



# MSU STUDENT ORGANIC FARM FARM NEWSLETTER

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July 12, 2005

## ***In your share this week***

### *New Veggies!*

- Summer squash/zucchini
- Peppers
- Field broccoli

### *Yummy Roots and Bulbs*

- Carrots
- Beets
- Kohlrabi

### *Greens, Greens, Greens*

- Kale
- Chard
- Tatsoi
- Lettuce – butterhead

### *Herbs*

- Garlic scapes
- Scallions
- Basil – lemon/lime and Thai

### *More lovely flower bunches!*

### *U-Pick or Extras*

- Peas
- Flowers
- Cucumbers
- Fava beans
- Dill

### *Coming soon, to a CSA near you!*

- Tomatoes, cucumbers, beans....

## ***Reminder!!***

As I am sure you have noticed, the shares are getting really LARGE. We want to give out what we have, and we have started our annual food donations to local food banks. Please, if you are unable to use all of your share (like all the greens) please leave it behind on the trade table. When we have extras, we are happy to donate it. I know it can feel frustrating to not be able to eat up all of your share on a given week, so, I encourage you to assess your traveling and eating schedule for the week and take or leave what you think you will use.

## ***CSA PICK UP DAY TO CHANGE!!***

Come this fall semester, we will have a farm stand on campus. We did it last year, and it was a huge hit. It was a great opportunity for the student farmers to learn marketing vegetables and flowers directly. Also, it was a great way for the Student Organic Farm to get more exposure among the undergraduate students, allow for more undergraduates to eat SOF food, and garner more participation in the EFFS student club (Ecological Food and Farm Stewardship). Our farm stand will be near the ROCK, by the Auditorium on Farm Lane, and the hours will be Thursdays, most likely from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

In order to streamline our harvesting, we will need to change our CSA pick up day to Thursdays as well. Another reason for the switch to Thursday is that next January, when

the Certificate Program starts, the students will have classes on Wednesday. This shift the distribution day will happen starting this fall session, which starts August 30. (The last day for the current summer session is August 23). Please let us know if you have any concerns!

### ***Skill Share August 19***

You might remember hearing about the anticipated skill share. It has been scheduled for Saturday, August 19 (two Saturdays before school starts). The day will have a series of workshops and then a potluck lunch. More details about the final schedule will come when we have all the workshop leaders in place.

This will be a great time to come to the farm and share your unique, creative, practical, and interesting skills with one another OR to learn from your fellow CSA members and farmers. To inspire you, some members and farmers have already decided to host workshops on yoga, knitting, yogurt and cheese making, bike repair, and drawing. Other possible workshops include herbs (teas and tinctures), wine making, fermentation (kim chee and sauerkraut), and others. If you have a skill you want to share, there will be forms ready to pick up during CSA that you can turn in to us for the next few weeks while we plan (so the sooner you turn it in, the better!) I can't wait to see all your great skills and talents! Also, mark your calendars to come as a participant for this unique, fun, NON-work party day at the farm. (Phew! We need more of those non-work parties!!).

### ***Check Out Our Flowers!***

As many of you noticed, we had a bounty of bunched cut flowers last week. The trend will continue and grow, with large bunches available for \$6 and small bunches for \$4. Also, the u-pick flowers will continue to be an option for those of you who love to pick your own. We will have more and more available to pick your own; we are excited about the variety this year and are anxiously awaiting the snaps, gomphrena, lavatera, nigella, bells of Ireland, cosmos, and a few other varieties. We will have sunflowers all summer and into the fall too.

### ***Great Work Party Saturday***

Thanks to all the members who came out to the work party on the July 8. We weeded all the corn (whew!) and a field that is fallow (no crops) so we can get our cover crop in weed free. We also weeded the mulch in front of the hoop-houses and planted some lovely flowers. Thanks for all your hard work!

### ***Local Businesses Doing Sustainable, Community-minded Work***

Michael Belt, a CSA member, is doing some work with us on our proposed teaching structure that we are hoping to build soon. I mentioned him in the last newsletter. As a reminder, this shade structure is critical to the farm—for us to gather out there, for work parties, and to teach classes, we need to have shade! What better way than to have a student-designed, beautiful structure as the gathering spot on the farm? Tom Becker and Tim Heuer, both SOF employees and MSU students, have put a lot of work into this design. Now, in working with Michael, they are getting closer to coming up with a design

that will be approved by the university powers and something we'll be able to make happen.

We wanted to highlight some of the work that Michael's group is doing. Following is an example of one of the projects his firm is working on. We are extremely lucky to have him helping us out and to have a group like this in our community! Check out the Rain Garden below! What a cool way to use storm water efficiently!

**Project:** Proposed Palmer, Bush & Jensen Family Funeral Home

**Owner:** Alan and Susan Jensen

**Statistics of Featured Project:** New one-story frame structure (approx. 9,000 sq.ft.) on approximately 20 acres on the southwest corner at Holt and Eifert Rds., Holt, MI

**Designer:** Ledy Design Group

**Surveyor:** Ledy Survey Group.

**Ecologist:** Water and Woods Ecology

**Contractor:** The Hoekstra Company

Ledy Design Group, here in Lansing, Michigan, has recently completed plans for construction of a new facility for the proposed Palmer, Bush & Jensen Family Funeral Home on a beautiful site at Holt and Eifert Roads. Rain garden design is one of the highlights featured on a site adjacent to a designated wetland.

