

It was a good week at the homestead. I got a lot of weeding done and taking more small deformed fruit off of the fruit trees. We collected two big bags full of Japanese beetles from the blackberries. I'm glad I picked all of the blueberries before the beetles found them. The blackberries are full, big and beautiful. I prayed that the bugs would go away, and there haven't been any the last few days, believe or not. I choose to believe.

PUBLIC

I almost have the greenhouse cleaned out. In the middle of the week, I found youngest son working in the garden. He helped me shut down the fans and electricity. I was emptying pots when it was 102 degrees, so I'm glad Sunday was a cooler day. The corn is forming and there are lots of tomatoes. We braced the vines also yesterday. The cantaloupe are coming right along. On oldest son's birthday, July 25, I will plant turnips and garlic. I'm thinking that will end the planting for this season. Market was good last week, but rain is in this Friday's forecast.

I found a good article in Mother Earth magazine about fruits. Store watermelon on the counter, not in the fridge. Blackberries, blueberries, nectarines, peaches, raspberries, and strawberries should be purchased locally. Select grapes and cherries with bright green and flexible stems; older fruit has brown stems. Choose pungent, robust varieties of yellow and red onions for all cooking. Scallions are better for your health rather than full size bulb onions, because the greens are more nutritious than the white parts. Before heating garlic, let it rest for 10 minutes after chopping, slicing or pressing. Grow tomatoes at home or purchase from a farmer's market to ensure they are picked ripe. Choose smaller and more darkly colored varieties. More next week on this subject.

If you missed the blue grass show Saturday at the Opera House, you missed a good one. It's too bad people sit at home in their air conditioning, with the doors shut from the world. What an opportunity you are missing in life. Watch for the upcoming show, The Wiz, it will be a good one. Get out and enjoy life; it's pretty short if you think about it!

Here is this week's recipe: Tomato-Garlic salad dressing -- blend the following ingredients in a blender or food processor until smooth and creamy, or blend in a large glass measuring cup or jar with immersion blender. Makes about 1 1/2 cups dressing, which will keep at least three days in the fridge. 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil; 1/4 cup red wine vinegar; 1/4 cup fresh parsley; 1 medium tomato quartered and seeded; 5 anchovy fillets; 2 cloves garlic; 1 tsp. capers, rinsed. Enjoy that fresh summer salad and have a good week.

See you next week, behind the Garden Gate.