

Word From the Farm

Farm News

- The high temperatures have accelerated the growth of the lettuce crop, consequently there is a headlong dash to get the red leaf and green leaf lettuces picked before they go to seed and burn up. The romaine lettuce being a heartier plant will be picked next week. As the lettuce is picked, it is immediately cooled down with a spray of water and placed in the cooler. Expect a lot of lettuce this week!

- The majority of the crops, lettuces, cucumbers, squash, etc., the CSAs received have all come from Norwich Meadows Farm. In the following weeks, crops from the Ithaca area network farms will be included in the deliveries. This week all members will receive turnips from the Remembrance Farm.

- Future deliveries will also include some value-added products from Norwich Meadows Farm, such as strawberry jam and pickles.

- There are the beginning stages of mites on the raspberry plants. This is the first time the farm has experienced mites. Mites can be devastating if not taken care of in their early stages. Zaid will most likely use a vegetable based oil spray to combat the minor infestation before it becomes a major problem.

- Construction has started on two more 300' tunnels which should be completed by next Wednesday. This will bring the total number of tunnels to 27. Three more tunnels are to be constructed during the summer.

- Animal predation directed at the chickens is less than what it was last year. Six skunks have already been trapped alive and removed to faraway places. The skunks like to feed on young chickens and they especially love eggs. An unknown animal, possibly a weasel, was killing two chickens per night. Proving to be an elusive animal, Zaid camped out with the chickens one night in order to catch the predator in the act. Evidently, the culprit got wind of the plan and has not been seen since nor have any more chickens been killed.

- This past week another guest worker, Antar, arrived from Egypt. He has previously worked with Khaled, an earlier Egyptian arrival, on an organic farm. Zaid continues to work on the farm to make up for the shortage of labor. Two more workers are expected next week from the island of Jamaica. This will free up Zaid and allow him to do the New York City markets on Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Haifa has been ably handling the NYC marketing chores in Union Square for the past four weeks and Thompkins Square for the last six weeks. Zaid will be joining Haifa next weekend.

Farm Labor

Despite the labor shortage, the farm is off to a very good start. We still are encouraging all CSA members to volunteer their labor as much as possible. Zaid has suggested that the CSAs get together and organize periodic trips to the farm. The labor shortage means that the all-important task of weeding

does not get done. While weeding may seem to be an insignificant and lowly task, not doing it can have devastating results. One robust weed growing right next to a head of lettuce will reduce the size of the lettuce to less than one half its normal size. An abundance of weeds will literally choke out and kill many crops. The best time to visit is during the week when Zaid is present on the farm to direct the volunteers. Direction is very necessary even in a simple task as weeding. Done improperly, the crops can be irreparably damaged.

Although weekdays are the preferred time to volunteer, we realize that many members are working. If the only time you can volunteer is on the weekends, by all means, please come when you wish. Be sure to contact Zaid as to arrival time so he can plan and delegate what work is to be done.

- We would like to give great thanks to the members of the Norwich CSA for all their hard work which amounts to "overtime." Because its members live in the area, travel is not a problem. They have consistently volunteered beyond what is to be expected.

Weather Report

The weather remains dry with very little rain, save for a few evening thunder showers. The past few days, the temperatures have climbed into the high 80s with predictions of 90 degree temperatures until the middle of the week. The ground is so dry any rain that does fall is immediately absorbed by the parched soil. Zaid considers the weather good, but not ideal. Wednesday and Thursday are predicted to bring the much needed rain.

As reported in last week's newsletter, all of the crops grown within the tunnels are irrigated. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the network farms in the Ithaca area. They are experiencing the same dry weather, but have no irrigation facilities. Many of the Ithaca farms also got off to a late start because almost all of their crops are not grown in tunnels. The tunnels have the distinct advantage of extending the growing season by allowing very early spring planting..

KITCHEN AID

Vegetable Spotlight:

Turnips



Most people have never tasted a turnip. Those that have, either love them or hate them. The turnip root is full of vitamin C, and has more of this vitamin than an equivalent amount of orange juice. The greens are a source of significant amounts of vitamin A and vitamin K, both considered powerful antioxidants offering protection against cancer.

Turnips are a member of the huge Brassicales Order. Roots and leaves are grown for food. Turnip roots have a pungent flavor similar to raw cabbage or radishes that becomes mild after cooking.

Baby turnips are mild and can be eaten raw in salads. Larger turnips are usually boiled, baked or sautéed. A relative of radishes and mustard green, turnips have little archeological evidence as to their origin. It is known that the Romans grew them and Indian farmers were growing them as far back as 1500 BC.

Turnips make great side dishes and are frequently combined with potatoes and onions.

Turnip and Potato Patties

- 1/2 pound turnips, cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 8 oz. potato, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1/8 cup thinly sliced scallion greens
- 1 egg, (preferably organic) beaten lightly
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- peanut oil, or olive oil

Cook turnips and potatoes in a large saucepan of salted water for 15 minutes. Drain and mash with a fork. Stir in scallions, egg, and flour. Salt and pepper to taste. Heat oil in skillet until hot. Spoon 1/4-cup mounds of the turnip potato batter into the pan, flattening them into 1/2-inch thick patties with the back of a spatula. Fry until golden, turning once, about 4 minutes on each side. Drain off excess oil and serve.

