

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 11, 2008

week # 9 of 18

How's it GROWin'?

by Mark Printz

Weather, oh that weather. Typically, the first week in August should be the warmest week of year, but here we are in fresh, fall weather. Cooler weather is preferable to weather that is too hot, however, the cold does slow down the maturation of some crops such as tomatoes. The rain hasn't hurt us either. It has actually made the harvest of carrots easier. Speaking of carrots, this year's crop is looking very good. Our carrots are not mono-carrots, as you may have noticed! There is considerable variation in size, shape, and form. This is due to the fact that we do not thin our carrots, so the carrots grow and are shaped as they press up against their neighboring carrots. The variation in size can be beneficial. Some people may prefer to pick out smaller, baby carrots, others may like larger, stockier carrots. You have your pick! Also, be aware that you don't have to peel our carrots, simple wash and go! The peel is safe and actually harbors many of the carrots' acclaims, vitamins and nutrients. Another root crops, our beets, are looking good also. We expect a long run of both of carrots and beets.

In these coming weeks we are loosing our college and high school help, so we are in need of shareholders to step up and help, especially on harvest days (Mondays and Thursdays). On harvest days we have enjoyable tasks such as washing and bean picking. Bean picking can actually happen any day that it is dry and is a simple and pleasurable task.

ICE CREAM SOCIAL FUN

There was a great turnout at the ice cream social. It was a beautiful evening and everyone enjoyed the music, the ice cream sundaes and the time together. The bicycle was raffled off and the lucky winner was shareholder Madeline Fodor. Congratulations!



Being Kind to Mother Earth: Another Reason for Choosing Organic

Our Canticle Farm community knows our vegetables offer much more nutrient content than their store-bought conventionally grown cousins. They are nurtured in healthy topsoil: a happy balance of minerals, air, water, decaying plant material, fungi, earthworms, bacteria and microbes.

By contrast, the soil in agribusiness serves only as a medium for holding these same plants in a vertical position so they can be sprayed with chemicals: pesticides, insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, and petroleum-based fertilizers. Synthetic fertilizers, primarily nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, have no organic matter. This process forces plant production, but rapidly depletes eroding soil. Undernourished plants are more susceptible to disease and pests. Chemical use then spirals upward, both in quantity and concentration. Then, diseases and "bad bugs" adapt, developing resistance. Pesticide use on this nation's mono-croplands increased 3,300% (yes, thousands) since 1945. Yet, the bugs are winning; crop losses due to insects are up 20%. (USDA Agriculture Census 1997).

As a shareholder, you are already aware of the solution to this mad agricultural arms race. Sustainable farming—good stewardship—not only avoids harming the land, but enhances it. Sustainable farming employs various techniques, including windbreaks, cover crops, crop rotation, intercropping, composting, manual weeding, and low/no tillage practices. Polyculture, planting a variety of crops in one area rather than just one, promotes biodiversity and mimics natural ecosystems. Diversity of species aids in creating a healthy environment, thus the need for aggressive pesticide use is eliminated.

Many folks don't realize that the food they eat is an environmental topic. Only recently has recognition dawned that sustainable farming offers a model of how we can co-exist with, and energize, the natural world—and grow delicious food at the same time.

By avoiding chemicals, an organic farm avoids their devastating effects on its natural ecology as well as its surrounding terrain, watersheds, and air quality.

Cornell entomologist David Pimentel estimates that only 0.1% of applied pesticides actually reach their target, leaving the bulk of the pesticides (99.9%) to impact non-targeted species.

Depending on the particular chemical, a pesticide can be neurotoxic, carcinogenic, or endocrine disruptive. Pesticide residues reach surface water from farm runoff and accumulate in ecosystems, harming wildlife habitats. The insecticides chlorpyrifos (Dursban) and diazinon, though banned by the EPA in 2003, are still present in soils and watersheds. Other pesticide residues found in streams include malathion and carbaryl, which disrupt immune and nervous systems.