Rain garden design, which models Mother Nature, is currently the local preference for accommodating and cleansing storm water. In brief, this is how it works:

Rainwater is allowed to flow from our streets and impervious surfaces into our regional lakes and streams. Local agencies are encouraging rain garden application to improve water quality. Rain Gardens are naturally designed keep rainfall close to where it falls, thereby reducing the impact on our lakes, streams, and local wildlife. A rain garden is an abundantly planted area acting as a micro-detention pond. The rain garden's specialty plantings and prescribed subsoils provide a natural way to reduce the amount of collected rainfall. Using the concept of bioretention, these gardens actually remove potential pollutants from the storm water and help natural infiltration.

Where will rain gardens work? Virtually everywhere! Homeowners and commercial developers alike can create a shallow depression in the landscape and add sand and/or gravel layered with organic mulch topping, thus creating a garden plot. How friendly this would be to our environment! The choices of seeds, seedlings, and selected mature deep-rooted plantings are virtually unlimited. Hardy native species that like wet feet and can withstand occasional dry spells such as New England aster, sedges, march marigold, swamp milkweed, etc. are only a few.

On large commercial developments, professional consultants are recommended, especially if the area is within 500 feet of a designated wetland.

The new Palmer, Bush, and Jensen Family Funeral Home will feature several abundantly planted rain gardens and is coming soon in a neighborhood near you. Stop by and take a look and learn.

Michael Belt, AIA  
Ledy Design Group Architect

### **Sources:**

Maplewood Public Works Brochure: See Rainwater Gardens at [www.ci.maplewood.mn.us](http://www.ci.maplewood.mn.us)  
*Rainy-Day Gardens*, by Maryalice Koehne

*Rain Gardens of West Michigan*, West Michigan Environmental Action Council,  
[www.raingardens.org](http://www.raingardens.org).

### **Chicken News**

Unfortunately, we lost four of our five chicks to Mother Nature (either avian predators or by chicks slipping through the fence). Fortunately, it appears that one of our hens may be brooding, which means she doesn't want to do anything but sit, sit, sit! If she really is brooding, (hatching out some chicks) we will do our best to encourage her to become a mom and soon enough we can have a crew of happy little chicks! We will keep you posted.

### **Check out your Family Tree!**

During CSA you can check out the (in-progress) Farm Family Tree, which Mitra has been working on (in large part thanks to Liz' photos) in an effort to unify our names and faces so we can all see how big our family is and appreciate our unique community. The members will be on the leaves; the core members, professors and managers will be on the trunk; and the interns and farmers will be on the roots.

\*\*If you don't see yourself or your family on the tree, please bring a photo with the names on the back to CSA and Mitra will add your lovely face to our growing family!\*\*

### **A-Z Cookbooks Have Arrived!**

At distribution we will have *Asparagus to Zucchini* cookbooks for you to purchase for \$20. This book has nearly everything you need to know about all the unique and sometimes intimidating (when you just don't know what to do with it!) vegetables in your share each week. It explains a bit about the crop and how to use it generally, as well as some fabulous recipes for getting creative with it.

### **Recipes**

From Mitra....some family goodies...save for when we have cucumbers!

#### **Persian Yogurt-Cucumber Salad**

3 cups yogurt

1 cucumber, peeled, cut lengthwise and seeded with a spoon, then diced

As much dill as you like, and dill flowers taste best for this

Garlic (I put 2 cloves chopped up but up to you for flavor)

Salt to taste

1 T or so lemon juice  
2–3 T olive oil to thin it if it's a side to a rice dish

### **Boughali Polo (Persian Lima Beans with Rice) with Tadig**

1 package Fordhook lima beans (frozen), thawed and heated a bit above room temperature  
2–3 cups rice  
4–5 sprigs dill, chopped (flowers are great!)  
Oil and salt, for cooking

To make it extra fancy:

Dash saffron and 2–3 T butter

Sliced potatoes (enough to cover the bottom of a large pot) or a tortilla

This is a very simple dish I grew up eating, and the amount can vary depending on the group you're feeding! I have a rice maker so throw the rice in there (after you rinse it a few times) with the oil, salt and enough water so you can have a knuckle's length of water above where the rice rests (can you tell this is a mom recipe?). If you are doing it in a saucepan, bring it to a boil then down to low and cover for about 15 minutes.

While that's cooking up, you need to melt the saffron in 1/3 cup or so of water by heating it up to near boiling and mixing/melting the magical spice. Then you can put it with the rest of the butter and swirl it to mix.

When the rice is done, put a small amount of oil on the bottom of a big pot and put the potato slices or tortilla and add a small amount of saffron butter to it. This will fry as you heat the rest, making "tadig" or crunch yummy stuff. Put it on a medium flame and add layers of rice, lima beans, and dill until you run out, then pour the rest of the saffron butter on top. It's ready when heated through, about 20–30 minutes. Enjoy!

### ***Upcoming Events!! Work Parties and More...***

#### ***July 14 Work Party!***

Yes, come on out this Friday to help the farm crew! See what a weekday workday is like.... any time between 7 AM and 5 PM. Call us at 230-7987.

#### ***August 19 Skill Share***

Come out to learn a new skill or to share one of your skills! Schedule of workshops and lunch will be posted soon! Please sign up to lead a skill on Wednesday!

#### ***CSA Member Meeting – CORE Meeting***

Come on out to find out in more detail what is happening with the farm and how you can get more involved. Date and time to be set soon. Stay tuned!