

the
Canticle Farm
newsletter

HARVEST TIMES

The Canticle Farm is a Certified Naturally Grown farm and Community Supported Agriculture project sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany. The farm is committed to connecting all peoples, practicing Earth-friendly habits, and realizing a Creation-centered spirituality.



week of June 30, 2008

week # 3 of 18

The wonders of COMPOST

by Elizabeth Thompson

Compost is an integral element for growing healthy plants as well as bringing our food system full circle. At Canticle Farm, compost is an important amendment, nourishing the earth and the bounty and beauty of our crops.

Compost, a "brown manure," is decomposed organic matter that has been aerobically broken down. Organic material is broken down by natural microorganisms that release the nutrients of our leftover foodstuffs into a rich humus. At Canticle Farm we rely on you for much of our compost! We encourage you to take home a bucket (empty cat litter containers with lids are available at the farm for you to take home) and fill it with your vegetable scraps, eggshells, and coffee grounds and filters. These organic scraps are mixed with manure and carbon matter (straw and hay) and composted in an 18-24 month process before being spread on the fields.

This compost, when spread on the fields, improves soil structure and aeration and helps keep moisture in. When incorporated into the soil, compost continues to feed microorganisms which produce nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus, creating a healthy, balanced environment for plant growth. With all of this good stuff from compost, few additional soil amendments are needed.

To make our compost we can also use grass clippings (from untreated lawns only, please) and leaves. Maple and oak leaves are optimal; please ask Mark about other leaves. Pine straw and cones are too acidic and brush clippings and vines do not compost well. If you have leaves or a quantity of grass clippings, they can be taken directly to the compost area past the distribution center. There will be signage posted to indicate the exact dumping spot.

Kitchen scraps collected in the cat litter containers can be left at the distribution center and a clean container picked up. Please don't leave compost in plastic bags as this attracts critters and please bring your compost only once the container is at least half full. Dumping the containers is a nasty job, so we prefer to keep it as efficient as possible. With the container under the sink or on the front porch with

How's it GROWin'?

by Mark Printz

Rain, rain, beautiful rain! We can sing this song since we have been blessed with timely, but not excessive, rains. Most of our plants need an inch of water a week and they have received this with little help from our irrigation system.

Allium update: The Allium family includes onions, scallions, shallots and garlic. We hope you have been enjoying the wonderful crop of garlic scapes this year; they bode well for an excellent garlic harvest this summer. We are planning a garlic harvesting party in another few weeks to pull up all the bulbs and prepare them to be dried. This was a fun and rewarding event last year and we look forward to it this year. The onions are looking good since they got a timely weeding last week. There is still some weeding to be done in their beds to keep them coming on strong. The scallions are also looking good.

The perennial flower beds got a good weeding last week and we thank those who joined forces to accomplish this work quickly. The blessed rains have made for superb weed pulling conditions, where it is moist enough to make for easy pulling while not being mucky.

the lid tightly on, there will be little smell. Please no leftovers, dairy, or meat products in the compost. Also, please remove anything that won't break down, such as rubber bands, labels, stickers, and plastic bags, from your kitchen scraps before tossing them in the compost.

By bringing your "compostables" back to the farm you can cut down on what ends up in our landfills while also saving on your garbage bill. Additionally, there is the satisfaction of knowing that your food is going full circle – what is born of the healthy earth at Canticle Farm becomes again healthy earth for the next cycle of crops. So, if a vegetable gets forgotten in the back of the fridge for two weeks, it needn't be considered wasted, merely recycled in a different way.

Composting is also something you can do at home. Ask Mark for tips about setting up your own compost if interested. Either way, recycling your organic waste is simple and satisfying. Thanks for you help!

HARVEST RECIPES

Garlic Scapes

Garlic scapes are a great, mild addition to practically any dish. I especially enjoy them in stir-fries, omelets, and soups. They also take exceptionally well to pickling and make a phenomenal pesto. Try your own variations on this simple recipe.

~ Elizabeth Thompson

8-10 garlic scapes, coarsely chopped
1 cup extra virgin olive oil
1 cup parmesan or asiago cheese
a handful of pine nuts or walnuts (optional)

Pureé garlic scapes in food processor or blender and process until smooth. Add cheese and nuts and process again until fairly smooth.

With machine running, slowly drizzle in the olive oil until all is combined. Store in an airtight jar in the fridge.

This is delicious on pasta as well as many steamed veggies.

Great Opportunity!

We have a need for someone to maintain the flower beds in our reflection area during this season. We are offering an in-kind participating small summer share to a shareholder or someone you may know who has experience in the care of flowers and plants. If you are interested and qualify you would receive a full refund for your share and agree to 40 hours of work over the season.

Olean Farmers Market

Come visit us and other local growers Saturdays between 8 am and 2 pm in the JCC – Olean parking lot.

This is a great opportunity to meet other growers and pick up some additional great, local products such as fruit, baked goods and buffalo meat.

There are two other certified naturally grown growers at the market in addition to us and it is a great local market place.

Come out some morning and support local!

Volunteer Opportunities

- Heavy and light field work
- Cultivation (ie weeding pulling) – the next 3-6 weeks are the prime time to get ahead of the weeds. Once we get behind on the weeds it becomes very difficult to control them. By addressing weeds in their infancy we cut down on our weed seed bank for future years and positively affect the yield of our crops.
- Early morning harvest helpers, especially on Monday and Thursday. Some field work as well as light wash station help is needed.
- Coming soon: pea and bean pickin' season!

Help the Canticle Farm Spiritual / Social Committee Improve the Reflection Area

The Spiritual/Social Committee received a generous donation of a bike that will be raffled off to support the Committee's work in the Reflection Area.

We're planting flowers, weeding, improving signage, clearing space, and performing other tasks in our effort to make the Reflection Area and labyrinth more inviting to visitors.

The bike is a Next PowerClimber, teen or small-adult sized (24" wheels) mountain bike with 18 speeds, full (front and back) suspension, and a lock and chain. It retails for about \$75 new. This bike is in very gently used condition and will be inspected and tuned by one of our shareholders. Tickets are \$1 each or 7 for \$5 and can be purchased during distribution.

Tickets will also be sold at the Wednesday, August 6, Canticle Farm Ice Cream Social, during which the winning ticket will be drawn (you need not be present to win).

If you have any questions about the bike or the raffle, email Kris Later at chogrook@aol.com. Take a chance for a great cause and maybe we'll see you on the bike trails!

"Be praised, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth who sustains us and produces diverse fruits with colored flowers and herbs..."

- St. Francis
Canticle of Creation