

May 13, 2004

**This (past) week's share:**

- Beets (Red Ace)\*
- Baby carrots\*
- Cabbage
- Onions
- Baby Salad Mix\*
- French Breakfast radishes\*
- Tatsoi\* OR Mei qing choi\*
- Spinach\*
- Herbs: chives

\*=items from the hoopouses (i.e. "WOW! That grew in Michigan this early in the spring???)")

**Announcements:**

**1. Welcome new members, and welcome back, returning members!** The summer '04 session at our farm hit the ground running and is going strong. We're so happy you all have joined us for the start of our second full year in production. Scroll on down past the recipe section for a welcome letter from John, one of our faculty advisors. Please see the "All About Our CSA" section after the announcements.

**2. Recipes Wanted!** We try to include seasonal recipes in each

newsletter, especially for new or unusual veggies, herbs, etc. If you have favorite recipes using

produce we grow at the farm (please see attached document "Seasonal Availability of Produce"), send it to me via email (ferrares@msu.edu). In fact, send me several – the more the better. I'll try to include them all in the newsletters as those crops come into season.

**4. Volunteer Days and Community Potlucks: We consider every day a volunteer day.** Thursday mornings are a good time for regular, committed volunteers (our main harvest day). Other weekdays are better for drop-in or first-time volunteers. We will, however, plan a few weekend volunteer days and community meals together throughout the summer. Please let me know if you are interested in coordinating and/or hosting a member potluck either at the farm or at your home.

**5. Visits and outreach:** If *you* teach or are in a class or organization 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](mailto: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.

### **All About Our CSA**

As new members learned at last Thursday's orientation meeting, CSA is a "mutually beneficial relationship between growers and consumers" in which both parties "share the benefit and share the risk." This means that if we have a bumper crop of tomatoes, for example, then everyone gets lots of tomatoes, to enjoy fresh, freeze or can, or share with friends. Conversely, if, say, the sweet corn crop fails entirely, we all go a year without sweet corn (from our farm, anyway; I know that wouldn't stop me from buying it at the farmers' market, and I hope it wouldn't stop you, either). That's what sharing the benefits and risks of farming is about. After a few seasons or years of CSA, eaters/members grow accustomed to eating seasonally and getting creative with large amounts of certain veggies and not much of others,

with the assurance that it will balance out in future seasons.

If you are the kind of person who enjoys trying new veggies, new recipes, methods of preparation, canning, drying, and freezing to preserve summer's bounty for winter, sharing food with friends, and conscientiously participating in a community of growers and eaters, then CSA is a good place for you. Thank you so much for joining us this summer, and for supporting our missions of education, production, research, and community.

As you probably know, CSA pick-up is at the farm, every Thursday, from 4:00-6:30. A couple of you have requested to pick up your shares on campus; you know who you are, and if you have any questions, please call or email. By now everyone else has probably found the farm and the distribution room and figured out how the "buffet system" works. If not, please call or email for directions. We request that you bring your own cooler and/or bags in which to take your share home. We try to have bags on hand if you ever forget yours (and if you have a stash of plastic grocery bags – please no drugstore or automotive store bags—we take bag donations for that purpose), but better to use a cooler to

maintain freshness, quality, and nutritional value of your produce.

If you ever need to miss a week, there are a few things you can do. Preferably, have a friend come get your share for you – let them know what to expect, and let us know via email that someone else is coming in your place that week. Alternately, we can hold your share til the next day (Friday) or the following Monday. Usually we're not there on weekends. If you need to contact us via email, do it *before Wednesday of the week in question*. Not surprisingly, I don't check email on Thursdays (harvest and distribution day). If no one can get your share some week, let us know in advance, and we'll either harvest a little less or donate it to the soup kitchen that week.

In the summer we make regular donations to a Lansing soup kitchen of greens, tomatoes, and whatever else we have in surplus, after offering it to our members. In fact, stay tuned for upcoming announcements about volunteering at the soup kitchen with us on some Saturdays.

There will be more CSA pointers in future newsletters, but for now, a couple last things: one is that as a current member, you will be offered first dibs on fall shares, which run Sept-Dec, and the same with all future sessions

(current members get first dibs). So start thinking about whether you'd like to stick with CSA into the winter – come January we'll be offering many more storage veggies: roots, cabbages, onions, etc, as well as spinach, salad greens, and cooking greens out of the hoopouses. And one last thing: two web sites: to learn more about CSA in general, please check out the Robyn Van En Center for CSA at [www.csacenter.org](http://www.csacenter.org), and to locate CSA farms, farmers' markets, and farm stands anywhere in the US by zip code, check out [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org).

