



MSU STUDENT ORGANIC FARM FARM NEWSLETTER

June 14, 2006

In your share this week

- Baby Salad Mix
- Lettuce
- Kohlrabi
- Sugar Snap Peas!!
- Collards
- Lacinato Kale
- Dill
- Radishes

STRAWBERRIES! They are coming in....you can PICK YOUR OWN, please only pick about a half quart. We want to have enough to go around...

EXTRAS:

Please remember to use the TRADE TABLE. If you don't want something in the share, please bring YOUR share to the table so someone else can enjoy it. And then feel free to help yourself to something at the table.

Announcements

SHARE SPLITTING!

As many of you know, many of you split a share. We just wanted to remind you all of the procedure for share splitting. Please have ONE member of your share take the WHOLE share from the table and then split the share for all the involved parties. If you come together, you can do it together. If you come separately, please coordinate with each other about WHO will gather your share, and then leave the second half on the counter. We have had a few problems with some folks not communicating and BOTH people taking whole shares. We want to continue to offer the splitting option, but need to make sure that the procedures are followed by all who take advantage of the split share. Thank you!

KITTEN!!

We have a new addition to the farm!! Meet TRIP! Our new farm kitten.... we have received the official blessing of the managers of the Horticulture Farm to allow Trip to live at the Student Organic Farm. Holly, one of the interns, brought us this character to help us control the mice population and just to spice up the workhouse with some fun animal energy. He has taken to the farm like a bee on honey. He is adorable and a welcomed

addition. He is still quite young and we are happy to have all the kids play with him, but we ask that we be gentle with him as he grows up.

Work Party Last Saturday!

Yet another successful work party. We had many women (and a few men...) out at the farm. We achieved a lot of weeding, irrigation laying, wood sorting, spinach ripping out, among other tasks....oh, and strawberry eating! Thank you all for coming out.

Organic Farming Certificate Program

Last week I gave you a brief description of the proposed Certificate Program that we are working on and I listed all of the courses that are going to be offered. This week, I wanted to get into a little more detail about how the program will work, who we expect to apply, what we expect graduates to get out of it. It is exciting, and it is important for you all to know about this program. In order to make something like this happen, we need all the support we can get and it is important for you all, as members of our CSA, to understand what else we are working on besides the operation of the farm.

In an ideal world, given the interest and demand for local organic produce, we would expand our CSA to double, triple or even quadruple the size. We have the waitlist, as many of you know....it kills me not to be able to offer a share to everyone on the waitlist and I wish that we could expand, but we need to keep all of the goals of the farm in check and one of the biggest goals is continued education and outreach opportunities, to teach more people how to grow their own food and to run viable organic farms. We have a long way to go to make the January 2007 start date happen and so balancing the operation of the farm with development of the classes and program structure is our daily, weekly and monthly challenge.

The team working on the Certificate Program includes John Biernbaum, Jeremy Moghtader, Laurie Thorp, Jay Tomczak, Melissa Timm-Cook and myself. One of our CORE CSA members, Toby Salzman acts as our liaison between the CSA and the farm crew, and she also helps us with vision, development and goal setting for the Certificate Program. All of us play some sort of role in running the farm, writing curriculum, recruiting students, advertising about the program, writing grants to pay for our salaries, managing the interns and other student workers at the farm.

Okay, now for the details about the program. Here is the lowdown....

Organic Farming Certificate Program

Michigan State University is happy to announce the proposed Organic Farming Certificate Program. The program consists of course work and practical training and management of a 10 acre organic farm. In addition, students are required to complete a 3-4 month, off-site internship or apprenticeship on a working farm. This program will begin in January of 2007, the MSU Spring semester.

This Certificate Program provides both hands on learning opportunities at the MSU Student Organic Farm together with classroom learning to prepare graduates for careers in organic farming, food security and other sustainable agriculture related careers. Some of the courses are available on-line and all courses can be taken either for credit or not for credit.

