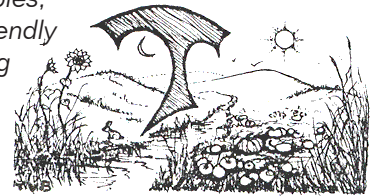


the
Canticle Farm
newsletter

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 2, 2007

week # 5 of 20

Kohl-what??

When you picked up that greenish globe with a spiked hairdo off of the distribution table, what was your honest reaction? Was it something along the lines of, "You can eat that??" or "What are they trying to feed us now?" If so, you probably aren't alone in your initial reaction to kohlrabi, but you are in for a delightful surprise as you learn about, prepare and enjoy this vegetable.

Kohlrabi is another member of the Brassica family, kin to broccoli, cabbage, kale and Brussels sprouts. Its name is a combination of two German words, *kohl* meaning cabbage and *rabi* meaning turnip. Though it looks like a root vegetable, the greenish or purplish globe is actually a swollen area on the stem called a corm. This corm and the leaves are the parts enjoyed culinarily. Here are some ideas to get you started on enjoying this unique vegetable.

Kohlrabi leaves can be used as you would any other green – sautéed, steamed, in stir-fries, soups, salads, etc. The stems are relatively tough and are best reserved for use in stocks. After trimming the corm of any tough or woody sections, it can be also be used in countless ways either raw or cooked. In its raw state it can be sliced thinly and served with vegetable dip, grated or cut into matchstick pieces to add to salads, coarsely grated to make a unique coleslaw (try adding grated radish, chopped parsley, sliced scallions and a dressing of your liking), or sliced thickly and served on buttered bread with salt and pepper for an exceptional sandwich. Kohlrabi can be steamed, stir-fried, sautéed, braised, baked, added to soups or stews, and even stuffed. Once you discover the diversity of dishes that this crunchy, sweet'n'spicy vegetable lends its delicate flavor to, you may find yourself growing kohlrabi in your garden!

Like other Brassicas, kohlrabi is generous in its servings of vitamins A and C as well as potassium and calcium. Store the leaves separately from the corm, wrapping them in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. Use these within a week. The corm will keep for up to a month in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

The Nine Mile Scout

by Garrett Dudley

Last Monday you might have caught our head farmer experimenting with a new method of pest control. Like many sustainable agricultural practices, this method is a bit old-fashioned (indeed, some might

Kohlrabi Kreation:

Dice or slice kohlrabi and braise in just enough stock to cover the pieces. Add some butter and caraway seeds to the stock and simmer until tender (10-15 minutes). Sprinkle with parsley and serve. For a variation, omit the caraway seeds, or replace them with coriander seeds, and sprinkle with a little curry powder before serving.

Sauté sliced kohlrabi in peanut or sesame oil with some mushrooms of your choosing (shitake are nice but not necessary), sliced sweet peppers, shallots or scallions, minced gingerroot, and cashews or pine nuts. Season with rice wine, soy sauce, sesame oil and/or a pinch of sugar. The sauce can also be thickened with a little cornstarch mixed with water.

Try this vinaigrette as a dipping sauce for sliced kohlrabi, or as a dressing for a salad or slaw featuring kohlrabi: 3 TBL olive oil, 2 TBL red wine vinegar, 2 tsp prepared horseradish, ½ tsp prepared mustard, ½ tsp honey, salt and pepper.

How's it GROWin'?

by Garrett Dudley

If you've taken a gander in the first high tunnel lately, you've already discovered what we did with last Tuesday's brief shower. Jason and Jen (the muscles on your farm) took a quick pass through some bitter lettuce and fully bolted radish beds. Now my morning watering is down to transplants and a few beets! It is unfortunate to lose a few heads of lettuce to the heat; Mark and I are constantly reminding ourselves that compost is a good thing.

More big news – the farm stand is open for business! The farm stand is open to the public during distribution and will mostly feature overflow produce. Also available at the stand will be products that we cannot feature in a full distribution but that need to be harvested regardless. So don't forget to check for special items after picking up your share....and tell your friends!

even call it crude).

But rest assured – these tactics were 100% organic, certifiably natural, and OMRI approved. Your field tomatoes now have one less woodchuck - and we all have Mark to thank for that!

