

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 August 4, 2008

week # 8 of 18

How's it GROWin'?

by Mark Printz

The tomatoes and peppers will soon be smiling at you from the distribution table. Both the field and high tunnel tomatoes are looking great. The first few red tomatoes were on the farm stand last week, but soon the bounty will be rolling in.

We will have pick-your-own beans this week – a rainbow of yellow, green and purple. Please be conscious of the plants as you pick, as we are hoping for 2-3 weeks of harvest out of these plants. If they get damaged, then their yield falters.

The cucumbers are coming right along. We have had more picklers than slicers thus far because the picklers produce more fruits, and we need a lot of fruits to distribute to all our shareholders! Just because they are called pickling cucumbers doesn't mean that they can't be sliced and enjoyed raw. These little cukes are great eaters! The slicing cucumbers are looking good and should be ready in the next week or two. We realize cucumbers are highly sought after, and we are doing our best to grow and harvest the necessary quantities. Enjoy!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Aihme Ellis from the Cornell Cooperative Extension will be offering a **pressure cooker canning lesson and demonstration on Monday, August 11th at 6:00 p.m. at St. Elizabeth Motherhouse.** Participants will learn how to can non-acid vegetables. Each participant will leave with recipes and handouts explaining how to can properly and safely. Participants will also prepare a pint of green or yellow beans to take home. The cost will be \$10 per person to cover materials. Please contact the Canticle Farm Office at 373-0200, ext. 3358 to register for the demonstration. Due to space limitations, there will only be room for 20 participants, so make sure to call to reserve a spot.

Another canning demonstration will be held on September 3rd at 6:00 p.m. to learn how to can tomatoes using a boiling method.

Farewell to the hardworking Warming House Interns: Sharee Ortiz, Sarah Specchio, Jenny Ackers and Zach Domes. Thanks for all your hard work and high spirits. We will miss you!

Inter-Generational Reflection

by Jenny Ackers, SBU class of 2008

Plates with bare corncobs and creamy macaroni salad residue drifted through my periphery as my grandfather hunkered deeper into his seat to prepare for another serious after-dinner discussion. Usually these lectures started just as everyone sucked the last drops of milk from the corners of their cups. Sensing his audience's exodus towards the television set, he would quickly reel us back with one simple phrase, "When I was on Iwo Jima..."

These WWII stories seemed to burst forth uncontrollably after holiday suppers. As one of the few remaining survivors, he feels it necessary to pass on this knowledge before it is too late. Staring into whichever decorative tablecloth represents the current holiday my 12-member family is celebrating, he tries not to meet our gazes. Whenever he does, choking tears surely follow, then the fumbling with silverware and silently served slices of apple pie.

But on this particular Memorial Day, one week before beginning my part-time internship at Canticle Farm, the post-dinner talk went differently. Earlier in the week, I told him about my summer plans of toiling in the very same New York State soil he spent his childhood cultivating during the Great Depression. I could tell this opportunity of mine ignited something inside of him, but just how deeply I had no idea until the napkins flew off the laps that night.

After the meal, the rest of the family hurriedly retreated to take shelter on the family-room couch from the impending and seemingly inevitable somber, war-story rant. For some reason I stayed, but prepared for the worst. But instead of hearing about black sands and flag raisings, this talk started with, "The thing about planting potatoes is..."

This phrase began what I'm sure will soon become one of my favorite memories of our relationship. As I learned from our talk, during his pre-war stint as the son of Ilion, New York's biggest little farmer, small-scale, local farming proved essential to keeping his family and community nourished. Knowing how to keep potato bugs on the run meant one more meal that wasn't breadline issued. Knowing that you needed to plant potatoes with three sprouts meant in four months you could eat when the breadline distributed crumbs. He went on and on describing the intricacies of each vegetable's growth and harvest and how to stretch the crop as far as possible.

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We spent about an hour discussing that community-sustaining garden, partly in an attempt to green up my thumb. But mostly it was a way for him to proudly pass along the wisdom gained from summers spent elbow-deep in soil. My attention never faltered once. Neither did the demonstration of my gardening inexperience. "What is a scuffle hoe, anyway?"

