

June 10, 2004

This week's share:

- SOF famous salad mix*
- New potatoes (Rose Gold)*
- Purple OR white Kohlrabi*
- Altaglobe or Easter Egg Radishes*
- Onions
- Broccoli, Cauliflower, or Komatsuna- your choice
- Peas! PSSB shares get a pint; farm shares get U-pick peas (also a pint)
- Herbs: rosemary and mint

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

Announcements:

1. Same old

announcement: Share Balances Due by June 17, 2004. (Next week) You should have received a receipt in the mail by now for your deposit or payment in full. You should also have received a confirmation letter which includes your balance due, if any. Unless we've made alternate arrangements, all balances are due by June 17, 2004 (third Thursday in

June). **Make checks out to MSU.** Either hand-deliver to us at pick-up, or mail to me:

Michelle Ferrarese, MSU Dept. of Horticulture, A288 Plant and Soil Science Building, East Lansing MI 48824. If you split a share, we request that you make out one check for the total balance – it makes our record-keeping simpler. If your receipt and/or confirmation letter has still not arrived, please email or call me at 355-5191 ext. 342.

2. End of an Era: This past week saw the last day of work at the SOF for Lynn Rhodes, one of the original "farm mothers" – students who got together several years ago to dream, vision, and plan the farm. Lynn has been a source of continuity, historical perspective, and good cooking, not to mention organic certification research, organization, and our CSA pick-up site mastermind. We'll miss "Lawnmower Lynn" and her fabulous lunches.

Congratulations on your graduation, Lynn, and have a great trip to Alaska and everything that follows.

3. Volunteers: Thanks so much to those of you who have come out and/or offered to help. I'll be in touch soon if we haven't talked yet. For everyone:

Now's your chance to pitch in at your farm: Weekends, the plants in the hoopouses need watering. We'd like to train a pool of volunteers to learn how to open and water on weekends, so we can either schedule you into our regular weekend shift rotation, or call on you in a pinch if we need a substitute. It takes about two hours total to open and water, but you can learn how to do it in about half an hour. Please email (ferrares@msu.edu) or call (355-5191 ex. 342) to set up a visit to learn the ropes.

3. Organic Certification

Inspection completed: This morning an inspector from Organic Growers of Michigan, the certifying agency through which the farm has applied for organic certification, came to inspect our farm. She found everything in compliance with organic standards, our record-keeping impeccable, our farm plan conforming to the letter and spirit of organic, and we had some great Q and A with her along the way. Students learned

about organic standards, certification, and how to become an inspector. The only concern we all have is possible drift of sprays used on the Hort Farm fruit trees near the east edge of our farm. Our possible solutions include planting a perennial shrubby windbreak near the edge, planting only non-food crops (e.g. flowers, decorative corn, crops intended purely as compost pile ingredients, or just cover crops) in the buffer zone, and continuing to work with the Hort Farm staff and co-researchers out there to reduce and/or plan timing of sprays to minimize drift. The last step in the certification process will be processing the paperwork through OGM and getting their stamp of approval. Of course since we deal directly with our members, instead of selling to anonymous "customers," certification is less a concern for us than it would be for a wholesale farmer – you can come witness and participate in our farm practices any time, and you know our commitment to organic principles. That's part of the beauty of CSA, but soon we'll be official, as well. Thanks to Lynn, John, Melissa, Andy, and everyone who helped make it happen. ☺

New veggies?

“New” potatoes: different from regular old spuds in that they are freshly harvested, no sitting around for these taters. The skins are delicate, papery, and tear easily – no need to peel, if there ever was. We just dug these today, Wednesday, from the potato plants in House 4 – yes, potatoes in the greenhouse! The crazy thing is that we planted these in March, and we’re already harvesting, while we’re just now getting the bulk of the field potatoes in the ground (yes, the ground finally dried out enough to till!). These are a variety called Rose Gold, pink outside and pale yellow inside. I hope you enjoy them, perhaps roasted with olive oil, fresh rosemary (included) and salt and pepper.

Broccoli, Cauliflower, or Komatsuna: We’ve got a lot of Komatsuna, somewhat less broccoli and cauliflower, also from the hoopouses. The early spring brassicas (members of the mustard family, like broccoli, cauliflower, and komatsuna) are in the field, soaking up all this sun and rain, but the ones you received last week, and this week’s, are from the hoopouses. We may cut some of the extra large cauliflowers or broccoli in half so everyone can get some,

but if you prefer komatsuna, by all means, take it. I hope you’ve enjoyed these early treats.

Peas! Peas are just starting to show up in the field – I think we have enough for everyone this week, but not sure; that’s why it’s U-pick for farm shares this week. These are sugar snap and snow peas, and the whole pod is edible, no shelling required. If you have time and inclination to come out back and pick, great. If not, don’t worry, there will be plenty in coming weeks. Also strawberries for U-pickers in coming weeks.... (for snacking; not enough to preserve)

Rosemary and Mint: Well, don’t you just naturally think “rosemary potatoes” when they come in a share together? My favorite thing to do with rosemary is to chop it coarsely, toss cubed potatoes first with lemon juice, then with olive oil, then with rosemary, salt, and pepper, and bake spread thin on a cookie sheet at 375 for about 45 min, or until the edges are nice and browned. Mmm..... You can do a similar thing with parsley, just don’t cook the parsley – do everything else the same, but add the parsley (generously) as potatoes come out of the oven, and toss to mix.

Mint—do we need to say it again? Sun Tea! Get a big glass jar or pitcher with a cover, put a big handful of mint in there, fill with water, cover, and set in the sun for a few hours, or as long as you can wait. You can also get fancy and freeze mint leaves into ice cubes for use in any iced tea, mint juleps, soda water, etc. Hint: make a tray of ice cubes only partially full (half sized cubes), then lay a mint leaf on each half-cube, and fill the rest of the way up with water. As long as the mint doesn't float up, you'll get leaves in the middle of the cubes. You can do this with anything, of course, not just mint – lemon thyme flowers (which are edible) are pretty in ice cubes, as are violets (also edible), lemon balm leaves, or anything you like in iced drinks.

That's it.

Short and sweet again- Cheers,
MF