

August 5, 2004

This week's share:

- Tomatoes (just a couple each – they're just starting to trickle in, and those will be U-pick for folks who pick up at the farm)
- Green beans! They are also just starting, so there may be just a handful each, but they'll come on strong in the next few weeks. (If you like picking beans, we can use volunteer help Thursday and Monday afternoons between 1:00 and 3:30)
- Kale – either green curly (“Winterbor”), red curly (“Redbor”), or dino (a.k.a. Lacinato, the dark green savoyed-leaf kale)
- Beets – mixed bunches of red beets, Chioggia (the “bullseye” one) and golden beets
- Braising mix (Remember that? It's essentially a stir-fry mix or hearty salad –spicy!)
- Radishes (French Breakfast)
- Baby spinach
- Green spring cabbage (yes, it's definitely summer, but they were planted in the spring....)
- Either Broccoli OR Carrots – there's not enough of either for everyone, so it's your choice this week
- Herbs: Dill (leaf and/or flower) and Basil (Either “regular” Genovese, purple, or lemon--U-pick for farm shares)
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Specials for U-Pickers: Extra collard greens and kale (any juicers out there?), basil (just enough for one good pesto batch – more on the way, though!), dill flowers (only leaf included in shares), fresh flowers for bunching (also just starting – more to come), and weeds! If you come out to pick herbs, flowers, or greens, you may just be recruited to weed around them as you pick.... Consider yourself warned, and ask us for gloves and/or hoes if you'd like! ☺

Announcements:

1. Fall Shares now available for current CSA members: The last week of this summer CSA session is approaching, and we want to make sure our current members have plenty of time to renew memberships before we offer shares to the folks on the waitlist. As a current, summer member, you have until August 19 (that's two Thursdays from now) to reserve your share, with a guaranteed spot. After the 19th, you can still join, but your spot is no longer guaranteed; you'll be taken on a first-pay, first-served basis along with the folks on the waitlist. What you need to do: Send or bring either the full \$350

(same as for summer session) or a \$150 deposit, balance to be paid later this fall. Either one will reserve your share. **Make checks out to MSU (please no cash), and write “Fall CSA” on the memo line. Either bring to CSA pick-up, or mail to Michelle Ferrarese, Dept. of Horticulture, A280 Plant and Soil Science Building, East Lansing MI 48824.** If you are splitting a share, please send only one check for you and your share partner, and if you have a new share partner, please include their contact info with your payment. If your address, email, or phone number has changed since the beginning of summer session, also include that new info with your check.

Fall session will run Sept-mid-Dec, for sixteen weeks, just like summer, and share sizes will be comparable, though we'll start getting into the heavier fall crops like winter squash, pumpkins, onions, rutabaga, etc. Since spring came so late this year, I suspect that the bulk of our summer crops will actually come in during the fall session, so I hope you'll stay with us to reap the bounty of the planting we've done thanks to your support this summer!

2. The coolers at the Hort Farm are now back up and running! For you, this means that we'll be able to pick beans, cucumbers, summer squash, etc. – anything that requires daily harvesting—and keep it fresh until Thursday's pick-up. Also, if you need to miss a Thursday pick-up, we'll be able to bag a share for you and store it in our cooler, to be picked up Friday. We do, of course, request that you plan to pick up Thursday, since the Hort Farm crew uses the building where the cooler is, and there are tractors, trucks, and people coming and going all day most days – it's safer and easier all around to come on Thursday.

3. Garlic Braiding Workshop for CSA

members and friends – Next Thursday (Aug. 12) we'll be braiding garlic during CSA pick-up. If you are a member, you are invited to join us for a complimentary tutorial and small garlic braid that you'll make yourself, to take home. If you are not a member, you are also invited, and encouraged to make a donation to the SOF for the garlic (free instruction). The workshop will be short and informal, from 4:30-5:00, back at the farm (not in the building where you pick up shares), so

you'll have plenty of time afterward to pick up your share. Please RSVP by email BEFORE next Wednesday, so we can make sure we have enough garlic to braid! Adults and kids welcome.

