



News from Provident Organic Farm



www.providentfarm.org

Season 2, Week 19

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

August 18, 2003

NOTES FROM THE FIELD # 19...

Mother Nature, as we have witnessed this year with the rain and last year with the drought, can be cruel. It is comforting to know that despite the harshness of the weather, our CSA has a committed membership that is attempting to build a socially responsible and ultimately a sustainable agricultural model on the Eastern Shore. We all made a commitment to share the risk as well as the bounty when we purchased our membership (much like purchasing stock) for the season. Through Jay's "notes from the field" and other efforts such as volunteering on the farm, we try hard to educate our membership about the CSA philosophy and the challenges of farming. For the first time in our two-year effort, we have a member that has asked for a refund. I outvoted Jay 1 to 1 as I refuse to give this member a refund. (Jay has a hard time winning when I really put my foot down.) Below is Jay's response to this member. I thought it was worthy of printing in our newsletter.--Amy

Dear CSA Member.

Offering refunds for discontinued shares is not in keeping with the spirit of a CSA. In joining the CSA, you made a commitment to me, as I did to you. I have done my very best to honor that commitment. I have been working 14-16 hour days, seven days a week under stressful conditions, to say the least, to grow your food along with the other 99 shareholders who joined the CSA. This I usually do with a joyful heart, seeing my work as an act of praise. Lately, these efforts have become burdensome rather than joyful as I have watched countless hours of work get washed away by excessive rains. I would venture a guess that over half of what I have attempted to grow has been lost due to the excessive rains. This can be very depressing, yet I continue to sow seeds and transplant seedlings with hope that I will be able to provide the members with a bounty of food. My plantings were scaled to satisfy 140 shares. The additional 40 shares worth of food was intended to cover losses and to generate farmer's market sales, which I depend on to support my family. I have sacrificed approximately 40% of my income that I had hoped to derive from farmer's market sales to give the membership the best I could each week. There have been a few complaints about the quantity of food distributed, but until now, no one has asked for a refund.

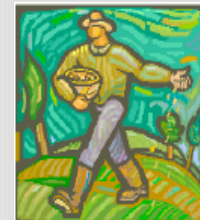
Our CSA is in its infancy, and faces problems, as does any start-up business. Last year I took no income from the CSA and provided a salary for an assistant from my pocket. I did that willingly, but cannot afford to do it again. I have no doubts we will ultimately be successful and grow to become a model for a safe, sustainable and just food system for this region, which is my dream.

Most of the folks who signed up for working shares and committed to 30 or 36 hours of work have given far beyond their commitment. They have willingly and happily endured harvests in downpours, blood thirsty mosquitoes, hot and humid conditions, all to make this successful. We even have a few non-members that come to the farm and offer to help in exchange for the occasional tomato.

I am sorry this has been a disappointment to you.

Onward,

Jay



Ratatouille

2 c	peeled and cubed eggplant (about 3/4" cubes)
3-4 small	onions
1-2	bell pepper, any color
2	summer squash (yellow, zucchini)
2-3 med	tomatoes
4-6 clove	garlic
2-4 tbsp	olive oil
1/4 tsp	hot pepper flakes, optional
1-2 c	fresh basil, washed and tied in a bundle; reserve some whole leaves for garnish



Peel the onions. Cut peppers, onions, squash, and tomatoes into pieces roughly the same size as the eggplant, keeping them all separate. Peel garlic and chop coarsely.

In a heavy pan over medium heat, heat a tablespoon of olive oil and gently fry the eggplant until golden; set aside. Add more olive oil to pan with onions and sauté until soft. Add garlic, hot pepper flakes and chopped basil. Stir for a minute, then add the peppers and sauté for a few minutes. Add the squash and cook for a few more minutes. Add tomatoes and cook about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add eggplant and cook 15-20 minutes more until vegetables are tender. Remove basil and press to extract the flavor; discard. Taste and add salt and pepper, if desired. Serve warm or cold.

Serves 4

Prep Tips: Amounts of vegetables are approximate - adjust to suit your own taste as long as you keep the original proportions. Best if refrigerated overnight to allow flavors to mellow. Garnish with coarsely chopped fresh basil and finely chopped garlic to serve.



THE LEADER IN ORGANIC-BASED LAWN CARE

Joe Lieb
Branch Manager

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Good Stuff, Cool Stuff

Core Group Meeting!

Saturday the 23rd of August at 10 AM. Come one! Come all! See Jay in action at the Farmer's Market and join other core group folks to make decisions about **your** CSA!

Plastic Bags

Yes we still need them, so please pass them along to us at your drop-off spot.

Park n' Flea Tables

They're cutting us a break so take advantage while you can.

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.

In your share this week.....any hot weather crops (tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, etc.) that Jay manages to salvage from the rain!

Lower Shore Land Trust

The Lower Shore Land Trust is dedicated to protecting the natural heritage, rural character and historic landscapes of Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester counties by assisting interested landowners with various land preservation techniques. Since its inception in 1990, the Lower Shore Land Trust (LSLT) has protected over 10,000 acres of land. This land includes valuable agricultural land under threat of development as local population centers grow, and forests, wetlands and buffers that protect the water quality of streams flowing to the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays. There are various ways of protecting land, from outright donation of the property's development rights to protection within the Coastal Bays or Quantico Creek Rural Legacy programs. Whatever method is chosen however, the LSLT can assist you in preserving your land, in perpetuity. For more information, call the LSLT at (410) 641-4467.