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Reminders – plan for vacations and change your pickup day if you need to.

Basil picking goes on – I've warned about sudden mildew that can hit in early August (or not) so even though it's really hot and working in the kitchen might not be your thing, I (let alone going into the hot hoop houses), this is the time to get basil for pesto and get it made up into jars or ice cube trays in the freezer.

So as not to be dull, you can also make **cilantro pesto, dill pesto, parsley pesto**. These are great flavors for you to use throughout the year.

Cilantro and dill – I expect they will start bolting (going to seed) in 2 days with heat, but don't worry, you can use it anyway!! Also, **dill flowers** are great in flower bouquets, and won't count as your "pick 10 stems". They tend to wilt but will come back to life (like the sunflowers) if you cut a little off the stems while holding under water. Good for all flowers. And also use the mature dill for pickling.

For us farmers, it seems like we've been working forever – actually most of us start the first week of March. Jeff and I work year round. Not sure why I don't seem to get very far in my to-do winter list as my work hours are really only 6-7 hours per day, not the 10-12 hours every day during the June to Oct time period. But I do a lot of reading and stuff, more sleep too. So this is **just the ninth week of our CSA harvest**, but we're gearing up for the last Sept to Oct period when all the fall crops come on.

How do we plant all this stuff in the hot weather? Well the key is to pre-water the ground. That means timing to run water on an area overnight, and then quickly get plastic mulch on top for the leafy stuff so the ground is cooler when we plant the transplants. Then we run more water regularly until the roots go down deeper. So it's somewhat challenging. Of course, this very hot week is our heaviest week for getting planting done, continuing into next week. Around 25,000 transplants already coming up in flats in the greenhouse! So all the kohlrabi, turnips, fall u-pick greens, bok choy, etc, etc, for the rest of the year is going in now. The final crops of carrots and beets were planted 2 weeks ago. Lettuce continues to get planted until the third week of August when we plant a quadruple crop (so they will grow big enough to provide our October lettuce).

Since our valley acts as a little sun bowl, I'm expecting the mid-90's temps to reach over 100 here for several days. The crew will be starting work at 6 instead of 7 to get a little head start. I'm still in the middle of pruning and trellising the tomatoes which is basically my job, so not looking forward to that, although it should be good for tomato ripening.

Crop report: even though we have some hives of our own, there is a chronic **bee shortage**, especially of the wild bumble bees that are such good pollinators. The use of chemicals commercial applications and yard services that do peoples yards has taken a toll. We're noticing that a lot of our summer squash is not getting fully pollinated (which results in shriveled squash) so that affects the yield. I think the winter squash is doing ok, even though it seems it should have more squash on it. Now the pumpkins are in full bloom, so hope the bees will get to those.

Lettuce will be in shorter supply over the next couple of weeks. I expect to have some burn from the heat. **Bush beans** are in now, and the **pole beans** are topping their trellises. Once those vines start blooming the beans will form. Usually the pole bean are harvested first part of September.

Corn has been disappointing. We planted three crops. The first crop never really looked that great and now is tuning yellow without signs of any ears forming. My daughter's corn at her farm is doing the same thing and I just talked to another farmer who said the same. I've never seen that before so am hoping the next two crops do well!! More later-