4. Let's have a round of applause for the student farmers AND all our wonderful volunteers who pitched in for harvest the last couple of weeks! Thanks to our hard-working student farmers, and to our generous volunteers, I was able to take two weeks off in the heart of the growing season and go up north, to Isle Royale, practically unheard of in a normal farm season. We've got a truly great and competent farm crew this year, and a handful of enthusiastic volunteers, and the season, while starting off soggy and progressing steadily into weedy, is going great. No complaints, and lots of heartfelt appreciation for our CSA community. Thank you all.

5. New Student Farmers Wanted: Fall semester is coming up, and with it classes, and with classes, fewer student farmers on the farm. The plants still need tending, though, and the CSA still needs staffing, so we'll be interviewing prospective new employees over the next month. If you or anyone you know is

interested in working at the farm as a paid position (you can ALWAYS volunteer!), please contact John Biernbaum (biernbau@msu.edu) as soon as possible.

6. Last but not least, I'd like to formally honor our Hoer of the Month, for the month of July, Fred "Dirtball" Monroe, who nearly singlehandedly kept our onions in the clear, House 4 weed-free, and relentlessly stalks the weeds in their elusive "white thread stage," hoe in hand, every day of the week. Congratulations and THANKS, Fred!

New veggies?

What is new this week....
Hmmm.... The students have been in charge the last few weeks, so I'm not sure what's really new to you – I know I'm pretty excited for tomatoes to finally start coming in!

This week is the official last week of anything resembling spring crops – spinach (though it seems to do well, at least as baby leaf, in the hoop house in July/Aug, perhaps to be reclassified as an "under plastic" summer crop -?), early cabbage, lettuce (optional extra for farm shares; not enough for all shares), and radishes (though more are on their way for fall). It is with resignation and a sense of "well,

finally!” that we bid spring farewell, this first week of August ☺, and usher in summer in full force next week. Next week will see the first of our “salsa special” shares – tomato, pepper, onion, cilantro, parsley, etc. – all the makings of a delicious fresh salsa, among other things. But for now...

Have you seen **basil** already? There is enough basil for everyone to make one batch of pesto this week, and more to come next week and beyond. If you’re interested in a large batch for preserving (freezing pesto works well), let me know. Tonight we made a simple salad of chopped tomatoes, *chiffonaded* purple basil, chopped parsley, sea salt, black pepper, and a dash of olive oil. How delicious – I highly recommend it.

U-pick collards, kale, fresh flowers, and extra herbs: Michael Rodriguez will be out at the farm to direct U-pickers to each of these crops and show you harvesting methods – if you have time, you’re also invited to weed around them as you harvest – much needed, much appreciated. See Michael for specifics when you head out back.

Green beans are new this week! These beans are so delicious and fresh that I’ll be surprised if you even get them home before they’re gone – but if so, let me know if you have any favorite preparation ideas. My favorite is fresh, raw, in the field, while harvesting, but lightly steamed with either a dash of vinegar or butter is tasty, too.

Does everyone know **dill**? It’s traditionally used to make cucumber pickles, but you can use it in fresh veggie salads (especially with cuke, zuke, tomato, or cabbage salads) in tandem with salt and vinegar – a trio that always works together. You can also make a dill-chive-or-onion-or-whatever dip, with dill, salt, pepper, herbs, and half sour cream (or yogurt) and half cream cheese. Melissa traditionally starts making her famous Yard Dip around the time dill shows up, and if dill comes up in her yard, it goes in the dip (if not, something else does). I also have seen recipes for chilled creamy carrot-dill soup – never tried it, but it sounds good. Also, check out the Hungarian Mushroom Soup in the Moosewood cookbook – in general for Moosewood recipes, double all the spices (sometimes triple), and they are delicious – use all the dill you can stand or

get your hands on for the Hungarian Mushroom Soup, if you're a dill-hound. And fresh mushrooms – and real Hungarian paprika. Just FYI, we are growing paprika peppers this year, for drying, to be distributed this winter, along with cayenne and other hot chiles. So if you stay with us through the winter (Jan-April), you'll see those dried chiles that you can now see growing in the hoopouses and field.