Makes 6 patties.

Turnip and Onion Au Gratin

- - 1 pound turnips, grated
- - 2 medium onions, chopped finely
- - 1/4 cup of freshly grated Parmesan
- - 1/2 cup cream

In a bowl toss the turnips, onion, corn flour, and Parmesan cheese. Salt and pepper to taste. Transfer the mixture to a buttered 9-inch square baking dish, patting it down. Drizzle the cream evenly over the mixture. Sprinkle with more Parmesan, and bake the gratin in the middle of a preheated 350 F degree oven for 25 to 30 minutes, or until the top is golden.

Serves 4

Quick Turnip "Fries"

Slice the turnips into french-fry strips and lightly coat with olive oil. Place on a flat baking sheet and sprinkle with sea salt. (Also can sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, pepper or brown sugar. Bake at 350 F for 20 minutes.

Here is a delicious dressing to serve with the red and green leaf luttuces you will be receiving.

Avocado with Sesame Soy Dressing

- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 1/2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon Asian sesame oil
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 2 chilled firm-ripe California avocados (Hass)

Whisk soy sauce, lemon juice, oil, sugar, until sugar is dissolved. Salt to taste Peel avocado and cube, add to dressing and gently turn.

While You're In the Kitchen... Feed Us!

The North American Gannick (*Literatum gannick*) is omnivorous, and best subsists on a varied diet of recipes, culinary how-tos, organic- and urban-agriculture news, artwork, vegetable- or agriculture-inspired poetry, and anything else agriculture/organic/community social awareness oriented that it can find.

NOTE: This docile but threatened species readily accepts hand-feeding by humans.

seanmonster@gmail.com

Kitchen Catch-Up

There's always a lot to say at the beginning of the year, and we don't always have room in the first issue. Given that we're currently enjoying a feast of lettuce and other leafy greens (high in folates and minerals), we at the Gannick have decided they deserve the page of their own that they didn't get last week.

Any Greens Salad

Recipe courtesy of new member Grete

Greens are here! They are tender or succulent, spicy or sweet, buttery or crisp.



They are bursting with flavors that deserve to be savored. Don't drown 'em in heavy commercial dressings- here's a few tips to bring out their best.

1. Always start with greens that have been washed and **DRIED**. Let them drain and pat dry with a paper towel. If you have a salad spinner, it is also a great storage container.
2. Season with salt and pepper, and toss, **BEFORE** adding any dressing. (Freshly milled pepper is great, **AND** coarse salt through a mill also adds zing to salads and other veggies). You can season the greens at the start of food prep and dress at the last minute.
3. Just **DRIZZLE** on enough dressing to enhance the flavors of the greens.

Here's a basic balsamic vinaigrette- with room to improvise:

- 3TBS balsamic vinegar
- 2 TBS lemon juice
- Mix these together. Then add herbs/spices to taste. A few options:
 - 1-2 tsp fresh herbs (garlic, basil, rosemary, thyme, tarragon)
 - 2-3 tsp honey (takes the bite out of the vinegar)
 - 1 Tbl dijon mustard

Add some of these to the base, Then, slowly whisk in:

- up to one-half cup of olive oil

You can make this in advance and keep it covered in fridge.

Okonomiyaki

"Okonomiyaki" means "as you like" or "cook as you like" in Japanese, and it's been described somewhat accurately as a cross between pancakes and pizza. It's a good way of using up stray vegetables (or other food) one otherwise can't find a use for. Also, it's easily veganized by omitting the eggs.

In essence, okonomiyaki consists of a base of batter pan-fried with various other ingredients. As with pizza, there are regional differences in style: in Osaka-style the ingredients are mixed into the batter, while in Hiroshima-style the ingredients layered atop the batter base while it cooks, then the whole thing flipped.

The version I usually make is a fusion of styles:

Make a batter of two eggs, one cup flour and enough water to make this fairly thin; add 1 cup shredded cabbage to the batter. Pour this into a hot, oiled skillet over medium-low heat. Lay washed spinach leaves over batter as it cooks; on top of this, layer shredded carrot, shredded daikon, julienne summer squash, sliced or diced peppers, onion and tofu. I like to add bonito flakes, if available. (I've also employed other greens, tomatoes, cheese, canned tuna, bacon, chicken and/or beef strips, and shrimp, all to happy effect).

When the pancake is golden-brown and cooked through, flip the whole carefully (it may help to flip the skillet into a second hot, oiled pan). Cook several minutes, then flip onto a plate and break an egg in the pan; spread into roughly the size of the okonomiyaki. Flip the okonomiyaki (filling-side down) onto the egg, and cook 1-2 minutes, until the egg is set.

Cut into wedges to serve. It is usually spread with mayonnaise and/or "okonomiyaki sauce":

2 Tbl tomato puree	1 tsp sugar
2 Tbl ketchup	1/3 c. Worcestershire
3 Tbl dark soy sauce	7tbl dashi (bonito stock)*
2 Tbl cornstarch dissolved in 2 Tbl water	

Bring tomato puree, ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, soy sauce, sugar and dashi to boil in saucepan over high heat. Add cornstarch mixture, a little at a time, and cook until thickened to the texture of ketchup. Cool before serving.

** I've used vegetable stock successfully*