Hoquiam Farmers Market News - Tomato Scowling Edition

Local News

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Wednesday at 9 am Fresh for you;
Leeks, Onions, round Zucchini, Beets, Elephant Garlic, Pears, Beans and who knows what else? Oh yeah- flowers! Chinese Lanterns, Dahlias, and Gladiolus.Thursday morning our Wenatchee connection hits town with his fresh picked Bartlet Pears, Unbelievably Sweet Corn, Gala Apples, maybe Peaches, and whatever his wife will allow him to pilfer from her garden!Put us on your shopping list, don't wait until Friday afternoon to stop by- we know that the traffic situation will not be a pretty one at that time!

This weeks gentle rain has given our garden the nourishment and encouragement that it needed to give that last big burst of energy necessary to get those veggies producing again. I've been negligent in watering the garden, my mind couldn't grasp that the cool days we've had most of the summer weren't actually bringing moisture into the garden. No wonder things were looking pitiful. I told Frank (Elma gardener and provider of Good Things) that I may have to strategically place some of his beautiful veggies in my garden to fake the scene. Our lettuce loves this cool weather, but not much else does. Tomatoes especially. Lat year I had dozens of huge green tomatoes on the vine when the cooler fall weather began. None of them ever developed into a tasty tomato! They made exquisite compost, but that was not my intention.Our market gardener, Judy Hanson, has given me some tips so that my tomatoes have a fighting chance of becoming the best that they can be. No, she isn't telling me to move to eastern Washington. Here is Judy's secret; Wrap your tomato plants in a plastic blanket! She says that any clear plastic bag will do, as long as it fits over the plant. If you have a huge plant, use a plastic sheet. You need to tie the plastic at the base of the plant, use clothes line or whatever you have lying around. In the highly unlikely event that the weather heats up, remove the plastic on hot days. Fat chance of that being necessary.Covering the plant with plastic keeps Tomato Blight off of your precious plant. Blight makes it's insidious way into the garden with moisture. Dew, drizzle, rain.Now here is something that I can definitely achieve; Judy says that you should 'Stress' your tomato plant. Uh-huh! The more you stress the plant, the more concerned it becomes, fearful for it's very life- and it produces more fruit! Talk mean to it. Keep it awake at night. Play loud music.
Oops, that's what stresses me. Back to the tomato plants' idea of stress. Stop watering it- that will teach it to behave, according to Judy. When the lower leaves start to turn yellow, give it some water. Make it beg.
If your tomato plant has been coddled like mine and has a lush profusion of green leaves, strip those leaves off so that light can get to the fruit, or it cannot ripen.No fruit on your tomato plant? Keep this in mind for next year; when the flowers are blooming, give them a shake to get them to pollinate. I never realized that tomatoes prefer being treated so rough! I've been far too nice to them. From now on, no more Mrs. Nice guy- I'm going to stomp out there to the garden and scowl at those tomatoes. I'll speak sharply and strip off those lovely green leaves. Then, to make up for such unseemly behavior, I will gently enfold them in a big plastic bag. Tuck them in and keep them nice an warm, awaiting the first blush of red to arrive.If you need tomatoes right now, come on over to the Hoquiam Farmers Market. Julie, Ruth, and Judy all have great tomatoes, and Mrs. Todd

may not be looking when Gary is foraging in her Wenatchee garden- look for hers on Thursday. I'll protect Gary from his wife's wrath. The things I do in order to make sure that the market brings you the very best food that is out there!Barbara Bennett Parsons, vowing to treat those tomatoes badly from now on.

Hoquiam Farmers Market is open Wednesday thru Sunday, and Deidra keeps the Deli open 6 days a week! Give us a call at 538-9747 to place an order or ask a question.