I think it was at this point, as I brilliantly displayed my ignorance, that my grandfather realized he, along with the rest of his generation, had forgotten this time-tested wisdom when they sailed across the Pacific Ocean to fight the war that was supposed to end all wars. Together, they had beaten the Axis Powers, but failed as torchbearers of the food-production system our ancestors had perfected with thousands of years of experience.

With the end of the war, few wanted to keep fighting, even if it was against measly potato bugs. My own grandfather traded in his scuffle hoe for a slide rule and a desk at RCA. Simultaneously, instant, microwavable, potato-like powders began to flood grocery store shelves and drowned out any sort of recollection or recognition of the life and identity of the potato for younger generations. All at once, the nation forgot about how beautiful and valuable even the life of the most common of vegetables could be.

But on this past Memorial Day, the Canticle Farm reminded my grandfather to slip the remnants of his story of life and creation in the garden, a happy memory overshadowed by the death and destruction of WWII, on to at least one of his grandchildren. Thanks to Canticle Farm he had the opportunity to pass his torch on after all.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- There are some Arbor Vitaes that need to be transplanted to the entrance of the reflection area. We don't have the staff time to do this and are looking for some volunteers.
- We are looking for landscaping timbers to border the permanent perennial beds in the reflection area and then someone to install them.
- Onion pulling coming soon!
- Weeding! We have been able to stay ahead of the root crops in terms of weeding, but continued cultivation ensures root crops for late summer and early fall.
- Trap and relocate our woodchucks. We have some traps, but we could use others, and a person to do the job.

HARVEST RECIPES

Greek Green Beans

3/4 cup olive oil
2 cups chopped onions
1 clove garlic, minced
2 pounds fresh green beans, rinsed and trimmed
3 large tomatoes, diced
2 teaspoons sugar
1 pinch salt to taste

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Cook and stir the onions and garlic in the skillet until tender. Mix the green beans, tomatoes, sugar, and salt into the skillet. Reduce heat to low, and continue cooking 45 minutes, or until beans are soft.

Green Bean Salad

1½ pounds tender young green beans
1 large or 2 small fennel bulbs, washed and trimmed
4 small ripe tomatoes, peeled and seeded
Handful of fresh chervil (½ teaspoon dried)
6 ounces small Mediterranean type black olives – pitted
12 -18 anchovy filets packed in oil
3 medium sized eggs, hard boiled and quartered
1½ tablespoons fresh basil (if dried, less)
Slice the beans into halves lengthwise. Cook them in boiling, salted water until they are tender but still a little firm. Drain. Refresh under cold running water. Drain. Thinly slice the fennel and quarter the tomatoes. Add these to the beans, chervil and olives in a bowl. Drain the anchovy fillets and wipe them on a paper towel. Sprinkle over the salad. Add the hard boiled eggs over the salad. Sprinkle the basil over the salad. Refrigerate 2-3 hours. Top with Garlic-basil vinaigrette. Serve as fantastic luncheon or light dinner fare.

Garlic-basil vinaigrette

3 large cloves garlic, peeled
6-8 fresh basil leaves, washed and patted dry
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons wine vinegar
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
Smash the garlic with a heavy knife, and then smash it with the basil. Add the olive oil very slowly to make a fine paste. Add the vinegar and season with salt and pepper.

Stir-Fried Green Beans with Pork & Chillies

1¼ lb green beans, washed and trimmed ¼ - ½" length
12-16 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped finely
6-9 fresh hot green or red chillies, cut crosswise into very thin slices
5 tablespoons vegetable oil or lard (lard preferred as it is more stable and thus healthier when using a high heat).
10 oz. ground pork
½ teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon brown sugar
3 tablespoons fish sauce OR salt to taste
1¼ cup water

Put oil into a wok and place over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot add the garlic and chillies. Stir and cook until the garlic turns golden. Add the pork, breaking up any lumps and cook until the pork has lost its raw look. Add the green beans, paprika, brown sugar, fish sauce and water. Cook, stirring, on medium-high heat 8-10 minutes or until the beans are tender and most of the water has been absorbed.

Enjoy with rice and kimchi!