



Veggies on Wheels



Volume 19 – # 224

NEWSLETTER OF PFENNING'S ORGANIC FOOD BOX

October 31, 2017

1760 Erb's Rd. W., St Agatha – (519) 725-4282 – Fax (519) 725-9968 – E-mail: store@pfenningsorganic.ca – <http://pfenningsorganic.ca/>
"Veggies on Wheels" (edited by Wolfgang W.) appears about once/month. Biweekly or irregular customers may receive the latest issue at a later date.

Dear Pfenning's Food Box Community,

Now that the honeymoon is definitely over and we are continually being reminded that the weather is actually where it is supposed to be, field work on the Farm is very gradually starting to tone down. Oh yes, there are still plenty of harvesting activities going on, most notably the **Carrot harvest**. You can see Lincoln below preparing to take the Carrot harvester out on a beautiful, crisp fall day. Squashes and oodles of root veggies are filling the storage areas and the field crews are bringing in lots of hardy greens on a daily basis.

With fall half gone and winter almost here, our thoughts may not be hovering around insects at this time of the year. Still, a recent news release about a scientific study that found "dramatic" and "alarming" **declines in insect populations** in areas in Germany, which researchers say could have far-reaching consequences for the world's crop production and natural ecosystems, took me out of my pre-hibernal reverie. You can read about it on CNN: <http://tinyurl.com/yagveugg>.

According to the Dutch/German study, flying insect populations in German nature reserves have declined by more than 75% over the duration of the 27-year study. It is feared that the **loss of insect diversity and abundance** may provoke cascading effects on food webs and jeopardize ecosystem services. The study was not even performed in agricultural areas but in locations meant to preserve biodiversity. The assumption was that if you see these sorts of dramatic declines in protected areas, what might the situation be for insects in unprotected areas? The study

also emphasizes that this disturbing trend could be happening everywhere, not only over in Europe (just in case anyone here feels smug about this). Any farmer can tell you about the importance of insects, which make up around 70% of all animal species. But they essentially run the world. They pollinate the crops we eat, contribute to pest and waste control (most of the waste in urban areas is taken care of by ants and cockroaches) and are an important part of the food chain. So what is going on? Climate change, loss of insect habitats and the use of pesticides have been suggested as potential causes. As is being discussed in the wake of the study, other than actually acknowledging that we have a problem, we may want to design our agriculture to encourage the proliferation of insects, which could be as simple as growing wildflowers along the edges of fields. Did anyone mention that these fields should ideally be **organic**...?



The Rights of Nature

Once again, while on my delivery travels, CBC captured my attention with an absolutely intriguing report on a (still) fringe tendency to **ascribe rights to nature**, the same rights as persons have – read about it on CBC News: <http://tinyurl.com/y9yqq2px>. The reasoning behind this, as expounded in his newest book, *The Rights of Nature*, is to use rights for non-human entities in an analogous sense with the goal of protecting the environment. **David Boyd**, an environmental lawyer and professor at the University of British Columbia argues that our historic track record on sustaining and protecting earth and our environment clearly shows that existing laws and policies just aren't getting the job done, whereas giving legal rights to the land and animals would give these non-human entities an unprecedented level of protection, much more than the current system is capable of.

If you think this is a bit far out, think again. When digging a bit, there are many examples of legal recognition given to non-persons. Ecuador's 2008 constitution enshrines rights for **Pachamama** (Mother Nature). There have been landmark cases recognizing the rights of great apes in captivity. In 2017 the Māori Nation in New Zealand won special recognition for the **Whanganui River** which now has the same legal rights as a human being. Boyd says that ruling created guardians who now make decisions in the best interest of the river. He argues that this is a more powerful protection than environmental law and regulations which can be full of loopholes and often subjugated to other – often economic – interests. Here in our country there is even a movement aiming at granting **Lake Winnipeg** the right to be recognized as a person (read about it here: <http://tinyurl.com/yda47e5q>). This falls in line with the aboriginal belief that the land is our mother and deserves our respect. Boyd admits that giving rights to natural things might require a shift in culture. It could as well be argued that it needs a shift in consciousness. Even legal protection for people can fall short of ill intent, no matter how well-intended the law might be. In any case, leaning on the aboriginal view of the maternal character of the land, like a wise mother, the land has its way of showing us whether we are treating it right or not. We better try to be on our best behaviour.

“Honey, you're a nut!”

Or was that **Honeynut**? Yes, I think that's what it was. To give you a heads up, in coming week's Basket selection you will be seeing a new variety of Butternut Squash called “**Honeynut**”. This is a diminutive but apparently much sweeter and more flavourful version of Butternut Squash. It's been on the market for about two years now and we are delighted to embrace it and offer it to you, coming from a local farm. Let us know how you like the new squash and its supposedly sweet and nutty flavour. **By the way**, this early in the season you **do not have to peel the squash**. Just cook it with the skin which is still nice and tender. Especially if you are puréeing squash and putting it in soup.



Turkey for Christmas

The festive season is coming up in another seven weeks or so – and so is the **Turkey List**. The Christmas birds will be coming in from **Yorkshire Valley Farms** near Woodstock the week just before the Christmas weekend – pricing is \$6.00/lb. Plenty of time to think ahead and let us know if you are interested. We had lots of customer feedback about the last Thanksgiving Turkeys from the same farm saying “**this was the best Turkey we ever had.**”

Bargain Corner

Looking for a **Bargain**? We made things a bit easier for you now and along with the usual specials you see when you click your way through our online **Catalogue**, you can now go directly to the **Bargain Corner** which you will find in the Food section (<https://www.pfenningsorganic.ca/ecommerce/food/bargain-corner>). There you may stumble over some super special Bargains that may tickle your tummy. The Bargain Corner will include organic and natural food items from our Erb Outlet section. Happy Bargain hunting!



Happy Halloween and a charming November!

Wolfgang