This program is one-of-a-kind as students are trained to operate a unique, 4 season, 48 week Community Supported Agriculture program (CSA) that provides fresh vegetables and herbs **YEAR ROUND** and fruit and flowers for 6 months, to more than 50 families. In addition to traditional field scale production, the farm uses unheated greenhouses and cold storage facilities to be the **only** educational organic farm that operates a year round CSA in a cold climate. Other independent learning projects and management opportunities are key components of the Certificate Program.

For more information about the Student Organic Farm please go to www.msuorganicfarm.com.

This program was developed because the need for small scale, organic growers is increasing every day, especially in cold climates.

All people who wish to promote sustainability through food systems are great candidates for this program and more specifically:

- 1) *Current Students (of all disciplines) Interested in Sustainable Agriculture:* Students interested in farming, sustainability, environmental science, environmental / experiential education, and other related careers. Students at colleges or universities with gardens or farms but no supporting agriculture or farming courses. Students interested in starting their own sustainable businesses.
- 2) *Current and New Adult Farmers:* Smaller scale farmers seeking classes and experience in organic farming. Farmers who are considering converting to organic. Farmers wishing to expand their business by doing season extension.
- 3) *Urban and Community Farmers and Gardeners, Educators:* People seeking to contribute to personal, local and national food security by developing a less centralized food system. Educators wanting to incorporate organic and sustainable food systems into their teachings.

Program Description:

The program consists of classroom coursework and on-farm internship based learning at the MSU Student Organic Farm (SOF). The SOF is a small-scale, year-round, diversified organic farm (vegetable, fruit, herbs and flowers) and is located on the campus of Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI. The SOF has been developed with over \$400,000 of research, teaching and outreach grants and is currently growing vegetables year round in 10,000 sq. ft. of greenhouses and on 8 acres of certified organic land. The

farm supports a 50 member CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) and generates over \$50,000 in sales.

The goal of the Organic Farming Certificate Program is to successfully train and develop people who will take their education and practical work experience and open their own farms, work closely with existing farmers to support and promote sustainable agriculture, educate others about the movement, and generally make a commitment to a career and lifestyle within organic farming.

To apply to the Organic Farming Certificate Program, candidates must have a high school diploma, competency in math and writing, and a strong desire to contribute positively to the sustainable agriculture movement. In addition, some experience in farming, environmental education, or a related field is desired. Classes will be 100, 200 and 300 level courses. The Certificate will be awarded to those participants who have completed 40 credits in Organic Farming and a 3 to 4 month internship on a commercial working farm other than SOF, their own, or previous farms where they worked.

Stay Tuned...if you are interested in more information; feel free to contact me, Corie Pierce at piercee@msu.edu. I would be happy to tell you more about it!

LOCAL, SUSTAINABLE, COMMUNITY ORIENTED BUSINESSES

I want to do a profile of local businesses that are doing great things for our community....I wanted to ask YOU all for some ideas of businesses I can write about. I have a list going, but wanted to ask you all for your thoughts. Please send ideas to me at piercee@msu.edu. I will pick one or two a week to do a profile on.

Recipes

Charlotte, one of our CORE members, made a recipe recently that had been in the newsletter and it was SO good that I am going to write it up again!

Kale and Blue Cheese Toasts

Garlic
Blue Cheese
Kale- finely chopped and steamed until soft
French Baguette
Olive oil
salt to taste

Prepare kale, set aside. Mix together cheese, garlic and kale (once cooled). Slice baguette, put on cookie sheet, drizzle each slice with olive oil, toast in the oven until lightly browned, place a small spoonful of kale / cheese mixture onto each slice of toast and serve! Easy and yummy.

Spicy Green Pasta

Any kind of pasta (I prefer farfelle or bowtie)

Kale- finely chopped

garlic

hot red pepper flakes

parmesan

salt

olive oil

pine nuts

Cook pasta. Sautee kale in T of olive oil and T water until soft, set aside. Mix together kale, red pepper flakes, salt, olive oil. In a large bowl, mix pasta, kale mixture, and parmesan and pine nuts. You can also add sautéed mushrooms or anything else, really!