



News from Provident Organic Farm



www.providentfarm.org

Season 3, 2004

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

Week 4, May 2nd-8th

Notes from the Field, v. 3, #4

This week's Notes come from Robert Nichols who is keeping bees on Provident Farm.

Very few people take the time to realize how important bees are to humans and the world in general. Sure, most of us have learned that bees help pollinate plants, and make honey, but what does that really mean? Their roles in the ecological system have been taken for granted, but it is becoming clear how crucial pollinating insects such as honeybees are to sustaining our food sources. To understand the gravity of this situation, consider this: *honeybees are responsible for at least one out of every three bites of food we as humans eat, and by some accounts up to 80% of our food supply has honeybees involved at some point in the food chain before it reaches our tables.* That's a lot of food we wouldn't have if the girls decided to call it quits! Thankfully, they do this job for us while ensuring their own survival (honey is their winter food they live on until spring returns when they can get fresh pollen and nectar to eat while making more honey for the next winter). Poor pollination leads to lower yields as well as misshapen, smaller, less juicy fruits, vegetables, and nuts. Pollination never used to be considered an issue for most farmers, due to lots of bees that always seemed to be around; however, it's getting harder and harder to find feral honeybees that are doing this job due to a pest that

has decimated about 90% of wild hives, and even about 60% of commercial beekeeping hives – this pest is known as the Varroa mite, a parasitic mite that lives off a bee's blood (hemoglyph) in much the same way as a tick does off an animal or human, only with devastating effects, leading to deformed bees as well as dead ones if infestations get bad. Beekeepers are still trying to figure out the best ways to deal with this pest, and treatments run the full gamut from harsh chemicals to more natural methods such as powdered sugar, natural acids, or food grade mineral oil, to doing nothing at all, hoping to breed “survivor” stock that can handle living with the mites.

I am conveying this information to tell why I sought to place hives with Provident Farm; by Jay's account, pollination on the farm was very poor last year, and we both saw a way that we could possibly change that; what this will hopefully mean for members of the farm is higher yields and better quality produce due to the bees' help, all through natural, organic means – simply put, more food in your grocery bags! I seek to keep bees as naturally as possible, and believe in supporting CSA endeavors; by that measure Provident Farm is a natural fit, especially here on the Eastern Shore. In the coming weeks I will give more information about the bees at Provident Farm, as well as bees in general, to help you better understand what they are doing. If you wish to contact me, or have questions, please email me at ranwithrsd@yahoo.com.

Good Stuff, Cool Stuff

Don't forget that the Farmer's Market has moved! It is now at the corner of Rt. 50 and Rt. 13 in the District Court parking lot ... Saturdays from 8am-1pm and starting from May 19th Wednesdays 12 noon to 5pm.

We 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.

In your share this week:

Tatsoi
Braising Mix
Lettuce
Scallions



"What good is freedom if the structure of work makes it so there is almost no time in which to be free, that is, no time to pursue your interests, have friends, enjoy a book or movie, or even a hobby, enjoy nature?"

Karla Mantilla

Tofu and Pak-Choi Stir-Fry

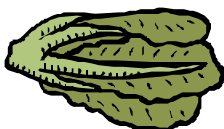
Pak Choi (bok choy) is a main component of most stir-fries as it marries well with the flavors of garlic and ginger. Rich in vitamins A and C, pak choy is also a good source of potassium.

- 1/3 c soy sauce
- 2 tbsp dry sherry
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp cornstarch
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 tbsp minced garlic
- 2-3 tbsp peeled, minced fresh ginger
- 1/4 tsp dried crushed red pepper
- 1-2 head pak choy, trimmed and thinly sliced (3-4 cups sliced)
- 5 oz sliced water chestnuts, drained
- 6-8 scallions, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 15 oz tofu, extra-firm, drained, cut into 3/4 inch pieces

Combine first 4 ingredients in small bowl; mix well and set aside.

Heat vegetable oil until very hot in large wok or skillet over high heat. Add garlic, ginger and crushed red pepper. Stir-fry until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add pak choy and stir-fry until just wilted, about 2 minutes. Add water chestnuts and green onions and stir-fry until onions are tender, about 1 minute. Add tofu and lightly stir-fry until tofu is just heated through, about 2 minutes. Pour soy mixture into pan. Stir-fry until liquid boils and thickens, about 1 minute.

Serves 4.



Food for Thought, Thought for Food

I know this has nothing to do with farming, but it IS noteworthy:

Incarceration rates:

- U.S.S.R 1950 (Stalin) - 1,423 per 100,000
- U.S.A. 2002 (Bush) - 2,998 per 100,000
- Black men:
- South Africa 1993 (pre ANC rule) - 851 per 100,000
- U.S.A 2002 (Bush) - 7,150 per 100,000

Land of the free?

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.

HANDS ON !

Fresh Ginger

Fresh ginger root is one of those ingredients where the dry, spice-rack only vaguely resembles the fresh product ... once you become familiar with the taste of fresh ginger, you will scoff at the powdered! Most grocery stores now carry fresh ginger root in the produce section – the root resembles gnarled, stubby toes, pale beige in color. Look for roots that are plump with smooth skin – shriveled ones indicate old age ... not a desirable quality. Store, unwrapped, at room temperature, or in a zipper bag in the freezer. Ginger root is best kept whole until just before using. Remove peel with a sharp knife – most peelers will not make it around the knobs and nubbins. Because of its potency, fresh ginger is usually thinly sliced, minced or grated for cooking. Special ginger graters exist, but a rasp or plane grater is infinitely more effective. Long and narrow, plane graters come in several grades from very fine to coarse – a fine or medium grade will also work well with other foods like cheeses and firm vegetables like turnips and carrots. They are exceptionally sharp...watch out for your knuckles ...! Minced and grated ginger root are interchangeable in recipes.

Asparagus with Gremolata Butter

Do not be afraid ... *gremolata* is simply a garnish of finely chopped parsley, lemon peel and garlic.

- 1 1/2 - 2 lb asparagus, trimmed
- 2 tbsp butter
- 2 tsp grated lemon peel
- 1-2 tsp minced garlic
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

Cook asparagus in large pot of boiling salted water until just crisp-tender, about 4 minutes. Drain, rinse with cold water and drain again. Pat dry and set aside.

Melt butter in large sauté pan or skillet over medium-high heat. Add lemon peel and garlic and stir 30 seconds. Add asparagus and toss to coat; sprinkle with lemon juice. Sauté until asparagus is heated through and coated with sauce, about 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer to flat serving plate. Sprinkle with parsley and serve. Serves 4.

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