



News from Provident Organic Farm



www.providentfarm.org

Season 3, Week 24

“dedicated to a safe, just, and sustainable food system”

Sept. 19th-25th, 2004

Notes from the Field, v. 3, #24

Volunteer Thoughts in Autumn


I have always had a weakness for legs. Long, shapely and strong are all good – brilliant azure, cunningly combined with pale green wing casings and displayed to advantage against a backdrop of rioting pink zinnia however, seemed almost too good to be true. Among grasshoppers, an elegant and varied group, especially in Jay's fields, this particular creature was a revelation.

Two years into the volunteer experience I have seen Provident Farm's acres dressed in the soft earthy browns and freshening splashes of spring green, plants both invited and "un" taking stock of one another like a group of uncertain kindergarteners; all of them far behind their exuberant peers bursting into maturity in the sudden warmth of the passive house. I have come back to spend hours on my knees practicing a favored form of masochism down 80 ft rows of beets and spinach, knife raised against weed intruders. My shoes have disappeared in sodden soils, leaving me barefoot, with unspeakable skirt hems and subject to Jay's particular sort of sympathy. High summer's purgatorial warmth has been offset by the pungent scents of glowing tomatoes, firm bunches of basil and the sweetness of clover. Morning Glories careering through the beans to catch the early morning light and the zooming of bees salved the spirit as I wondered, once again, just how many species of mosquito live on the Eastern Shore. Suddenly – there are squash – time tilts crazily and lurches for the fall; 80 degree days notwithstanding, the sere and yellow leaf announces the mortality of summer pleasures and the last tomatoes, green, hard, as resistant, perhaps,

to the notion that their days are numbered as we are, drop noisily into plastic buckets. We cut sober collards and pause over the winter lettuce seedlings which, eagerly anticipated, we now know will taste a little different, a little more knowing, than their springtime counterparts.

As the season turns and flies headlong toward the Final Harvest I am struck once again by the doubleness of this time of year. Fall reminds us that the path we are traveling is in some sense rhythmically circular and strangely linear at the same time: we recognize this time of ripeness and decay, but, a year older, we are not quite as we were in other autumns; we look to winters and springs anticipated, but still mysterious. Hours on the farm bring the rhythm of the seasons and their differing abundances to every one of the senses, and marking the passage of time among familiar rituals I am conscious of how much I have grown here. Yesterday, working my way down a manic stretch of sun gold tomatoes, feet sinking in the sweet decay of other crops returning to the ground that bore them, and ears ringing with the insistence of crickets, I indulged in one of the best "picker's perks", the pure zing of eating sunwarmed food straight off the vine. Almost Edenic (there was a distinctly postlapsarian mosquito presence) that moment, like the encounter with the well-hosed grasshopper, was a small revelation, a sign hidden in ordinary things. Two years into the volunteer experience at Provident Farm, I know that I have been walking among wonders, and that my eyes have opened to more of them.

Charlotte England



**NaturalLawn[®]
of America**

THE LEADER IN ORGANIC-BASED LAWN CARE

Joe Lieb Branch Manager
P.O. Box 2416 Salisbury, MD 21802
410-341-6711



Broccoli Mushroom Noodle Casserole

Jay requested a casserole with broccoli – here is a favorite adapted from the original *Moosewood Cookbook*, Mollie Katzen, Ten Speed Press, 1977 (... has it really been that long ...?!)

2 tbsp	butter
1 lb	mushrooms, cut in halves or quarters
1 large	onion, chopped
1 lb	broccoli, fresh, cut into flowerets and pieces of stem
to taste	salt and pepper
1/4 c	dry white wine
2	eggs
3 c	ricotta or cottage cheese
1 c	sour cream
4 c	wide, flat noodles or other favorite pasta shape
1/2 c	fine bread crumbs OR 2 tbsp wheat germ, divided
1/2-1 c	grated cheese (cheddar, Monterey jack, muenster)

Melt butter in large skillet or sauté pan. Add onions and sauté until translucent, about 5-10 minutes. Add mushrooms and cook until soft. Increase heat to medium-high. Add broccoli and toss just until tender crisp. Season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat and stir in wine. Set aside

Beat eggs in a large bowl and whisk in the ricotta or cottage cheese and sour cream.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add noodles and cook until al dente or still firm to the bite. Drain thoroughly.

Combine vegetables and cheese mixture. Stir in noodles and half of bread crumbs. Pour into a greased 13 x 9" baking or casserole dish. Sprinkle with cheese and remaining bread crumbs.

Cover and bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Uncover and bake another 15-30 minutes or until heated through and lightly brown.

Prep Tips: Any combination of ricotta, cottage cheese, crumbled tofu, sour cream and plain yogurt may be substituted for the ricotta and sour cream - just make sure you have 4 cups combined ingredients.

Good Stuff, Cool Stuff

We **desperately** need plastic grocery bags, but please don't send us bags that have had contact with meat products. We also can't use small bags such as newspaper bags, English muffin bags, etc.

Comments & 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.

Jay's Winter Squash

Yes, your favorite organic farmer and political pundit, Jay, is also a cook! He used Red Kuri squash for this delicious dish.

1 large	winter squash
1/2 c	half and half cream
1/8 tsp	nutmeg
1/2 tsp	salt
1/2 c	walnuts, toasted and coarsely chopped
1/2 c	raisins
2	apples, cored and thinly sliced
2 tbsp	butter, melted
1/4 c	brown sugar
-	cinnamon

Peel squash and cut into large chunks. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and add squash. Cook until tender.

Mash with cream, salt and nutmeg until smooth and pile into a well-greased casserole dish. Scatter apple slices over top, then sprinkle evenly with nuts and raisins.

Combine butter, brown sugar and a dash of cinnamon; sprinkle evenly over top of casserole.

Bake, uncovered, at 350 degrees until apples are softened and brown sugar is bubbling and crusty, about 45 minutes.

Serves 4, depending on size of squash.

Prep Tips: The quantities are approximate, so add or decrease at will!

Acorn Squash Puree

A deceptively simple recipe that is just delicious.

2	acorn squash
2 tbsp	butter
-	freshly grated nutmeg
-	salt and pepper

Cut squash in half and remove seeds. Sprinkle the inside lightly with salt and arrange upside-down in a greased baking dish. Cover with foil and bake at 375 degrees until soft, about 1 hour. When cool enough to handle, scoop out the squash pulp, discarding the skin. Transfer with any juices to a food processor and add butter. Purée briefly until smooth. Transfer mixture to a saucepan and simmer over low heat, stirring occasionally, until any excess liquid has evaporated. Season the purée with the nutmeg and additional salt and pepper.

Serves 4.

Prep Tips: If you do not have a food processor, mash mixture with the back of a wooden spoon until smooth. An old fashioned hand potato masher also works well.