

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 July 14, 2008

week # 5 of 18

How's it GROWin'?

with Mark Printz

One of the initial challenges this season has been the early broccoli crop. Our broccoli plants have been tested in a variety of ways already this season. On the farm we have experimented with a couple of new varieties of broccoli plants and with a new planting method. While the new varieties have not grown as vigorously as expected, the planting method of decreasing the spacing between plants seems to be allowing the plants to grow while decreasing the space for weeds to grow. The lack of early rains and sporadic periods of intense heat also negatively affected these cooler weather crops.

However, the biggest challenge has been the increase in the Swede midge insect pressure. The Swede midge has progressively migrated down from the north and preys on Brassicas plants, particularly broccoli, by attacking the growth tip of the plant. This leads to scarring and irregular head formation. We have seen this pest for the last couple of years, but this year it has increased enough for us to see a 30-40% loss in our broccoli crop.

Our tactic for dealing with this issue is to continue what we do throughout the farm to encourage strong, healthy plants that can then defend themselves against insect and weed pressure. Just like a strong, healthy, well-cared for human body can better defend itself against disease, a strong, healthy, well-cared for plant can also defend itself against invasive organisms.

We are working even more intensely with the broccoli plants, giving them natural amendments, foliar feedings and weedings. These are always the best long-term methods. Even conventional agriculture does not have an effective weapon against the Swede midge. We hope our work will create a stronger fall crop and that, coupled with the cooler autumn temperatures, we will see a more abundant yield on the distribution table.

On a brighter note, the vine crops are coming on strong. They are starting to set fruit and it looks like there will be a bounty, so get those zucchini bread recipes ready!

Magical PEAS

I eat my peas with honey
I've done it all my life.
It makes the peas taste funny
But it keeps them on my knife.

—Anonymous

Have you been enjoying one of "nature's candies" the past few weeks? We think our fresh peas are some of the best; they don't even need honey! In addition to being an enjoyable treat, peas also make a body strong. They are not as dark green as spinach or kale, which give a mightier nutritional bang, but their beautiful, delicate green does belie a good vitamin content, particularly vitamins A and B. Peas also deliver doses of calcium and potassium.

As for enjoying them, sooner is better. Once the peas are picked, the sugars start converting to starch and the flavor fades. Keeping them in the pod until ready to use them slows down this process. And, as for keeping them on your knife, I recommend a spoon!

And I also recommend the recipe on the back, which uses a number of crops now in season at Canticle Farm.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

GARLIC HARVEST PARTY

Saturday, July 26th from 10am – 1pm
No Experience Necessary – Fun for All!

Pulling, stacking, and clipping – there's a job for everyone. We had a great turnout and a lot of fun last year. Let's do it again!

SEWING! We need two money belts for the farmer's market & a canopy mended.

BEETLE PATROL! This involves walking through the plants and knocking the offending beetles into a bucket of water.

PEA & BEAN PICKING

AM HARVEST HELPERS
(especially Mondays and Thursdays)

CULTIVATION – with rain comes weeds!

HARVEST RECIPES

Peas and Lettuce

from *The Complete Encyclopedia of Vegetables and Vegetarian Cooking* by Roz Denny and Christine Ingram

6 outer leaves of a Romaine lettuce
1 small onion or shallot or a couple of spring onions, sliced
2 TBL butter
8 ounces shelled peas, fresh or frozen
nutmeg
salt and fresh ground pepper

Pull off the outer leaves (which are tougher and less desirable for salads, but perfect for this recipe). Wash and roughly shred them by hand. In a saucepan, lightly fry the lettuce and onion in butter for about three minutes. Add the peas and nutmeg, salt and pepper to taste. Stir, cover and simmer about 5 minutes. This dish can be drained or served slightly wet.

Swiss Chard Breakfast Burritos

from *From Asparagus to Zucchini, a guide to cooking farm-fresh seasonal produce*, third edition from the Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition

approximately 3 cups cooked and seasoned Swiss chard leaves*
6-8 flour tortillas
2-3 cups shredded cheese (like cheddar or swiss), divided
4 eggs, beaten
2 cups milk
1 TBL flour
1 tsp mustard powder
salsa
sour cream

Oil a 9-by-13-inch baking pan. Divide cooked chard down center of tortillas. Sprinkle each pile of chard with 3 TBL cheese. Roll up tortillas and place seam side down in prepared pan. Mix eggs, milk, flour and mustard powder. Pour over tortillas. Cover with foil and refrigerate OVERNIGHT. The next day, let burritos come to room temperature. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Bake until eggs are set, about 45 minutes. Sprinkle remaining cheese on top and cover for last 5 minutes of baking. Serve with salsa and sour cream. This recipe can be adapted to use a variety of seasonal vegetables, such as zucchini and spinach and many others. Serves 4-6.

*It is best to start by sautéing some onions and garlic; then add the Swiss chard and cook it. Season with salt, pepper and fresh herbs (dill is delicious).

Thursday, July 17
at Canticle Farm 7PM

"Building Community and the Spirituality of Supporting Local Agriculture"
by shareholder **Anthony Lipnicki**

Come hear this fascinating and multi-dimensional talk by Anthony Lipnicki, member of Canticle Farm's Education Committee and Cornell University Cooperative Extension's Agriculture Committee. Innkeepers of the Mustard Seed Inn and B&B in Andover, NY with his wife Mary, and community organizer, Anthony started FIRST FRIDAYS, a community oriented discussion group, two years ago. FIRST FRIDAYS' intention is to bring people together from a variety of backgrounds with the hope to find a common ground of understanding and to address issues relating to the community that are close to everyone's heart but need to be better understood so that a responsible response can be made in everyone's best interest. Anthony and Mary are parishioners of Blessed Sacrament Church in Andover and moved to Allegany County five years ago from the NYC area to simplify their lives in a Christian and Franciscan ethical philosophy, focused on prayer, Creation Centered spirituality and social responsibility.

wish list

From time to time you'll see this box in the Harvest Times, listing various items that the farm is in need of. This is an opportunity for you to donate to the farm if you have something sitting around in the garage or attic that is no longer of use to you or if you would like to purchase something specifically for the improvement of the farm. Canticle Farm is a non-profit, so all donations are tax-deductible. We very much appreciate the desire to donate, but ask that all donations be in good, operating condition. Maybe one day we'll recruit a full-time fixer-upper, but for now we simply don't have sufficient people-power to repair broken donations. Here are a few wish list items Mark thought of this week:

- * Reams of legal size paper for the newsletter
- * pool skimmer head (we don't need the long handle, just the head for skimming debris out of the wash station)
- * garden scooters for pea/bean picking and weeding
- * harvest carts (long handled green ones that you pull)