



MSU STUDENT ORGANIC FARM NEWSLETTER

March 28, 2007

IN YOUR SHARE THIS WEEK*

- Turtle Spring garlic
- Copra onions
- Champion cabbage
- Butternut squash
- Baby salad mix
- Bagged whale spinach
- Winterbor kale
- Swiss chard and Bull's Blood beet green stir fry mix
- Scallions
- Head lettuce
- Joi choi

* Optional Extras: cilantro (not as flavorful as summer cilantro) and komatsuna

FARM UPDATE

From Dan Blair, OFCP Student

The rolling thunders of spring showers have been moving across the Student Organic Farm on an off during the past week. Spring peepers are singing their song in the back woods and a couple of nervous white-tail deer stood on the edge of the field licking their chops in crunchy anticipation. Student farmers stop and give satisfied acknowledgement up toward the sounds of honking geese returning to their summer homes. As Aldo Leopold reminds us, "one swallow does not make summer, but one skein of geese, cleaving the murk of a March thaw, is the spring."

The past week has seen spring brassica, chard, and celery seeding. The sprouts are enjoying their young lives, growing strong up in the range house. A dedicated crew of student farmers is carefully propagating them to adulthood.

The tunnels are routinely being opened up wide, sides and all as temperatures rise inside. At first glance it seems like vegetables are growing outside. We are still tucking them into bed each night, but the inside covers haven't been needed lately.

As a testament to the fertility and soil organic matter in our greenhouses, the weeds are starting to grow like weeds. Thus, we've been spending more and more time pulling them out. If you get a chance, be sure to check out the spring transformation that is happening inside our passive solar greenhouses.

The compost is heating up, the chickens are outside, and Trip the cat has a new spring in his step. Enjoy your share of the spring bounty this week. We're glad we can grow it for you.

SUMMER SHARE ANNOUNCEMENT AND PAYMENT COMING UP!!

Last Spring Share Date: May 3

Summer Session goes from May 10 to August 23. Payment in full will be due one month before then—by April 14. We would prefer a single 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.

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

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!

UPCOMING EVENTS

CHILDREN'S GARDEN

We will be holding our meeting this week- by they time you read this, we will have talked and begun planning for the first year of the children's garden. Please stay tuned for events for getting you and your family involved with the garden and please plan to get involved with your kids and family. This garden is going to be a special place for kids and adults alike. We hope you all start coming out to the farm on a regular basis when you pick up your share and for those of you who are not members, we hope you get involved with the children's garden as well!!

Some ideas that were discussed before the meeting included: 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!

I am sure the children's garden will continue to change and grow and evolve over this first year and over several years. We hope to see you out there!!

VEGGIE OF THE WEEK: OUR SPECIAL BEET GREEN AND CHARD STIR FRY MIX

This week we will be giving out a special mix of Bull's Blood beet greens and Bright Lights Swiss chard. This is something that you would never find in a grocery store or food coop or even at a farmer's market. We are pretty proud to offer this unique mixture of delicious and nutritious greens. First of all, these are two of the most beautiful greens—these beet greens are a deep purple, almost uncanny in how deep and dark these grow. The

Swiss chard is an amazing combination of green with either white, yellow, pink, orange, red, etc. So we thought putting them together would be a visual spectacle as well as a taste bud sensation. My favorite greens (at least for right now) are chard. So, give me a baby chard with the beet greens and I am a happy camper!

I have written a bunch about the nutritional value of the Brassica family and the Chenopodiaceae family so I won't go into again....except to mention that they are jam-packed with lots of great stuff. Sometimes when I eat these nutritious greens I feel like I can feel the good stuff pulsing through my system....okay, I'll stop now...

Just enjoy this "gourmet" mix of beautiful and healthy cooking greens!

RECIPES

Chinese Cabbage Salad

From CSA Member Merry Stanford: I really like this one. It is from *The Book of Whole Meals* by Annemarie Colbin.

1 small Chinese cabbage (Napa), about 4 cups

Cut away the bottom of the cabbage, separate the leaves, and wash well. Stack the leaves and slice very fine. Toss with Tahini-Onion Dressing about 10 minutes before serving.

Tahini-Onion Dressing

2 T. tahini

1 T. shoyu (natural soy sauce)

1 tsp. umeboshi plum paste (available at a health food store)

3 T. water

1 T. finely grated onion

In a small mixing bowl, combine tahini and shoyu, then add plum paste. Gently stir in the water, add the grated onion, and mix well.

We had our first SLOW FOOD RED CEDAR Event a few weeks ago. Chef Nick Seccia from the Henry Ford was our guest chef and he provided an amazing dinner. I will put in one of his recipes each week to share what he made for the dinner. If you would like all the recipes together, please -email me (piercee@msu.edu) and I would be happy to send them to you!

Polenta

From the Slow Food Dinner – Chef Nick Seccia. Serves 6

Yellow corn meal, 1.5 cups

Chicken stock, 4 cups

Whole butter, 2 Tablespoons

Shredded Parmesan cheese, .25 cup

Basil fresh chopped, 2 large leaves

Salt and pepper, to taste

Pure olive oil, 1 Tablespoon

1. Bring the stock and butter to a boil; season with salt and pepper to taste
2. Slowly add the corn meal while stirring until all is incorporated with no lumps
3. Reduce heat very low and cook for about 30 minutes while stirring
4. Add the basil and cheese and take off the heat. Pour out onto a greased cookie sheet and spread thin. Allow to cool in the refrigerator until set
5. Cut the polenta into desired shapes, heat the oil in a sauté pan, season with salt and pepper, and sear until golden brown

Butternut Squash Soup

From the 1997 edition of *The Joy of Cooking*; this is delicious with any winter squash, including acorn squash.

Preheat oven to 400 degree F.

Halve one medium to large squash (about 3.5 lbs)

Remove squash seeds (you can toast them with oil when you bake the squash, if you like). Place cut side down on an oiled baking sheet. Bake until the squash can easily be pierced with a fork, about 1 hour. Let cook, then scoop the pulp from the squash skin and discard the skin. Melt or heat in a soup pot, over medium-low heat:

3 tablespoons unsalted butter or vegetable oil

Add and cook, stirring until tender but not browned, 5 to 10 minutes:

2 large leeks (white part only), cleaned thoroughly and chopped; 4 teaspoons minced, peeled fresh ginger

Stir in the cooked squash along with:

4 cups chicken stock, or any vegetable stock

Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring and breaking up the squash with a spoon, for 20 minutes. Purée until smooth. Return to the pot and stir in:

2 cups chicken or vegetable stock; 1-1/2 teaspoons salt

Heat through. Ladle into warmed bowls. Garnish with:

Chopped fresh parsley or cilantro, croutons, toasted squash seeds (optional)

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