



Notes from the Field by Jay Martin

Here we go again!

To our returning veteran members: Thank you for your continued support. To our new members: Thank you for joining us, I hope we live up to your expectations. Thank you all for making the commitment to the CSA model of farming.

This is our eighth year of production for the CSA members. Every year as I begin working in the greenhouses I am reminded of one of my favorite statements by my good friend, **Joan Norman of One Straw Farm**, "Spring is God's way of saying 'One more time'. We all get burned out by the end of the season, then we spend the winter making plans, fixing and servicing equipment, researching new ideas, attending conferences, sharing experiences and knowledge gained with each other and then back at it refreshed and ready to rock!

I have an annual ritual with a group of farm friends that signals the end of the winter break and the beginning of the growing season. A group of us go to **Eric and Lori Rice's** farm in Middletown, Md. to help them prune their orchard. Eric always tells us "There are NO bad cuts" as a way of expressing his gratitude for the help. It is always a great day and a lot of fun. We usually prune for about 3 hours in the morning, have a 3 hour lunch and do a little pruning in the afternoon just to make it look like we actually are there to work when we all know we are there to say good-bye and good luck to each other for the growing season. Most of us won't see each other until next year's conferences.

As you probably know, there are five farms growing for the CSA this year. We are **Ted Wycall of Greenbranch Farm, Craig East of Sunrise Farm, Lisa Garfield and Patrick Buckingham of Calliope Farm, Kelly Carey of Down to Earth Farm** and myself. We all met numerous times this winter to develop a crop plan and decide who would grow which crops. Some of the crops are dedicated to one of the farms, some of the crops are scattered through-out all of the farms. I couldn't now tell you how we arrived at these decisions, but I do know it made sense at the time! Really, it did.

As you are also probably aware, I have cut back on what I am growing here and focusing my attention on coordinating the production and distribution for the CSA. I have also expanded my work with LESSON. The funding we have received from the **Town Creek Foundation** has enabled me to follow through on some projects that, in past years, would have been left by the wayside in my dream world. I have been working on a gardening project with **Jim Hatley's** Environmental Ethics class at Salisbury University. I am having a lot of fun working with the students. They are jazzing me with their energy and interest. We have opened a dialogue with Wicomico County Parks, Recreation and Tourism on the possibility of creating community gardens on one of the county's parks. I am attending a 2 day workshop in mid May in New Jersey titled *Exploring the Small Farm Dream*. The workshop will teach me how to offer a set of self assessment tools to folks thinking about taking up farming. This workshop will be coupled with **Shane LaBrake's** *Skills, Scales and Sustainability* workshop which is designed to give emerging farmers a set of guidelines to help them develop the skills necessary to farm efficiently and effectively and to scale their enterprises to be sustainable. I am grateful to the LESSON board members for enabling me to put more emphasis on growing farmers than growing food. I like growing food, always have, but growing farmers is easier on my back.

Onward,

Jay

Amazing talking cow

A man's car stalled on a country road one morning. When the man got out to fix it, a cow came along and stopped beside him. "Your trouble is probably in the carburetor," said the cow. Startled, the man jumped back and ran down the road until he met a farmer. The amazed man told the farmer his story. "Was it a large red cow with a brown spot over the right eye?" asked the farmer. "Yes, yes," the man replied. "Oh! I wouldn't listen to Bessie," said the farmer. "She doesn't know a thing about cars."

In Your Share This Week

Lettuce from Calliope and Provident

Spinach from Provident

Carrots from Provident

Asparagus from Sunrise

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

Asparagus Tips

Asparagus is amazing this time of year. If you are unable to eat it immediately, here is how you keep it fresh. Cut the spears off at the bottom, and stand the spears upright in a bowl or cup just big enough to accommodate them. Add an inch or two of water. Place in the refrigerator until you are ready to cook.

Recipe of the week (<http://allrecipes.com>)

Cream of Fresh Asparagus Soup

PREP TIME 15 Min; COOK TIME 25 Min; READY IN 40 Min

SERVINGS 4

Ingredients

- 1 pound fresh asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1 inch pieces
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 (14.5 ounce) can chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 pinch ground black pepper
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large saucepan, combine asparagus, chopped onion, and 1/2 cup chicken broth. Cover, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat, and simmer uncovered until asparagus is tender, about 12 minutes. Process the mixture in a blender to puree the vegetables. Set aside.
2. In the same saucepan, melt the butter over medium-low heat. Stir in the flour, salt, and pepper. Cook, stirring constantly for 2 minutes. Whisk in the remaining chicken broth, and increase the heat to medium. Cook, stirring constantly until the mixture boils. Stir in the asparagus puree and the milk.
3. Put the sour cream in a small bowl, and stir in a ladleful of the hot soup. Add the sour cream mixture and the lemon juice to the soup. Stir while heating the soup to serving temperature, but don't allow it to boil. Serve immediately.