



June 12, 2004

Volume 1, Issue 3s

Fair Share Farm CSA Newsletter

This Week's Share:

Full Share:

1# Snow or Sugar snap peas

1 Lettuce head

Swiss chard

Broccoli

Kohlrabi

Scallions

Summer squash

Carrots

Dill

Extra: garlic scapes

Partial Share:

1# Snow or Sugar snap peas

1 Lettuce head

Swiss chard

Scallions

Easter Egg radishes

Dill

Extra: 1 carrot, garlic scapes

Next week: look for more lettuce, peas, carrots, radishes, and scallions. New will be summer squash, bok choy, arugula, and mint.

Summer here we come!

While Summer doesn't officially start for another 2 weeks, it sure feels like it. Hot, dry winds out of the southwest have replaced the spring storms and rain. Its amazing how quickly beds that had standing water in them only two weeks ago, now need irrigation.

So, this week we hauled out all the assorted plastic hoses, valves, filters, and whatnots that assembled in the correct fashion create our irrigation system. Water from our pond is pumped through the system and delivered to the soil around our plants. Each row of vegetables gets a line of drip "tape" down the length of it.

Needless to say it is a bit time consuming running tape out, but definitely worth it. Without the irrigation water, not much would survive the dry days of July and August. And we could just forget about any fall crops, most of which need to be planted in the fields in August.

We feel ready for summer. Last summer taught us a lot about how to cope with dry, hot conditions. Our plants are much healthier going into the season too thanks to plentiful rain, cow manure that was added in the fall, and adjustments to the soil's pH.

The local wildlife also know its summer. With all the surrounding grasslands putting up seed heads, the wildlife have turned to our plots for a nice salad buffet.

Last week when we went to harvest lettuce for the CSA, we found that many had been eaten by deer. Nothing else could take out a whole head of lettuce in one bite. We lost close to half of our lettuce crop over the two nights until we caught it. Luckily, we planted much more lettuce than we needed so you should be getting lettuce through June, and then again in the fall.

The lettuce is now covered with row cover, which is basically a big sheet of fabric made for agricultural use. But the real solution may be the solar-powered electric fence we just bought. It delivers a nice little jolt without doing any physical harm. We're still experimenting with the right approach to sharing the land we farm with our fellow animals.

Calendar

June 16th — CSA Distribution, Crossroads Market

June 19th — CSA Distribution, Fair Share Farm

Do you have a large collection of unwanted **GROCERY BAGS** lurking around your home? Donate them to the farm! They'll be used to pack shares.

Kids on the farm

We welcome kids of all ages to visit the farm with their families. Our goal is to make the farm as kid-safe and friendly as possible. We've already removed a lot of the hazards that were on the farm, but our work is not done. The kids area is under construction and now includes a bean teepee with plans to add a sandbox. Here are some things to keep in mind when bringing children to the farm:

- ◆ Besides the packing area where the cooler is, the barn is off-limits.
- ◆ Children should always be accompanied by an adult or teenage companion.
- ◆ No climbing on the tractor or other equipment without a farmer present.

Recipes

Stuffed Chard Leaves *(from Laurel's Kitchen)*

1 bunch Swiss Chard
2-1/2 cups cooked rice
1/2 cup chopped parsley
White part of 3 scallions, or 1 medium onion, chopped
2 tbsp chopped green garlic or garlic scapes
1/4 cup olive oil
1-1/2 cup ricotta or cottage cheese
1 tbsp chopped dill
1 egg beaten

- ◆ Preheat oven to 350°F.
- ◆ Sauté onion in olive oil
- ◆ Mix all ingredients except chard
- ◆ Wash and dry chard leaves, remove stems
- ◆ Place 2 tbsp of filling on the underside of each leaf a third from the bottom. Fold over the sides of leaf to make a square packet. Place seam side down in a greased baking dish
- ◆ Cover and bake for 30 minutes or until done.

You can also pour tomato sauce over this dish before baking, or even top with your favorite cheese.

The Politics of Food

While you may think of what we do as organic farming, it is better called sustainable agriculture. Our goal over the long term is to continually reduce our inputs to the farm (eg, energy/fuel, non-local materials) and improve soil quality and biological diversity.

The Land Institute in Salina, Kansas is a true visionary organization that everyone should

Your Share Items

There are several new items in this week's full share (or next week's partial), some familiar, some not.

Swiss Chard

A relative of the beet, Swiss chard is grown for its beautiful large leaves and stems which are good fresh or cooked. More of a Mediterranean vegetable, it is a change from the Asian greens you've been getting. We grow several varieties including Bright Lights (red/yellow/white) and Verde di Taglio, a

white stemmed variety whose organic seeds we purchase from Italy. Chard is similar to spinach and beet greens, and high in vitamin A, calcium and potassium.

Kohlrabi

The most alien looking vegetable that we grow, it is the bulbed out stem of a relative of cabbage. It has a nice, melon-like texture. Peel before eating. Tasty grated into a salad or cut into

matchsticks and served with your favorite dip or dressing.

Carrots

Carrots need nice loose soil and the right conditions to grow to the slender, sweet treats we crave. When we began farming we thought that the clay in our soil would produce only stubs. Happily, our soil texture is excellent for carrots, and our spader (tiller) creates a nice, deep, soft bed for growing. Partial shares will have to wait a week for an entire bunch, but we've planted 1,500 row feet, so we should have a good supply this summer.

We leave the green tops on to show their freshness. Cut them off when you get home to improve storage.

Dill

Dill is another early herb, growing best in spring. It dries well, so hang it up in a dry place if you're not going to use it, and save it for later. It goes best with potatoes, cucumbers, beans and fish. In addition, it is a nice herb to add to yogurt and sour cream dressings or dips.

Hope We're Helpful

With the limited space of this newsletter, we are hoping to give you some helpful information on not only what your vegetables are, but how to prepare and store them. We encourage you, however, to make the most of other resources, from the library to the internet to your own stack of cookbooks.

There are some nice links on the Recipes page of our website, and the Mid-Continent library system is loaded with books on cooking and gardening. As the season progresses, we will talk more about preserving the harvest, from canning and pickling, to drying and root cellaring. With enough interest and the right facility, we can even hold some classes. While we have a 22 week season, we want you to be able to enjoy our vegetables all year long.

know about, that is doing this in a big way. Their goal is to "develop an agricultural system with the ecological stability of the prairie and a grain yield comparable to that from annual crops."

Their approach of **Natural Systems Agriculture** is a new paradigm for food production, where nature is mimicked rather than subdued and ignored. They are investigating

the feasibility of perennial polycultures or mixtures of perennial grains that will efficiently harvest the sun's energy (like the prairie).

Natural Systems Agriculture would leave the ground unplowed for years and use few or no chemicals, solving many environmental problems at their root.

Visit them at www.landinstitute.org.

Fair Share Farm

18613 Downing Road

Kearney, Missouri 64060

(816) 320-3763

www.farisharefarm.com