Whoops, one last thing – another thing that makes our farm unique (besides the year-round production we mentioned at the orientation meeting) is that we'll periodically request input and feedback from you, as part of our research into developing a student-run CSA farm, as well as our own improvement. We hope you'll enjoy the chances to give us feedback and help shape the next wave of local, sustainable food systems. If we ever need to use your feedback as part of formal research or a publication, we'll need to get your formal consent, and we'll let you know if that's the case. Please take the time to fill out and return all surveys and questionnaires we

send your way (there won't be too many). *Muchas gracias.*

### **Recipes and More**

Old members: these recipes may look familiar; I lifted this section out of the newsletter from the last time we had beets. New members: Read on; and I hope you enjoy the recipes.

**Beets:** Beets are one of my favorite veggies, not just because you can eat the roots, stems, and leaves, but also because they turn everything red once they're cut! We're also growing golden and Chioggia beets, and they're good if you *don't* want red cutting boards, red utensils, hands, dishes, and poop.... But the red ones are so beautiful. One of my favorite discussions on beets is the beginning of Tom Robbins' *Jitterbug Perfume*. The rest of it you can take or leave, but that opening couple of paragraphs are good, beety. I For more info on beets, those delicious, earthy, bloody roots, click on the link below:

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/plantanswers/publications/vegetabletravelers/beets.html>

### **Balsamic-Glazed Beets**

3

(4-oz.) beets

1 Tbs

olive oil

2 tsp

Salt

1/4 cup

balsamic vinegar

2 Tbs

firmly packed brown sugar

1

Preheat oven to 400°F.

2

Peel the beets, coat with oil and sprinkle with salt. Wrap each individually in aluminum foil and bake 1 hour.

3

Meanwhile, heat the vinegar in a small saucepan. Add sugar and stir to dissolve, simmer 15 minutes; set aside.

4

Unwrap beets and allow to cool slightly. Slice beets into 1/4-inch thick slices. Place in a roasting pan in a single layer. Pour vinegar on top and return to the oven for 5 minutes.

**Servings: 1**

**Preparation time: 15 minutes**

**Cooking time: 1 minutes**

Copied from

<http://www.livingcookbook.com/rec>

[ipes/vegetables/balsamicglazedbeets.htm](http://www.foodnetwork.com/food/show_cl/episode/0,1976,FOOD_9952_17381,00.html)

[http://www.foodnetwork.com/food/show\\_cl/episode/0,1976,FOOD\\_9952\\_17381,00.html](http://www.foodnetwork.com/food/show_cl/episode/0,1976,FOOD_9952_17381,00.html)

**BEET CHILI** by Meg (MWall53895@aol.com)

Beets give this chili an enticing reddish hue. If the leafy greens are in good shape, they can be chopped and added to the chili for an interesting flavor and texture.

1 Tbs. canola oil  
1 medium onion, diced  
1 large stalk celery, chopped  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
3 cups water  
2 cups diced beets  
1 cup white potato, diced  
15-oz. can stewed tomatoes  
2 to 3 tsp. chili powder  
2 tsp. dried oregano  
1 tsp. dried basil  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. ground black pepper  
15-oz. can kidney or other red beans, drained  
2 Tbs. tomato paste  
1 cup chopped beet greens (optional)

Heat oil in large saucepan. Add onion, celery, and garlic, saute until tender but not brown. Stir in water, beets, potatoes, tomatoes, chili powder, oregano, basil, pepper, and salt; bring to a simmer. Cook uncovered over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until beets and potatoes are tender, about 30 minutes. Stir in beans, tomato paste and beet greens. Cook 10 to 15 minutes more over low heat; let stand for 5 to 10 minutes before serving. Can be topped with sour cream if desired. Serve with warm dark or Italian bread.

**Copied from:**  
[http://members.aol.com/ht\\_a/Beetlady/index2.html](http://members.aol.com/ht_a/Beetlady/index2.html)

Check out the above link – I came across it randomly, and it's really funny! And there's a very complicated Borscht recipe there if you are so inclined. –MF

For baby beet, baby carrot, and other baby vegetable recipes, check out the below link:

**Spinach:**

## Spinach Curry

### Ingredients

1 lb. fresh spinach, chopped  
2 Tbs. oil  
1/2 tsp. mustard seed  
6 cloves garlic, minced  
1/4 cup tomato paste  
1/2 tsp. turmeric  
1 Tsp. corrinader powder  
1/2 tsp. cumin poder  
3 Tbs. water  
salt to taste

**General Info:**

Serves:4

**Instructions:**

1. Heat oil in a frying pan over medium heat until it's hot.
2. Add mustard seeds, and let cook until they pop; add garlic and tomato paste; stir and saute 2 minutes
3. Add spinach and all remaining seasonings; stir well and reduce heat to medium low.
4. Cover and cook for 5-8 minutes

**Serving Suggestions & Notes:**

Serve with grilled chicken and Basmati rice for a quick meal.

