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Dear Members, Lots of news here – please pick up a copy of “The Root Connection Story” – (a separate page)

Thank you to all who are calling in with pick up day changes! It's been much more manageable – no panic in the fields. **Plan ahead for the start of school** – we always have a LOT of Wed/Thurs pickup members show up unannounced on Fri or Sat, and we have to give them old produce saved from the Wednesday harvest. It's very hectic getting the kids settled that first week (I can remember that!), so think about just changing your day to Fri or Sat for that week so you don't have to worry about it, and we can pick fresh for you. Just give us a weeks notice if you can, but a last minute call is better than nothing.

Basil alert: the third basil house is open! Lots of basil. **We are CLOSING off the first house**, because we are noticing some black spots on the bottom leaves of those older plants. My farming friends in the Carnation area reported that powdery mildew has hit the basil. We had it in one of our hoop houses last year. So we are closing off that house to guard against it spreading by people picking and then handling plants in other areas. Not harmful to humans, so don't worry – Hopefully we can keep the rest of the plants healthy. Not really any reliable organic control method.

No time to make pesto? This is the time to pick basil for preserving. Just go get a few cheap extra ice cube trays and chop up some basil, put into the cups, and cover with water (not oil according to the PCC newsletter). Once frozen, you can unload them into a freezer bag and do it all over again. One little square will season your dishes with that fresh basil flavor all winter. Try it with cilantro and dill too, then let us know how that works. I've heard of members just putting basil leaves in a freezer bag as is- haven't tried it myself.

Try variety! What's with the Thai basil? No one wants it? Man, that is prime ingredient in stir fries and Thai style food. I could get big bucks for it, but don't have time to cart it around to restaurants. Be adventurous and use some-unique spicy flavor. My favorite though, it the **lemon basil** – it is sooooo good. And remember, when herb plants flower, the flowers can be put right into the dish or salad for visual appeal and extra flavor.

In the Shares: Tomatoes are coming on strong. About 3 weeks earlier than last year according to the crop chart. But then everything is earlier this year. We are trying two new varieties this year for the big tomatoes- Giant, and Siletz. The Siletz are ripening first. They are the short little bushes you see close to the wash station area. (Talk about easy to grow!) I have taste-tested both, and think maybe the Siletz are better than the Giant- a little more “beef-steak like” flavor. And of course the cherry tomatoes are Sungold – what can I say? We did trial Sunsugar too, but they aren't as good in the opinion of the crew that samples while they pick. The plants were harder to trellis and prune too, and not as many tomatoes on each bush.

In the fields: Wow have you seen the corn? We still haven't had time to get the bird net put up around the patch, but we better get it done this week! The ears are ripening fast, and the crows have a knack for ignoring it until it gets ripe, and then can ravage through the crop fast. The first crop is our favorite, Honey Treat. It is forming two ears per stalk on most stalks, which unusual for most kinds of corn, but Honey Treat is known to be able to do that if well weeded, given a boost of fertilizer and lots of water at the right time. We side dressed it with Walt's Organic Fertilizer (wonderful stuff!) when the plants were about 1.5 ft tall, then plenty of water, and watered heavily again when they were thigh high. Other than that, left it alone. The second crop (Sugar Pearl, a white corn) is just starting to tassle. So I think we MIGHT have corn next week, if not, the week after. Last year it was the first week of September.

Fall crops are being planted now. This is all the u-pick greens and kales, and things like bok choy, gailon, kohlrabi, turnips. Challenging to keep it alive when it's been so hot, but with over 30,000 transplants to get in the ground, we can't just wait for a cool day. So we plant some in the mornings, and then have to keep the sprinkler on what we planted all night for a few days until it gets rooted well. Then we put the floating row cover (that white stuff you see here and there) on it to keep away the insects (most of them).

Beans: Fortex long green pole beans and yellow Gold Marie romano beans starting now – enjoy!