



MSU STUDENT ORGANIC FARM NEWSLETTER

March 21, 2007

IN YOUR SHARE THIS WEEK

- Turtle Spring Garlic
- Copra Onions
- Carrots
- Potatoes
- Baby Salad Mix (mainly lettuce)
- Spinach
- Redbor Kale
- Napa Cabbage
- Collard Greens
- Scallions
- Optional Extras: More Choi!

FARM CALENDAR OF EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Farm Update—From Linda

Have you noticed what's missing from SOF these days? The SNOW is all gone! Okay, so mud season is about to be upon us, but you won't catch us complaining about that, especially on these days when the sun shines and the temp nudges up towards 50 and higher. We actually had a work day last week when we were outside in shirt sleeves and it was so HOT inside the hoop houses that we rolled up the sides for ventilation.

You may think we're being hasty in this early celebration of spring, but just consider what's been going on around SOF. In the hoop houses, we've ripped out old beds of some good old winter crops, and we've seeded new spinach, lettuce, carrots, and other yummy spring greens. We're prepping beds for the "season-extension" crops so they will be ready to receive the seedlings of tomatoes, cucumbers, and squashes that have been seeded and are growing rapidly in the Range House. There's a grand plan for what we will plant outside in the fields, starting in just a few weeks. The seeds have been ordered and are on their way.

So, keep enjoying these last few weeks of delicious Asian winter greens in your CSA share while the new veggies are growing, and let yourself fantasize about the first spring carrots and peas and broccoli, followed soon by that first ripe tomato. Those of us in the Certificate Program are eagerly looking ahead to the new season too, and sharing the foods of spring with all of you!

Last Spring Share Date: May 3rd.

Please let us know if you are planning to discontinue ASAP. We are planning to make room for more summer shares and need to know how many to plan for ASAP. Thanks so much!

Summer Share Announcement and Payment Coming Up!!

Summer Session goes from May 10th – August 23rd. Payment in full will be due one month before then – by April 14th. We would prefer 1 check from your share group and all paid in full. If this is a problem for your group, we are happy to discuss payment options.

Directions for renewing.

- 1) Write a check (1 per share) to Michigan State University for \$460.
- 2) Send it to Corie Pierce, MSU, A288 Plant and Soil Science Building, East Lansing, MI 48824.
- 3) Plan on continuing your membership right through the summer!

Children's Gardens

I received positive response about the Children's Garden. We will be having a meeting to plan the design of the magical, enchanted garden to be coming up on Wednesday, March 28th from 11:45 – 12:45. The meeting will be held at CSA member Ginger Ogilvie's house located at 1826 Snyder, E. Lansing, MI 48823. We would love to have you there! Please contact Corie (pierce@msu.edu) if you would like more details about this meeting.

Just to get your imagination going, here are some ideas that have been thrown around so far....

Pizza Garden, Rainbow Garden, Sunflower House, Play Farm Stand, Kids and Family veggies "plots", Tee-Pee, 3 sisters and much more!! We would love to hear ideas you have too!

Bee Update – From Joe Riddle our student Bee Keeper!

Our SOF Honeybees Are Alive!

With the recent and continuing scare of the mysterious disappearing disease among honeybees, I have been asked to write a few words of reassurance. This mysterious disease has been given the preliminary name Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). CCD is characterized by a hive full of food, brood, and a queen, but no workers to speak of. So far

this “disease” has been reported in 22 states including MI. My perspective is that most of the alarming news is coming from large commercial beekeepers who operate with thousands of hives.

The good news is that our four SOF honeybee colonies are alive and well. Before Spring Break I opened the hives to see living honeybees nicely packed tight together in their cluster. Then this past week when the warm weather wave came through, we knew they were alive and hungry! The poor chickens had to share their food with the honeybees. Our honeybees were hungry for pollen, and the best source they found was the grain dusk in the chicken feed. Closely examining the activity of the bees I realized that the honeybees were rolling around in the feed collecting food particles onto their entire body. Then they returned to the hive, staying outside on the landing, other workers came out to collect the food particles off of her. This Wednesday the BeeTeam will dig in the hives to further assign health and food reserves.

If you are interested in learning more about beekeeping drop Laurie Thorp a note at thorpl@msu.edu and she will add you to our MSU Bee Team.

Joe Riddle

Veggie of the Week: Collard Greens

Collard greens have been cooked and used for centuries. The Southern style of cooking of greens came with the arrival of African slaves to the southern colonies and the need to satisfy their hunger and provide food for their families. Though greens did not originate in Africa, the habit of eating greens that have been cooked down into a low gravy, and drinking the juices from the greens (known as "pot likker") is of African origin. The slaves of the plantations were given the leftover food from the plantation kitchen. Some of this food consisted of the tops of turnips and other greens. Ham hocks and pig's feet were also given to the slaves. Forced to create meals from these leftovers, they created the famous southern greens. The slave diet began to evolve and spread when slaves entered the plantation houses as cooks. Their African dishes, using the foods available in the region they lived in, began to evolve into present-day Southern cooking.

Southerners love their greens. A time-honored tradition in southern kitchens, greens have held an important place on the table for well over a century, and there is no other vegetable that is quite so unique to the region. Greens are any sort of cabbage in which the green leaves do not form a compact head. They are mostly kale, collards, turnip, spinach, and mustard greens.

In the Southern states, a large quantity of greens to serve a family is commonly referred to as a "mess o' greens." The exact quantity that constitutes a "mess" varies with the size of the family.