Copied from:  
<http://www.geocities.com/NapaValley/2267/spinach.html#curryspin>

### **Cabbage:**

Slaw Chez Nous from the New Laurel's Kitchen

2 Tbsp. almonds, sliced or chopped  
2 Tbsp. sesame seeds  
2 ½ c. shredded cabbage  
½ c. carrots, chopped or shredded  
1 Tbsp. olive oil  
1 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar

Toss all ingredients together, serve at room temp. Enjoy!

### Alice Waters' Coleslaw

1 med. Cabbage (about 3 lbs), outer leaves removed  
1 large jalapeno pepper  
½ small red onion, cut in half through the stem, peeled and thinly sliced  
1 c. loosely packed cilantro leaves, coarsely chopped  
3-4 Tbsp. fresh lime juice  
3-4 Tbsp. red wine vinegar  
¼-1/3 c. olive oil  
1 ½ tsp. sea salt, or to taste  
½ tsp. freshly ground pepper, or to taste  
pinch of sugar, or to taste

1. Quarter the cabbage through the core; cut out the core. Cut the quarters crosswise in half; finely shred, using a sharp knife. Place shredded cabbage in a very large bowl or pot (you will have about 5 ½ quarts)
2. Cut open the jalapeno, discard the seeds, and dice finely. Add diced jalapeno, onion, and cilantro to the cabbage, and toss to mix. Sprinkle with lime juice, vinegar, oil, salt, pepper, and sugar, and toss to coat.
3. Let the slaw sit for 1 hour, toss occasionally. Drain, taste, and adjust seasoning. Wait another hour. Serve at room temperature.

### **Tatsoi OR Mei qing choi:**

This isn't exactly a recipe, but here's my favorite way to prepare almost all Asian greens:

1 head tatsoi (dark green, round leaves with pale green stems; in a rosette) OR  
1 head mei qing choi  
1 onion, chopped  
1 Tbsp. grated ginger  
1-4 cloves garlic (your choice)  
a dash of sesame oil  
a dash of tamari (or shoyu)  
a dash of hot chili sauce (like the kind with the rooster on the bottle) (optional)  
a dash of fish sauce (optional; I don't even like fish sauce, but lots of folks do)

Clean and chop greens into bite-sized pieces. Heat oil on medium heat in a stainless steel wok, frying pan, or cast iron skillet. Add onions, sauté til nearly translucent. Add ginger and garlic, sauté a minute or so more, then add the choi (or tatsoi – you'll become well-versed in substituting one choi for another, or one leafy green veggie for another, in recipes this summer). Saute just enough to wilt leaves thoroughly; if you like soft stems, sauté longer; otherwise remove from heat to maintain crisp stems. Toss with tamari, and optional chili and/or fish sauce. Top with a sprinkle of sesame seeds, and serve with rice.

A note from John:

On behalf of all of us at the Student Organic Farm, Welcome! We are pleased to have you all with us to start our second year working together to provide fresh, healthy vegetables for our community. Let me invite members to take time to both welcome each other and continue to encourage and support our dedicated and hard working farmers.

Every day continues to be a learning opportunity and new challenge. We just finished our first year of pulling together ideas from many farms and the experience of many farmers to grow and distribute a wide variety of vegetables for 48 weeks of the year. The accomplishments of the past year are

nothing short of a marvel. With only a one week break the students are ready to go again with twice as many memberships and much new ground to cultivate.

I hope you are as impressed with the student's hard work and dedication as I am. Please take the time to reflect on what it means to have such a dedicated team putting great intention into making the best vegetables possible available for you. We are all a part of an amazing vision and mission to help find a more sustainable food system and to help with our individual and community journey to health and wholeness.

The responsibility of the members to support the farmers is every bit as great as the responsibilities of the farmers to provide healthy vegetables. Supporting the farmers means asking questions, being honest about what you experience that makes you feel good and what you experience that concerns you. We all need to make a commitment to take the time to share thoughts and feelings. Best wishes for a savory summer season.

John Biernbaum  
SOF Faculty Advisor

Thanks so much for reading, and look for this (current) week's newsletter Wednesday night, so you'll know what to expect in your share the next day. Cheers,  
MF