

March 31, 2004

**This week's share:
Soup Special!**

Doesn't Potato-Leek Soup sound good? How about chowder with SOF potatoes and celery?

- Potatoes, red or gold
- Leeks, overwintered under mulch in the field
- Celery, from the heated greenhouse
- Swiss Chard*
- Lettuce, var. Lollo Rossa*
- Spinach, loose leaf*
- Pac Choi*
- Herbs: fresh oregano OR chives OR rosemary OR thyme, from the heated house

*=items from the hoopouses (i.e. "WOW! That grew in Michigan in the winter???")

Announcements:

1. This week (tomorrow) is the LAST DAY to renew membership with a guaranteed spot for summer (May-Aug). Either bring to CSA pick-up or drop off a check at the Hort Dept. mailroom (288 Plant and Soil Science, in my mailbox) for the full \$350 share price, or for \$150,

the deposit price, to reserve your summer share.

A few of you who said you intended to renew have still not paid – get those checks in,

please! Just FYI, there are over 60 people on the waitlist, and membership will fill up FAST after tomorrow. If you need an alternate payment plan, let me know, and we'll work it out. I just don't want to give your spot to someone else if you want it.

2. All previous (Fall 2003) members – please fill out and return the Fall 2003 Member Survey sent on email last week. Thank you. Extra bonus items for those who return surveys!

3. VOLUNTEERS INVITED to the farm, this FRIDAY, April 2, all day until 5:00 p.m. We'll be weeding in all the hoopouses, planting salad mix in the heated and unheated houses, and seeding tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants in plug trays, to become your summer crop! We may also repair some plastic, clean out old beds, or

search the vernal pond in the woodlot for spring peepers. Come dig in the dirt with us.

Also, every Thursday and Friday are good volunteer days: SEEDS need to get planted, WEEDS need pulling, SOIL should be prepared for planting, PLASTIC and hoopouses can be repaired, and of course we're harvesting for your CSA shares. Every THURSDAY morning is CSA harvest, and the more hands the better. Every FRIDAY afternoon is seeding, weeding, soil prep, maintenance, etc. Drop me an email or just show up, with old clothes (dress in layers this time of year), rain gear if necessary, and your favorite weeding tool (or use ours—there's plenty!).

4. Check out last Sunday's Lansing State Journal – your farm, and one of your student farmers, Trevor Johnson, is on the front page! They did a great article on organic food and local agriculture – check it out.

What's up at the farm?

Spring transplant-o-rama! We just transplanted a bunch of lettuce, mei qing choi, parsley, cauliflower, broccoli, kohlrabi, and Swiss chard into the hoopouses. Potatoes were

planted in the big house, for early new spuds. Soon to be seeded are more baby salad mix, another round of spring turnips, and more Asian greens.

This Friday we'll seed a bunch of nightshades (tomatoes, peppers, eggplants) in plug trays, to be transplanted to the field in late May/early June, for YOUR summer crops! Also on deck in the seeding department are spring lettuces, brassicas, and more leafy greens -- next week.

Re: visits and outreach: If *you* teach or are in a class that would like to visit the farm, either for fun or as part of the coursework, please contact Emily Reardon, our Education and Outreach Coordinator, at reardone@msu.edu. We host walking tours, volunteers, interviewers, courses that use the farm as part of their curriculum, prospective or current farmers, and more.

Recipes

I know I said at the beginning of this newsletter that this week is "soup Special" --- Potato Leek, or Chowder, for example. They are in all your cookbooks, and on-line. They are also in *Asparagus to Zucchini*, which should be in soon! (keep checking—the order went in a while ago; we'll let you know as soon as it arrives). Be resourceful – let me know if you have a favorite potato-leek, or chowder recipe. Thanks.

Braised Leeks

Makes 4

- 4 leeks, root ends trimmed
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon coarse salt
- 1 1/2 cups Homemade Chicken Stock, or Vegetable stock
- 1 lemon sliced crosswise, 1/8 inch thick
- 4 sprigs thyme

1. Preheat oven to 450° with rack in the center. Peel away and discard the outer layer of each leek. Place leeks on work surface with the white end pointing away from you. To remove the dark-green parts of the leeks, slice a section of each off at an angle. Roll each leek a quarter-turn and repeat the same cut. Continue rolling and slicing a few more times in this manner until the tapered pale-green ends resemble a sharpened pencil. Discard the dark-green trimmings.

