



# News from Provident Organic Farm

www.providentfarm.org



Season 3, 2004

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

Oct. 25<sup>th</sup> - 31st

## Notes from the Field v. 3, #27

As the days get shorter and less demanding of my time, I have time for the 3 "R's" ---Reflection, Reading, and Research, all of which are crucial to improving my ability as a farmer. Reflecting on the successes and failures of the past season and trying to figure out why the failures failed and the successes succeeded guides my research and reading to improve my practices. Most organic farmers agree that their most valued source of information is other organic farmers. Unlike conventional farmers who view other farmers as competition, organic farmers typically share knowledge with each other freely and willingly. I am extremely fortunate to have some very good friends who are very good farmers. This week I had the opportunity to visit with two of my best farmer friends, Shane LaBrake and Steve Moore.

Shane is the farm manager at the Ecosystem Farm at The Accokeek Foundation. His mission there is training would-be, could-be farmers. Each year for the past 10 years Shane has selected 4 interns from as many as 100 applicants for the training program. He and the crew grow vegetables for a 60 member CSA which helps offset the cost of training the interns. A few of his trainees have dropped out during the season, a few realized that farming is not for them, but the overwhelming majority is still involved in farming on some level. Some have gone on to successfully farm on their own.

Shane and the two interns who will stay with the Ecosystem Farm, Erin and Will, came here on Wednesday for a visit. This is Shane's last season with the Ecosystem Farm, he and his life partner, Kirsten, will be searching for their own farm. Will and Erin will share farm manager responsibilities next year.

They are both excited and apprehensive. It will be helpful for them to know that they have many allies in the organic farming community willing to offer assistance and guidance as needed.

Yesterday I went to Spring Grove, Pa. to visit with my good friend Steve Moore. Steve and I met many years ago when we were both presenters at a conference in Westminster, Md. We realized that between us, we covered a lot of "greenhouse territory" and decided to do some consulting and offer workshops together. We didn't make much money, but had a lot of fun and became great friends. Kathy and Steve's wife Carol realized before we did that the only reason we were pretending to consult and do workshops together was so we could ride up and down the road talking.

Steve is the guru of passive solar greenhouse growing. After 12 years of growing greenhouse tomatoes successfully, Steve decided to see what he could do in a greenhouse environment without spending \$10,000 a year on heating and cooling the space. In the past 10 years, Steve has mastered the art of selecting and scheduling crops to provide a year-round supply of fresh vegetables. His 8 foot tall eggplants yielded over 10 times the national average this year. He has been harvesting a single swiss chard planting for 3 years. Steve is a humble man, he points out that the more he learns, the more he realizes there is to learn. We agree that this is the essence of successful farming and the strongest attraction. I had a great week and hope you did too.

Onward,  
Jay



## Quote for the Week:

*Once the universe becomes a machine, no longer alive, once human beings are defined as the only intelligent life-form, a unique kind of isolation enters human lives, a kind of loneliness...*

~ Stephen Harrod Buhner

Crab Contras, the Eastern Shore's community dance group, is offering CSA members two for the price of one admission to its Salisbury dance, Saturday, October 30, 2004, from 7 to 10 PM. Come dance contras, squares, and other fun old time community dances to live music at Go-Getters Main Street center, admission \$6 (that's for two!). All dances are taught and everyone is welcome, just like the dances so important to communities earlier in American history. info: 410 546-7754

**Food for Thought, Thought for Food**

In a lecture given at Washington College titled "Being at Home", Fred Kirschenmann, Director of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture discusses our role on the planet from our perspective, an ecological perspective, a spiritual perspective, and a social perspective.



Pretty heavy stuff, but I think he is saying it is somewhere between being "Masters of the Universe" and a failed experiment by the soil microbes aimed at improving soil fertility.

If you want to try to figure it out, the text of his lecture is available at:

[http://ces.washcoll.edu/journeys\\_home/04\\_03.html](http://ces.washcoll.edu/journeys_home/04_03.html)

A potluck dinner for all members of Provident Farm CSA is planned for **Saturday, Nov. 20**, in conjunction with our Final Harvest celebration. We will gather at the farm, so stay tuned for more information and how to sign up your favorite dish. But....

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
 CSA Final Harvest and Potluck  
**SATURDAY, November 20**  
 Provident Organic Farm  
 Bivalve, MD

- Charlotte England and Susie Wood  
 Potluck Persons

Halloween Party! **Saturday, 10/30** ~ 1-2:30 PM  
 ~ at the farm. Crafts and games from 1-2, followed by a small party. Costumes optional. Please bring treats, goodies, or drinks to share. In the case of inclement weather, the event will be cancelled.

Contact Lori Lilly at [llilly@ezy.net](mailto:llilly@ezy.net) or 10.572.2785 for more information. Hope to see you there!!




Directions to the farm: From Route 50, go west on Nanticoke Road (Rt. 349) about 17 miles to Bivalve. Provident Organic Farm is on your right, across the street from the fire station. Turn right into the driveway between the church and the yellow farm house. If you get lost, Jay's number is (410) 873-29



Joe Lieb Branch Manager  
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**Mashed Potato & Turnip Gratin**

Combined with those yummy Yukon gold potatoes, you won't even know the turnips are there!

- 2 lb Yukon Gold potatoes, about 5 medium
- 1 3/4 lb turnips, about 5 medium
- 1/4 c butter (half stick)
- 1/2 c grated Romano/Parmesan cheese, divided
- pinch ground nutmeg
- salt and pepper

Butter a 11"x7"x2" glass or ceramic baking dish.

Cook potatoes and turnips in large, heavy pot of boiling salted water until tender, about 35 minutes. Drain. Cool vegetables slightly and peel. Cut into large chunks; place in food processor. Add butter and process until smooth, scraping down sides of bowl occasionally. Add 1/4 cup cheese (one quarter) and pinch of ground nutmeg; blend briefly. Season puree to taste with salt and pepper and spoon into prepared dish. Sprinkle with remaining 1/4 cup (one quarter) cheese. (Gratin can be prepared 1 day ahead. Cover and chill.)

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Bake gratin uncovered until vegetables are hot and top is golden, about 25 minutes. Serves 6 Adapted from **Bon Appetit**, March 2004.

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