Water makes up 66% of our body mass and covers 75% of our planet. Despite its importance, groundwater

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in 38 states is contaminated by pesticides, hormones, antibiotics, and heavy metals, according to the EPA. This groundwater is the primary source of drinking water for more than half the country's population. Industrial agriculture practices and factory farms (feedlots) consume water at an unsustainable rate, causing aquifer depletion.

It is now thought that pesticides interfere with the ability of salmon to migrate back to their spawning streams by compromising their sense of smell. Salmon also use smell to detect "danger" pheromones from other fish and stop moving, making them less visible. Pesticides have been shown to reduce populations of other aquatic life and insects on which the salmon feed. Pesticides mimic or block their sex hormones, disrupting normal development.

No definitive studies exist on the effect of most pesticides, nor on their interactions with each other. The bottom line is that pesticides are poisons designed to kill living organisms. Common sense would suggest a connection between their use and degraded ecologies.

Environmentally sound solutions, grounded in harmony with Mother Earth, obviously exist. Small local innovative farms, by working with nature and not against her, are leading the way to a more sustainable future.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Friday, August 22 Rhonda will be off, so extra help is needed during distribution that day.
- Harvesters! Especially Monday and Thursday mornings
- Weeders
- Onion pulling

WISHLIST

- wicker baskets, trays etc. for displays at market and at distribution
- peck, half peck, bushel and half bushel baskets
- plastic bowls to line bushel baskets
- Old towels
- Coolers
- Plastic Totes
- picnic tables or benches for reflection area
- large harvest wagons
- garden scooters

SAD NEWS

During the ice cream social, our beloved white cat, Yang, was hit by a passing motorist as she crossed the road. It was very sad for those who saw her. She will be missed. Here is a little Haiku Tribute to Yang.

Soft white silky friend
Dancing through the green meadow
We will miss you Yang

— Linda Matthews

HARVEST RECIPES

Fatoosh (Lebanese Bread Salad) from Dea Hart, St. Joseph's Church, Olean

- 6 loaves pita bread
- 2 bunches scallions
- 1 small bunch mint
- 3 cucumbers
- 1 bunch parsley
- 4 tomatoes
- juice of 3-4 lemons
- ½ cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ½ head romaine lettuce

Toast bread in 350 degree oven until crunchy, then break into small pieces. Place in large bowl. Cut cucumbers and tomatoes into small chunks. Mince parsley and mint; add to bowl. Put all vegetables over the bread. Add lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper to taste. Mix well; serve over romaine lettuce.

Salade Nicoise

by Lori Peterson

- 1 lb. whole tiny new potatoes, quartered
- 1 lb. green beans, cut into 1" pieces
- 2 tsp. Dijon-style mustard
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 Tbs. rice vinegar
- 2 Tbs. teriyaki sauce
- 1 tsp. snipped fresh tarragon (¼ tsp. dried)
- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ tsp. cracked black pepper
- 2 ripe tomatoes, into wedges
- 1 medium cucumber, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 medium sweet onion, cut into thin slices
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, chilled and quartered
- 1 medium red or yellow sweet pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
- 12 Kalamata olives
- Leaf lettuce
- 1 can chunk white tuna, drained and flaked (optional)

In saucepan, cook potatoes and green beans in boiling, salted water for 8-10 minutes or until potatoes are crisp-tender. Drain; set aside.

For dressing, place mustard, garlic, vinegar, teriyaki sauce, tarragon, olive oil and pepper in blender. Blend or process for 10-20 seconds or until thoroughly combined. Set aside.

To serve, toss together the cooked potatoes, beans, tomatoes, cucumbers and onion. Place a fourth of the mixture on each of four lettuce-lined salad plates. Garnish with egg, pepper strips, and olives. If desired, top salad with tuna. Drizzle with dressing just before serving. Serve with a crusty, French bread.

There are many variations of this on the internet, especially for the dressing (some use anchovies, and different herbs and vinegars). If you do not have all of these ingredients on hand, you will probably find a variation on the internet that uses ingredients that you do have on hand. You can also make it fancier by using tuna steaks.