The traditional way to cook greens is to boil or simmer slowly with a piece of salt pork or ham hock for a long time (this tempers their tough texture and smoothes out their bitter flavor) until they are very soft. Typically, greens are served with freshly baked corn bread

to dip into the pot-likker. Pot likker is the highly concentrated, vitamin-filled broth that results from the long boil of the greens. It is, in other words, the "liquor" left in the pot.

In spite of what some consider their unpleasant smell, reaction to the smell of cooking greens separates true southern eaters from wannabes.

According to folklore, collards served with black-eyed peas and hog jowl on New Year's Day promises a year of good luck and financial reward, hanging a fresh leaf over your door will ward off evil spirits, and a fresh leaf placed on the forehead promises to cure a headache.

RECIPES

Awesome Collard Greens Recipe

Collard greens are a very nutritious and inexpensive treat. When I was growing up, my grandmother would buy about 50 cents worth of collard seeds and this would grow enough collard greens to feed us for the entire year. That 50 cents worth of seeds would produce hundreds of collard plants in our North Carolina backyard garden.

2 - 3 medium smoked ham hocks or 2 pounds smoked pork neck bones
5 pounds of collards or several large bunches (If you can't get them fresh, frozen will do.)
2 teaspoon of salt

My favorite way to cook collard greens is very simple. I take 2 or 3 smoked ham hocks and put them in a large (6 quart) pot of water. Bring the water to a rolling boil and let it boil for about 1 1/2 hours. Add more water as it boils down. The idea is to boil the ham hocks until they begin to fall apart. You should always cook pork very thoroughly and use proper food handling techniques. You want the ham hocks to be falling apart before you add the collard greens.

Take the collard greens and separate the leaves (if fresh). Now rinse each leaf individually under cold running water. After you rinse the collard greens thoroughly, stack several leaves on top of each other. Roll these leaves together. Then slice the leaves into thin strips using a cutting board and large knife. Rolling them together speeds up the process as you are slicking through several leaves at once.

Next, add your collard greens to the pot. Since this is a lot of collards, you will need to add them until the pot is full. Then allow them to wilt as they cook - then add more. Add you salt, cover and cook for thirty minutes on medium heat. Stir every few minutes to distribute the smoked meat taste evenly. Taste to confirm they are the tenderness you prefer. Serve with your favorite meat dish such as chitterlings. Eat the ham hocks or neck bones right along with the collards.

Collard Greens with Rice

2 cups chicken or meat stock

1 cup long-grain rice
1 tablespoon butter or margarine
1/2 teaspoon salt
3 cups chopped collard leaves, loosely packed
Pepper

Bring the stock to a boil in a 2-quart saucepan. Add the rice, butter or margarine, and salt; stir. Add the chopped collard greens, a handful at a time, stirring after each addition. Bring back to the boil; cover and reduce heat. Cook approximately 15 to 20 minutes, or until rice is tender. Season with pepper before serving.

Garlic, Chickpea, and Spinach Soup

[Vegetarian Cookbook by Nicola Graimes, submitted by Anna Kaschner]

2 Tbsp olive oil
4 garlic cloves, crushed or minced
1 onion, roughly chopped
2 tsp cumin
2 tsp coriander
5 c vegetable or meat stock
12 oz potatoes, peeled and finely chopped
15-oz can of chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 Tbsp cornstarch
2/3 c heavy cream
2 Tbsp tahini paste
7 oz spinach, chopped or shredded
salt and pepper
cayenne pepper

-Heat oil in large saucepan and cook garlic and onion until soft or golden brown.

-Stir in cumin, and coriander and cook for another minute.

-Pour in stock and add potatoes. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Add chickpeas and and simmer 5 more minutes, or until potatoes are fork-tender.

-Blend together the cornstarch, cream, tahini, and salt and pepper. Stir into soup with spinach. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer while stirring for 2 minutes. Season with more salt and pepper and cayenne if desired, Serve immediately.

Savory Cabbage with Mackerel

[The Creative Gardener's Cookbook by Teri Mitchell and Gail Kummings, submitted by Anna Kaschner]

1 1/2 oz. butter or meat drippings
1/2 lb onions, quartered
5 juniper berries if available
1 bay leaf
1/2 c water
2 apples, cored and halved
salt and pepper to taste
vinegar
2 mackerel fillets, rinsed and patted dry
lemon juice

-In a large skillet, saute the onions in butter or drippings until tender. Add cabbage and saute together for 3-5 minutes. Season to taste.

-Add berries, bay leaf, and water. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes.

-Add apples, cover and simmer for 10 more minutes. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and vinegar. Set mixture aside and keep warm.

-Preheat broiler; season mackerel with lemon juice and let stand for 15 minutes. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, broil on a greased baking sheet for 7 minutes on each side, or until flesh flakes easily with a fork. Lay fish across hot cabbage mixture, serve with potatoes.

MSU Student Organic Farm Contact Information

Farm Phone: 230-7987

Farm Managers: Jeremy Moghtader, Corie Pierce

Assistant Farm Manager: Jay Tomczak

SOF Student Farmers: Tim Heuer, Andy Fles, Trevor Johnson, Luke Tomczak, Amanda Taylor, Aryn Labrake, Sam Cooper

OFCP Students: Rosemary Sheets, Maggie Wright, Tom Stump, Dan Bair, James Garthe, Teri Vanhall, Linda Anderson, Kathy Koch, Anna Kaschner