And last but definitely most (prolific and nutritious), I know you know what **kale** is, but do you know how nutritious and delicious it can be? At the end of this section is a bunch of info I got from the web about the wonders of kale and collards – I was surprised to learn the history of these greens, but we all know they're good for you. I hope you enjoy the articles.

“No one can imagine a CSA without kale.” –David Hambleton, Farm Manager at Sisters Hill Farm in New York

COLLARD GREENS AND KALE

<http://www.molliekatzen.com/superfoods/superfood0299.htm>

Both of these humble, heroic vegetables are ancient (meaning they've been cultivated for a long, long time and, botanically, have been tampered with little over the millenia) "headless" members of the cabbage family. Neither of them has yet gained wide culinary acceptance in the United States (with the exception of the Southeast). This is changing now, with a broadening awareness of vegetable cookery in general, and of nutritional concerns in particular.

Nutritionally Speaking: Kale is a superstar! It is virtually loaded with calcium, potassium, indoles (cancer-fighting substances), beta-carotenes, and other antioxidants. Collards have the same nutrients, but in lesser concentration. Making friends with these two leafy greens is a good idea.

Culinarily Speaking: Kale, which is now available in many varieties, including purple, Russian, and "dinosaur" kale, is a bitter green, and is most palatable when combined with other, sweeter ingredients, especially caramelized onions (my favorite kale companion). See the recipes for [Bitter Greens with Sweet Onions and Sour Cherries](#) and [Kale Crunch](#).

Collard greens have a much softer, sweeter taste than kale. When you combine the two greens in the same dish, the mild collard flavor mitigates the sharpness of the kale.

From the author of the Moosewood cookbooks, Mollie Katzen

Buying and Storing: Leafy greens are officially "in season" in the winter months, but tend to be available year-round. Choose leaves that are crisp and fresh and have a deep green color, with no yellow tinge. Smaller leaves have a milder flavor, can be cooked whole, and often have stems tender enough to eat. With larger leaves, you'll need to cut out and discard the stems, and then chop the leaves into small pieces.

Store kale and collard greens in dry plastic bags in the refrigerator for up to three days. You can also cook the greens, and store them in the freezer in sealed plastic bags. They'll keep for months, so you can use them spontaneously in soups or casseroles when you don't have time to get to the store.

Kale o rama from
<http://www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/horticulture/nf51.htm>

Kale: The "New" Old Vegetable

*Laurie Hodges, Ph. D. Extension Specialist —
Commercial Vegetable Production*

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Kale is the one of the oldest forms of cabbage, originating in the eastern Mediterranean. Kale is thought to have been used as a food crop as early as 2000 B. C. Theophrastus described a savoyed form of kale in 350 B.C. Travelers and immigrants through the ages have introduced this green vegetable to many parts of the world.

The curly leaves of kale are among the most nutritious vegetables. One 3.5-ounce

serving of kale provides all the adult daily requirement of vitamin A and C and 13 percent of the calcium requirement. Kale is used as a green vegetable, steamed and served with butter or vinegar, or in soups. Much of the present production is used as decoration on salad bars since kale is less likely to wilt than lettuce or other greens.

Kale is tolerant of cold temperatures and is especially sweet following a light frost. Production is mainly from Norfolk, Virginia to Long Island, New York where it can be spread over a long, mild winter season. Smaller production areas are scattered throughout the U. S.

Cultivars of kale differ primarily in leaf color and texture, but selections and availability are limited. Scotch types have extremely curled, wrinkled, and finely divided leaves with color ranging from bright green to yellowish-green. Varieties include Dwarf Green Curled Scotch, Dwarf Blue Curled Scotch, and Tall Green Curled Scotch. Hybrid kale such as Blue Knight, Blue Armor, and Winterbor tends to be more uniform in plant size, leaf texture, and the preferred blue-green color.

