



News from Provident Organic Farm



www.providentfarm.org

Season 2, Week 13

"dedicated to a safe, just and sustainable food system"

July 7th, 2003

NOTES FROM THE FIELD #13...

In your share this week -
Mother Nature's Surprise!

In honor of Independence Day, newsletter staff gave Jay a break from preparing the *Notes From The Field*. Today...*Notes From VERY FAR A-FIELD*...Perspectives of a CSA volunteer...

Kneeling in the mud, the rain pouring down, dressed in my bright yellow rain gear (and looking a lot like Big Bird) I carefully searched the vines for the treasure. There it was—a beautiful bright red strawberry. I capture it for the harvest. And then another and another. Pints and pints of the sweet treasures. Bent over the vines that have become entwined, beaten down onto the paths by the wind, I step gingerly looking for snow peas that are full, but not too mature. I move slowly and carefully, since the peas are masters at hiding, the green colors so close that it is easy to miss the peas among the vines. Ahah! There they are. The harvesting is slow. The mosquitoes are finding more places on my skin to land than I am finding peas. Jay says we need several “buckets” of snow peas. Yikes, we only have one. I must keep looking. Oh, there are some I missed. We finally have enough for the shares. Later when I pick up my share, I wonder if those were the ones I picked. How much more valuable they seem. It's personal now.

Harvesting is accomplished in the heat, the torrential downpours, the muddy fields or the dry fields, all the while battling those pesky bugs, bugs and more bugs! It must be done and the CSA members will receive the best of what the farm has to offer that week. I have a renewed respect for the never-ending work of the farmer and a special appreciation for the cold well water to wash the vegetables and a cool breeze in the heat of harvesting. I thought I was in pretty good shape until I spent a few days on my knees weeding and picking, wielding a pitch fork to dig potatoes, bent over the snow pea vines, leaning down to pull beets or snap off kale. I am grateful for the long hot showers, arthritis ointment and Advil when I return home. I think every CSA member should spend at least one day harvesting for the share distribution pick-ups. Most would be impressed with what it takes to get shares for 50 families out in one day. I now realize I had little idea of what it takes to get from seed to food on the table. Jay welcomes us, coaches, encourages and guides our learning. He always thanks us.

Being at the farm I feel more a part of the whole. I feel a commitment - to get out the harvest for the shares, to learn, to help make the farm a successful endeavor for Jay and Kathy so they will continue to feed us healthy food, working together toward our larger goals. I feel a sense of community with my fellow workers - an interesting and hardy crop themselves. I have learned things about organic farming, like the way the farmers use one crop to trap a pest that may damage a more valuable crop. People who don't understand the CSA concept think we are daft. But I have seen first hand that Jay is a good steward of the land as well as our investment. I am impressed with his knowledge and his acute awareness of his responsibility to the CSA members. (Would that the executives of the businesses with which I invested my retirement funds had had such an awareness!)

Managing a family farm is a fragile balance of the interactions of plants, pests, soil, nutrients, sun and water with the farmer's knowledge, experience, ingenuity, perseverance and hard work. It takes organization, planning, resource management, and an abundance of good humor. It also takes a recognition that ultimately the bounty is dependent on the forces of nature to shine benevolently on the harvest. Jay has been able to provide us with a bountiful harvest despite the adverse weather conditions. But if you had been there to feel the disappointment I felt when I reached for a beautiful strawberry only to find the bottom had rotted from the rain, seen a crop washed away in the downpour, or the soggy fields untilled or unplanted, you'd know there is only so much the farmer can do.

Considering all this, I have been amazed at the wonderful produce we have received. I know there may well be weeks when the harvest is not so plentiful. I can deal with that because the commitment to the CSA is that we are all in this together. Even on the hottest, buggiest and rainiest days the farm is a glorious place.

Just my perspective....
Pat Vorus

"For evil to grow, we must feed it." Matthew Fox

Food for Thought, Thought for Food:

A Native American elder was asked by his grandson why people were fighting all the time. His grandfather answered, "In a vision I saw two wolves at war in my heart. One wolf was snarling and full of rage and violence. The other was loving, compassionate and peaceful. Between the two of them, I felt like I was being torn apart." "Who will win, grandpa?" asked the anxious little boy. "The one I feed," said his grandfather.

French Picnic Tart with New Potatoes, Red Peppers, Sage, and Gruyere

1, 10" unbaked tart crust (your favorite recipe or a frozen one from the store)
1 lb. baby potatoes
1-2 tsp olive oil
1 lg. onion thinly sliced (2 cups)
1/2 tsp. salt
1 1/2 c grated gruyere cheese (1/4 pound)
2 Tbsp. minced fresh sage (or 2 tsp. dried)
1/2 medium red bell pepper, finely sliced



Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Place potatoes in saucepan, cover with water, and boil. Cook 10-15 minutes. Drain and set aside.

Heat oil in skillet, add onion and salt, and cook on low heat until onion is tender, about 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.

Spread 1 cup of cheese in bottom into bottom of unbaked crust. Spoon onion over the cheese, and sprinkle with sage.

When potatoes are cool enough to handle, peel (if desired) then slice thin. Arrange slices in overlapping concentric circles over cheese. Arrange bell pepper slices over potatoes in ring. Sprinkle with remaining cheese and black pepper to taste.

Bake for 35 to 40 minutes, or until crust is golden around edges. Remove tart from oven, and let tart cool for at least 10 minutes. Serve sliced into large wedges either hot, warm, or at room temperature depending on your taste and the temperature outside!

- from Mollie Katzen's **Vegetable Heaven**.



THE LEADER IN ORGANIC-BASED LAWN CARE

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There will be a core group meeting on Saturday, July 19th at the Salisbury Farmer's Market at 10 AM. Core group meetings are open to everyone, and all CSA members are encouraged to attend.



Good Stuff, Cool Stuff

- * CSA members still get 50% off their "Park And Flea" tables, so be sure to take advantage!
- * We still need coolers if you have any
- * If you're going on vacation, let Amy know and she can donate your share for that week - aliebman@intercom.net
- * Plastic bags that never contained meat are still being accepted for donations - you bring 'em, we'll use 'em!

COMMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

We welcome your comments and contributions, including recipes! Please send to ubuubok@dmv.com or Provident Organic Farm CSA, PO Box 62, Bivalve, MD 21814.