Well folks, we did it again! We held another day camp on the farm in conjunction with Champaign Park District and the Champaign County Farm Bureau. This is our 3rd year and 5th camp session as part of the “Beginning Farmer” camp. This week, we hosted just over 30 kids, aged 6-11, from the Douglass Park Community Center. The kids rotated through four stations where they were introduced to the basics of growing and harvesting good veggies, the value of bees and heathy cooking and eating. Hunter took the kids on a field tour and introduced them to the concept of “roots, fruits and shoots” and helped them identify which part we are eating and how the complete plant looks when growing. My job was to get their blood pumping with food group relays after talking about food as fuel and what kids need to eat to keep up with their summer joys of swimming, biking, basketball, etc. We also talked about “superfoods” and the benefits of carrots, broccoli, tomatoes, spinach, etc and created our own “superfood superheroes” with modeling clay and markers. At the bee station, the kids learned from our resident bee keeper about bees and their unique community roles and their importance to fruit and vegetable production. Finally, the kids took a cooking class with Chef Colleen where they learned about setting your “mise en place”, food preparation and the basics of cooking! They made tasty squash and zucchini tacos- I’ll share the recipe as soon as summer squash is ripe and ready for harvest.

I say it each year….camp always takes a lot out of our staff and volunteers as we are doing this in the busiest part of the season with already over-full days. But working with the kids during these camp sessions serves to ground us and remind us why we are doing what we are doing in the first place. Outreach and education, especially with youth and those who lack adequate access to nutritious food, is also a key part of our mission. Here’s hoping a few will plant a garden, start experimenting in the kitchen, ask their parents to buy a few more healthy foods at the store and stop swatting at bees and instead take a moment to watch and wonder.

Best-
Traci
When the water boils, add 1 teaspoon salt. Add fettuccine to the boiling water, timing it to finish cooking with the chard. (The chard should be very tender but not overcooked when the pasta is done.)

For the salad:
1/2 pound washed, de-stemmed and chopped kale
1 t garlic, minced
1 carrot, grated
1/4 t salt
2 T olive oil

Massaged Kale Salad with Grated Root Vegetables & Avocado
(Traci’s personal favorite way to eat kale and always a family and guest-pleaser!)
For the salad:
1 large bunch kale, washed, de-stemmed and chopped (about 5 cups)
2 T olive oil
1/4 t salt
1 carrot, grated
1/2 a large rutabaga, beet or turnip, grated
1 avocado, sliced
2 scallions, miniced
1 t sesame seeds or roasted sunflower seeds
For the dressing:
Zest and juice of 1 lemon
1 T olive oil
1 t agave nectar or honey
Salt & pepper

Bunching Greens: Your choice of Swiss Chard, Red Kale, Lacinato Kale, & Collard Greens (my favorite!). Try using them as wraps for your favorite flavors. Or bake them for a few minutes after they’re stuffed (think Dolmades).