Blue-green color is commonly associated with greater cold tolerance. Smooth-leaf Siberian kale (Hanover salad) is not commonly grown. Some specialty seed dealers sell Red Russian kale, an heirloom cultivar with wavy leaves. The veins and stems of Red Russian are blue-green in warm weather but turn red in cold weather. Varieties sold as "flowering kale" are used as ornamental plants or for decoration. Although edible, it is not as palatable as regular kale. Seed of "flowering kale" is available through flower seed dealers rather than vegetable seed dealers.

Recipes:

Kale, White Bean, and Sweet Potato Soup

Serves 6

For a vegetarian version of this soup, substitute Homemade Vegetable Stock for the chicken stock.

- 1/2 cup dried cannellini beans
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 1 small onion, cut into quarters
- 1 head garlic
- Salt
- 1/2 cup tubetti (small tube-shaped pasta)
- 1 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 small leeks, rinsed, white and light-green parts cut in half lengthwise and thinly sliced
- 1 sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 bunch kale (3/4 pound)
- 6 cups Homemade Chicken Stock, or canned low-sodium chicken broth, skimmed of fat
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. Place beans in a large bowl, and cover with water. Let soak overnight, and drain.
2. Cut a 7-inch square of cheesecloth. Place 1 rosemary sprig at one end, and roll, enclosing sprig; secure with kitchen twine. Place beans, wrapped rosemary, onion, and 6 cups water in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to a simmer, and cook until beans are just tender, about 25 minutes. Drain beans in a colander. Discard onion and rosemary; set beans aside.

3. Heat oven to 425°. Wrap garlic in aluminum foil. Cook until soft, about 40 minutes. Remove garlic from oven, and allow to cool. Slice garlic in half crosswise, and squeeze, removing cloves; set cloves aside.

4. Bring a large stockpot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add tubetti, and cook until al dente, about 8 minutes. Transfer to a colander, drain, and set aside.

5. Place a 6-quart low-sided saucepan over medium heat. Add olive oil; heat until oil is hot but not smoking. Add leeks, remaining sprig rosemary, and roasted garlic cloves. Cook until leeks become translucent. Add sweet potato; cook, stirring until the potato pieces just begin to soften, about 8 minutes.

6. Add kale; cook until kale begins to wilt, about 4 minutes. Add stock; cook until potato pieces are tender, about 10 minutes. Add reserved beans, pasta, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and pepper. Cook until heated through, about 5 minutes. Divide among six plates; serve.

Per serving: 472 calories, 4 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 93 g carbohydrate, 726 mg sodium, 17 g protein, 5 g dietary fiber.

Just to reiterate, please pass along to farm friends who don't get the newsletter.

Thanks!

SOF Wish List :

We've been working up a SOF Wish List – mostly items

that we could buy, but prefer to reuse if you've got them and are not using them. Check your garage, basement, shed, etc. and see if you can donate any of these items:

1. Used pickup truck or van, to be used on-farm only (i.e. not for use on roads), for running produce and supplies from the back to the front of the Hort Farm and vice versa. We've been using my truck, which is fine as long as I'm here, but I'll be leaving next year.

2. A tune-up, oil change, and car wash for my truck ☺

3.

4. Large coolers (ice chests, not walk-ins, though one of those would be nice, too!)

5. A walk-behind lawnmower, preferably the human-powered reel mower style, but any push-mower will do

6. Useful hand tools: shovels/spades, a large mulching pitchfork, digging/spading forks, a machete, a heavy-duty old-fashioned hoe, fencepost pounder

7. paintbrushes!

8. Weatherproof shelving unit, i.e. plastic Rubbermaid upright shelves with locking doors

9. 5-gallon plastic buckets, preferably from food products

10. A large Gardenway cart

11. Wheelbarrows

12. Sawhorses

13. A battery-operated drill

14. Extra-long (150 ft. or more) tape measure

15. A 4-ft. segment of 18-24" diameter PVC or other heavy-duty pipe (not concrete)

16. Miscellaneous: old towels/rags, large (long) knives, large (1/2 gallon or more) glass jars with lids, sponges, rubber boots, watering cans, and snacks – thanks so much to those of you who have brought snacks out to the farm! The farmers appreciate any and all snacks all the time.

17. Massages: we'll take donations or barter extra produce for massages for farmers.