



MSU STUDENT ORGANIC FARM FARM NEWSLETTER

March 22, 2005

In your share this week

- Stir fry mix
- Komatsuna
- Pac choi
- Collard greens
- Scallions
- Onions
- Carrots
- Squash
- Celeriac
- Potatoes

Announcements

Mural Finishing Party! Saturday, April 1, at 9:00 AM in the distribution room.

Folks who like to paint, draw, or scrapbook, we need your help! Last spring we started painting the distribution room, but we still need some creative souls to help us finish! We will also have member photos that need a lovely little frame to put on our farm friends board. Bring any scrapbook supplies you have, paint, and glue and we will spend a morning being crafty. Show off your cooking talent and feel free to bring any nourishment that others may appreciate!

“Edible Forest”

The deadline for making “edible forest garden” contributions has been extended to April 19. Jay will be at the farm mulching paths in the garden this Thursday from 1–4:00 PM and this Saturday from 10 AM–2:00 PM if anyone would like to join him for volunteer hours. Information on the edible forest garden concepts can be found at <http://www.edibleforestgardens.com>. Please contact Jay with any questions at tomczak1@msu.edu or (616) 293-7208.

CSA Share Price Adjustment

Please also see the summary, included in this newsletter, of the Core Group meeting where members were invited and came to share their thoughts and ideas about the price adjustment.

After much thought, consideration, consultation, and discussion, the SOF CSA coordinating team (John, Laurie, Jeremy, Corie, Jay, Melissa, and Toby (as the Core Group liaison) has determined that the new share cost for the next four sessions will be \$460. As previously discussed, a primary reason for the needed adjustment includes covering a

greater share of the CSA operating costs, which are no longer supported by grants. The magnitude of the change and actual cost were strongly influenced by trying to be fair to both our members and to other Michigan CSA farmers and with consideration of our commitment to our food values and sustainable agriculture. We regret that we need to make a 30 percent adjustment all at one time, and we make a commitment to the membership that in the future a 5 to 10 percent increase will be made as needed based on the cost of production at the start of each fall session.

In our discussion with members over the last several weeks we learned that how members relate to the cost varies and they either prefer the daily, weekly, or seasonal cost breakdown—So we are providing all three in the following table to illustrate the change.

*New Share Price \$460.00 per session
Cost Per Share (intended for 4 people)*

Period	Day	Week	Session
Current ('03 to '06)	\$3.13	\$21.88	\$350
Summer' 06	\$4.11	\$28.75	\$460
Fall '07 and forward	5-10% annual increase each fall to reflect increased costs of production		

A reminder that renewals (deposits = \$230, or payment in full) for summer session are due Wednesday, April 12. If you have questions, concerns, or comments about the price adjustment or anything else, please talk to Corie or Jeremy at distribution or contact us via e-mail, piercee@msu.edu or moghtad1@msu.edu.

We thank you for your continued support and involvement with your Student Organic Farm CSA, as we engage students in learning about organic food production and provide local organic produce year round to the members of our community.

CORE Notes, Including Meeting Minutes Discussing the Share Price Adjustment

Here are a few notes to catch you up on the last CORE group meeting.

Many thanks to those who could make it, particularly a few newbies: Laska, Bill Kandler, Carolyn Dulai, and Corie Pierce, as well as old-timers Laurie, Charlotte, Margaret, Barb Mitchell, John, Jeremy, Liz, and Phil. Remember, all are welcome to come!

We discussed the adjustments in share prices further by opening with the opportunity to ask questions and hear the insight of the farm management team. We all tended to agree that in order to support local organic farmers as well the philosophies of the SOF, we should raise the share price with incremental adjustments annually. Other interesting conversation arose about working towards a living wage, food access and security for lower income families, and wondering at the value of Michigan-grown winter Pac choi. We also mentioned continually working towards open-mindedness and cultivating a comfort level among members to encourage them to voice their opinions, expressions of dissatisfaction, and positive feedback.

We have also been thinking about how the Core Group can help facilitate the service requirement. We had questions about what an effective system for member service requirement management looks like. At the meeting, Corie and Laska expressed interest in developing this further and we have plans to meet as small committees sometime in the near future. If anyone else would like to help out, please let me know.

Our next Core meeting is **Monday, April 3, at 7:00 PM**, location to be determined—if nice, maybe at the farm—or we might still be at PSS.

If you have any questions, feel free to call Liz (420-2372) or e-mail driscoll.elizabeth@gmail.com.

Bee Project

The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming!

The SOF/RISE Bee Team is pleased to announce that we will soon be home to four Russian queens and their thousands of loyal workers and drones. Yes, we will have four educational/demonstration hives at the SOF. Our busy bees will help with the pollination of our fruits and veggies and of course there will be honey! Joe Riddle, freshman RISE student and Katie Wharton, CSA member and zoology grad student, are our resident apiculturists. Joe brings years of experience keeping bees at his family beekeeping business in Pennsylvania and Katie is working on her PhD studying the behavior of bees. Who could ask for more?! If you are interested in learning more about the art of beekeeping, please send Laurie Thorp, thorpl@msu.edu, your name and e-mail and we will put you on the Bee Team list.

Bee Factoid:

Bees, via pollination, are responsible for 15 to 30 percent of the food that U.S. consumers eat. But in the last 50 years the domesticated honeybee population—which most farmers depend on for pollination—has declined by about 50 percent according to the USDA. Feral honeybee populations have declined by 70-90 percent. For more information I recommend Gary Nabhan's article, *Our Forgotten Pollinators*, available online.

Recipes

Coconut Curry Komatsuna

Chop and simmer komatsuna, garlic, and onion with olive oil. Add 1 can of coconut milk and a few shakes of curry powder. Cayenne powder optional.

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