



NEWS FROM PROVIDENT ORGANIC FARM



Season 2, Week 5

"Growing for the Future"

May 12, 2003

NOTES FROM THE FIELD #5...

We had a great week on the farm. The "catch-up" bottle was almost full with tasks I had not gotten to, but with all the help I had this week we almost drained it. Thank you all for your help.

On Monday I got the irrigation pump set up, plumbed into the new well and the trunk lines laid out to supply the trickle tapes. The crops in the field, although not stressed yet, were in need of water soon. I was able to get them irrigated that evening. Judy started weeding the spinach bed, but a shower of rain drove us into the passive house to do some weeding under cover.

Tuesday's harvest went smoothly. Marjorie, Dave, Lori and Julia came down to help.

On Wednesday, Lisa and I set up the trickle tapes for the passive house tomatoes. Charlotte drove the stakes for the scare tape in the strawberry patch and stretched the tape out over the rows. The birds have been checking out the strawberries for a week or so and I knew we had to get that project done soon. The birds are now flying over the patch, but not landing in it. With a few warm days, we should start picking berries this week. This is the first year in as long as I can remember that I have not picked strawberries before Mother's Day. Charlotte also finished weeding the spinach bed that Judy had started. She told me she likes to weed. You've come to the right place, Charlotte!! I was able to prepare a couple of raised beds that afternoon and sow 400 feet of carrots. I use pelleted carrot seed to eliminate thinning. The carrot seed is coated with clay so that it will go through a seeder and be properly spaced.

Thursday was the day we really drained that catch-up bottle. Pat came down and spent the whole day. She transplanted 250 lettuces, 250 bok choi in a raised bed, replaced the Sun Gold cherry tomato plants that I lost to frost and tied some of the passive house tomatoes. Russell and I finished spreading the compost on 3 blocks in the field, worked it in and marked the rows to be planted. Nick and I got the rest of the peas trellised. Joan brought 22 of her biology students down for a tour and to help. Joan had asked me to spend about 15 minutes telling them why I farm organically and then put them to work for about 45 minutes. I quickly did the math and realized that 15 minutes of my B.S. (that is not Bachelor of Science) would yield 16.5 hours of free labor. What a deal! In 45 minutes, they transplanted 400 squash, 100 cucumber and 250 tomato plants. And enjoyed it!! One of them said, "See, college students are good for something". Agreed.

On Friday Cassie, Lisa, Kathy, and Kathryn helped with the harvest in the morning, and Judy came in the afternoon to wrap it up with me.

I have never been one to hold back and it gets me in trouble sometimes, but the way I figure, if I don't say what's on my mind, who will? At the risk of offending the male portion of the membership, I would like to highlight the extremely lopsided-ness of the gender of the help I am getting on the farm. Pretty pitiful showing, guys.

Onward,

Jay

In the share this week:

Hakarai salad turnips
Braising mix
Lettuce
Carrots

Easter egg radishes
Leeks
Bok Choi

Spinach?
Shiitake?

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate power of society but the people themselves, and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion." - Thomas Jefferson, 1820 (*Jay's Editorial Comment: Would someone please forward this message to the Bush Administration, in particular, Dick Cheney and his Energy Task Force???*)

Food for Thought, Thought for Food

There are many illusions surrounding organic agriculture. One of them is that we cannot return to the “old ways” and feed the world. We do not need to feed the world, we should rather help the world feed itself without the use of toxic technology. The Farm Bureau and corporate farm suppliers use this mantra of needing to feed the world, along with a huge dose of fear as a means to convince conventional farmers to embrace their toxic technology. With growing concern about the safety of our food, much of the world is rejecting it.

In an article in ACRES, USA, Joel Salatin of Polyface farm in Swope, Va writes about combining what he calls “heritage wisdom” with appropriate technology to raise healthy food. Rather than trying to fit raising a turkey, for instance, into a mass production industrial model, we should be looking at what makes a turkey happy, what does it need to fully express its “turkey-ness”

So have lunch with a turkey this week, get to know one on a first name basis, you may come away from the experience enriched.

Braised Pak Choi (Bok Choy)

Pak Choi (bok choy) usually shows up in a stir-fry, at times being overshadowed by the stronger flavors of garlic, ginger or onions. But it is equally as good on its own. Rich in vitamins A and C, pak choy is also a good source of potassium.

1 large head pak choy, sliced diagonally into 1” strips (about 8-10 cups, tightly packed)
1 tbsp olive oil
1/4 c water
3 tbsp balsamic vinegar
1/4 tsp sugar
salt and freshly ground pepper



In a large sauté or frying pan, bring olive oil and water to a boil over high heat. Add pak choy and season lightly with salt. Bring to a boil again, reduce heat to medium and cover. Simmer pak choy until tender but still crisp, about 3 to 5 minutes.

Drain and discard liquid. Return pan to heat and sauté pak choy for another minute or two until all moisture is evaporated, adding a little olive oil, if necessary, to keep it from sticking. Remove from pan and keep warm.

Return pan to heat. Add vinegar, sugar and two tablespoons water. Bring to a boil over high heat and stir for a minute until mixture thickens slightly. Pour over pak choy and toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Serves 4

Prep Tips Use both green and white parts of pak choy. May be served hot or at room temperature.



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GOINGS-ON AND THINGS TO REMEMBER...

JIM AND ERIN KENNEDY ARE COLLECTING YARSALE ITEMS FOR A TABLE AT THE “PARK AND FLEA”. ALL PROFITS WILL BE DONATED TO THE FARM. PLEASE LET ERIN KNOW IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO DONATE - EJSKENNEDY@HOTMAIL.COM

THERE WILL BE A CORE GROUP MEETING AT THE FARM AT 1:30 ON MAY 31ST. THE CORE GROUP IS A TYPE OF ADVISORY GROUP THAT HELPS JAY WITH CERTAIN ISSUES - THE LATEST IS HELPING HIM TO DRAFT A MISSION STATEMENT FOR OUR NON-PROFIT STATUS STATEMENT. EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

A SPECIAL THANKS TO STEVIK FOR DOING SUCH A GREAT JOB WITH THE BOOKKEEPING!

WE STILL NEED COOLERS IF ANYONE HAS ANY AVAILABLE, BUT THANK YOU FOR THE WHITE BOARD DONATIONS!

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.