



Notes From The Field - by Craig East, Sunrise Organic Farm

On the fringe (and feathered) benefits of organic farming practices.

Every morning my two Golden Retrievers, Jenny and Gypsy, love to go with me for a walk around the garden. Most days we are met by a rabbit or two that get a good chase. Even a deer has made the mistake of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. There are blue birds perched on tomato stakes or bean poles, robins and black birds looking for a meal, and cardinals and gold finches helping get rid of weed seeds. Lots of different birds in fact, with an indigo bunting making an appearance now and then. Lady bugs and praying mantis are out along with dragon fly and wasps helping control insects that like to eat my crops. Last week Jenny let me know that a box turtle was laying her eggs in a plot of land that was sitting idle. It is wonderful to see nature working.

Years ago, when I was farming much more land and growing conventionally, I never saw these things. The chemicals that I used saw to that. One August I had an insect problem in my soybeans. The chemical that I had to use was so bad that if it got on your skin it could get in your blood and kill you. I had to wear a heavy rubber rain suit, rubber boots and gloves and a respirator. This, in one of the hottest months of the year. I knew there was a better way to farm and I tried to find it.

In those days the only information that I could find on organic growing was the magazine and a few books put out by Rodale Press. These were geared to small gardens and not a large farm. I talked to some other farmers about it and they laughed at me. The Agriculture Department agent that worked with me on conventional farming problems knew nothing about organic and couldn't answer any of my questions. Not long after, I got out of farming never expecting to return.

Well, things are different now. There is lots of information on growing organically. People don't laugh at me anymore -- well not about

that, and I am blessed to be able to work with people like Laura Hunsberger, who not only knows a lot about growing organically, but always goes the extra mile to give me the information I need.

When I go to the grocery store and see produce grown in Peru, Argentina, Chili, Mexico etc. etc. I know this is a plant full of poison. You can sleep easy knowing that the farmers growing for this C.S.A. care about your health as well as the health of their farms and all of nature.

-Craig

Special Offer to CSA Members

Hello Jay,

Thank you for your support as we build our CSA.

Your advice is really appreciated.

*We have a special for CSA members. Blades Orchard is offering CSA members **Canning Peaches for \$15/box**. This is between 20 and 25 pounds of peaches.*

*We ask that members **bring a container** to carry their prize peaches home. We do have a fruit box that members can borrow. **We require a \$10 deposit for the boxes** when the peaches are picked up.*

***Note:** The peaches in the box will be multiple varieties and are considered seconds (a little less pretty than the retail peaches). They are delicious, and we look forward to sharing them with everyone.*

Sincerely,

Lynda and Stephen Blades

Blades Orchard

Caroline County

We inquired about growing practices used by Blades, and Lynda replied as follows, for the information of our membership - Ed.

Blades Orchard utilizes Integrated Pest Management.

This means less chemicals, not organic. We strive to use products in the Orchard that are friendlier to the environment and you, however, we do not want to be misleading about our practices. Due to the delicate nature of peaches we find it impossible to subscribe to a completely organic regimen.

Carrots with Fresh Herbs

- 2 pounds carrots
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup chopped onions, about 1 medium onion
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme leaves
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 orange cut into 8 wedges

Cook Time: 30 minutes.

Preparation:

Carrot recipe directions

Wash and trim carrots, peel if desired, then cut in half crosswise. Heat oil on high in a large 12-inch skillet; place carrots closely together in pan in single layer. Sprinkle with chopped onion and freshly ground pepper. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover and cook, turning once after about 15 minutes. Continue cooking for about 15 minutes longer, or until fork-tender. Liquid should be evaporated and carrots beginning to caramelize at end of cooking time. Sprinkle with fresh herbs. Squeeze two of the orange wedges over carrots. Toss well and serve with remaining orange wedges. Carrot recipe with herbs serves 6.
--From "About.Com: Southern Food" - Diana Rattray

Loaded Potatoes with Veggies

One of my favorite ways to prepare potatoes is to load them up with chopped vegetables, either raw or steamed. Raw carrots, turnips, kohlrabi, parsnips, radish, and, of course, onions, scallions and chives are all candidates for my loaded potato. They give a crunchy consistency and interesting flavors to the blandness of the potato without adding a lot of calories or fat as do some of our more common potato additives, such as

In Your Share* This Week

Potatoes - Greenbranch & Provident

Squash - Greenbranch

Carrots - Provident

Cucumbers - Calliope

Beans - Greenbranch

Onions - Sunrise and Provident

Chard - Calliope, Greenbranch, and Provident

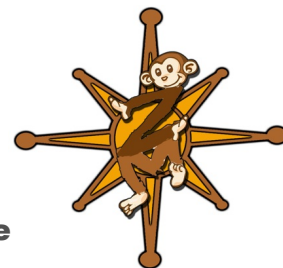
*Share makeup is best estimate at publication time.

Note: For preservation tips and additional recipes, visit the CSA website at <http://www.providentorganicfarm.com/>

sour cream, butter, salt, etc. Steaming the vegetables and blending into the potatoes gives a little variety to mashed potatoes, and ricing the mixture of boiled potatoes and steamed vegetables helps make them lump-free.

Another variation is available to garlic lovers - using steamed or raw cloves of garlic to add zest and flavor to the potato. Chopped-up jalapeno is another of my favorite additives. We tend to enjoy our food a bit more spicy than the average American palate. I find that I can use as many jalapenos as I like without using the seeds, but I can fine-tune the degree of hotness by including some of the seeds, the hottest part of the pepper. Those who don't care for a spicy flavor can use green, red, or yellow bell peppers, chopped.

Most of the bad rap that potatoes get for calories and fat come from the things we pile on, like butter, cheese, salt and sour cream. Try veggies instead. - Ed.



Save the Date

Don't forget, Tuesday 7/21, a musical treat for the Asbury Church distribution. Suzanne Mallow and the Zen Monkeys will be playing music for the kids. 4 to 6-ish. Come out and enjoy!