one stage to another- at this time of the year, it needs to be in the reproductive phase. If it just keeps growing new stems and leaves, it's not ripening the fruit. How do we stop this? To put it bluntly, we need to quit being nice! No more fertilizer, cut way back on the water (just enough to keep it alive). Even slight wilting of leaves before you water more will help kick it into reproduction.

Then what? Well, if we aren't already being unkind enough, we need to wack off all new growth! **Get mean!** Any new blossoms that develop after the first week of August will never have ripe tomatoes in our climate. Not only does it get cooler by Sept, but the hours of daylight decrease dramatically. So you need to go out to your beautiful lush tomato plants and completely cut off all new branches that are developing, and on the main branches, cut them off just above the last blossom cluster. (we call this "dead-heading") Then go on patrol every week and keep snipping off new suckers. If you are religious about doing this, you will have very few un-ripe tomatoes at the end of the season.

Note these instructions are for vining type ("indeterminate") varieties only. If you have a bush type ("determinate") do not do anything to it except no more fertilizer. Determinate varieties stop blooming on their own.