2. Cut the leeks in half lengthwise, wash well, and pat dry. Place the leeks, oil, and salt in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish, cut-side up (it is important that they fit snugly). Add stock, and arrange lemon slices and thyme over the top. Cover with plastic wrap, and then aluminum foil. Bake until tender, 35 to 40 minutes. Remove from oven. Remove the foil, puncture the plastic to release steam, then remove plastic.

3. Return baking dish to oven, and bake until leeks are dark golden brown, and the liquid is reduced, 30 to 45 minutes more. If there is a lot of liquid left in the baking dish, remove the leeks, and transfer the liquid to a small saucepan. Place over

medium-high heat, and cook until reduced and slightly thickened. Drizzle over leeks. Can be made ahead and stored, covered, in the refrigerator. Reheat in a 325° oven before using.

Carrot Vichyssoise

Serves 6

Use a blender, not a food processor, to purée this soup, or it will become gummy.

- 3 large leeks (1 1/2 pounds), white and light-green parts trimmed
- 1 medium clove garlic, minced
- 4 small Yukon Gold potatoes (1 1/2 pounds), peeled
- 5 carrots (9 ounces), peeled
- 2 1/2 cups Homemade Chicken Stock, or canned low-sodium chicken broth, skimmed of fat (note: you can always use veggie instead of chicken stock. -MF)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups whole milk
- 3 tablespoons snipped fresh chives
- Olive-oil cooking spray

1. Coarsely chop leeks; place in bowl of cold water. Let stand 5 minutes to rid them of dirt and sand; lift out of water; drain in colander.

2. Spray bottom of small stockpot with olive-oil spray; place over low heat. Add leeks and garlic; cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until leeks are wilted, about 12 minutes.

3. Cut 2 potatoes into small chunks; add to leeks. Slice 3 carrots into 1/4-inch-thick rounds; add to vegetables along with stock, salt, pepper, and 2 cups water.

Cover partially, raise heat to high, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium low; cook until vegetables are tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from heat, stir in milk, and purée in blender until smooth. Let stand until cool; refrigerate until cold.

4. Meanwhile, finely julienne remaining 2 potatoes and 2 carrots; place in a small pot of boiling water. Boil until just tender, 2 to 3 minutes. Drain; transfer to ice-water bath until cool. Drain; add carrots and potatoes to puréed soup. To serve, divide soup among six bowls, and garnish each with snipped chives.

Per serving: 181 calories, 3 g fat, 12 mg cholesterol, 31 g carbohydrate, 718 mg sodium, 7 g protein, 4 g dietary fiber

Leek Dip

Makes 3 1/2 cups

We serve this dip with cucumber, cauliflower, fennel, daikon radishes, jícama, kohlrabi, and celery.

1/4 cup slivered almonds
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 medium leeks, white and pale-green parts only, thinly sliced
1 sixteen-ounce container sour cream
1 fourteen-ounce log fresh creamy goat cheese
1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 350°. Spread slivered almonds in a rimmed baking sheet; bake until fragrant, about 10 minutes. Set aside to cool. Coarsely chop and set aside.

2. In a medium sauté pan, melt butter over medium-low heat, then add leeks. Sauté until soft and translucent, about 5 minutes. Set aside to cool.

3. Place sour cream and goat cheese in a medium bowl, and stir until well combined. Add almonds, leeks, parsley, salt and freshly ground pepper. Keep covered with plastic wrap in the refrigerator until ready to serve.

Creamed Swiss Chard

Serves 4

Swiss chard, a member of the beet family, has bumpy, dark-green leaves and white or red stalks and veins. We use green chard with white stems in this recipe since the bright red stems often bleed their color.

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/4 cup coarsely chopped shallots (2 medium)
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1 cup milk
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 large bunch green Swiss chard (about 1 pound 10 ounces), ribs removed, leaves roughly chopped

1. In a large skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add shallots, and cook until translucent, about 3 minutes. Add flour, and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Add milk, nutmeg, salt, and pepper; raise heat to high and cook, stirring constantly, until mixture is reduced by half, about 2 minutes.

2. Add chard, and cook until tender and coated with the thickened milk mixture, 3 to 4 minutes. Serve immediately.

**Thanks a bunch to Ty Middleton,
Student Farmer-in-Exile, somewhere on
the Appalachian Trail, for these recipes!**