Greensight

As shareholders at Canticle Farm, we are taking a profound step towards impacting the environment in a positive way. We have dramatically reduced fossil fuel use by reducing the distance our food travels and buying foods grown without pesticides or chemical fertilizers. As a farm committed to practicing Earth-friendly habits we are always asking ourselves what else can we do to impact the environment in a positive way both on the farm and at home. Small changes around the house can be important steps towards a healthier planet. This periodic column will offer information and ideas to inform and empower us to be more conscious stewards of Mother Earth.

Paper bleached with sodium hypochlorite (chlorine bleach) is all around us: paper towels, napkins, coffee filters, diapers, writing paper. The bleaching of paper produces dioxin, a chemical known to be a carcinogen and poses health risks to the immune, endocrine and reproductive systems. The break down of this bleached paper in landfills also releases dioxin. Dioxin is taken up in plant cells and concentrated in the bodies of animals and humans who eat the plants and animals.

Alternatives to bleached paper products exist – cloth napkins and old rags can replace paper napkins and towels, cloth diapers can supplement disposables and unbleached coffee filters, paper napkins and diapers are available for purchase. These small steps impact our lives, homes and planet in life giving ways.



**Garrett Dudley,
Assistant Farmer**

Well, what can I say? I think if I can learn at least one thing about Stephanie English, last year's assistant farmer, it is to figure out what size shoes this girl wears. All those newspaper clippings at the farm are from the waist up, so it's kind of hard to tell. But here I am stuck with size 8 - my feet quit growing several years ago. If I wear a couple layers of socks I can probably manage a size 9, but a size 10 is just going to give me blisters. And anything bigger is just going to look plain goofy on the farm.

Yep, I'm the new assistant farmer, and I'm doing the best I can to match the energy and enthusiasm of last years crew. I'm excited to lend what knowledge and skills I have to help make this a successful growing season. While Sarah held down the fort in the greenhouse, I was tapping trees and assisting with syrup production at Spragues Maple Farms. I joined Mark in April and it seems we've been on a tear ever since!

Just a bit about myself: I grew up in Portville...and I was never too far from the river. Very much your local farm boy, I've fished these streams, trapped muskrat on the banks, and hunted in these woods. My grandfather, Hugh Martin, owns the dairy farm on Steam Valley Road between Olean and Portville. So naturally I've thrown my share of hay bales and mucked a few stalls. But organic vegetables?

My first memories of a life in agriculture come from a 2 acre strawberry patch that my parents managed when I was a boy. I remember the cold, early mornings that turned into scorching summer days at the height of the season. I remember long days selling quarts at the roadside stand - even being swindled by a few men offering to pay in Canadian dollars (hey, I thought they were cool!). But most of all I remember the sense of togetherness that my family built as we worked in the field. Unfortunately, just like family unity, strawberries require constant care and tending. We were lucky to get 3 good years of production.

Skip ahead a few, and in 2002 I graduated 2nd Honor Student from Portville Central School. Early on in my senior year I laid plans to join the Air Force with an ROTC scholarship - I would finally escape Portville with dreams of flightsuits, fighter jets, and a career with solid earning potential! Funny how life always goes exactly the way you plan, eh?

After returning to the area in May of 2006, I took a job with Noblehurst Farms, Inc., a large dairy farm in Livingston County. Here I refined my mucking skills, turned a few wrenches, and spent the corn harvest running a 9220 over a Mt. Everest-size pile of silage. By seasons end I was helping to manage a 285 HP methane gas digester - the less glorious parts of this task have actually been featured on the World's Dirtiest Jobs television show! Dried manure solids have a unique odor that defies classification.

But at 1,300 cows, I found I could not turn my head from issues of sustainability. I was naturally drawn to Canticle Farm, especially to the community supported aspect of what you folks have created. For me, CSA is an engaging way to translate the level of understanding found in my history degree to constructive work. I believe that people my age have three choices - we can hide in shelter from a world of imperfections, we can ignore our conscious and follow the accepted path, or we can move progressively from the textbook to the real world to reshape our children's future. With this happening right along the Allegheny, and with my own roots in agriculture, Canticle Farm becomes the epitome of thinking globally but acting locally.

With my own battles to fight, my parents pushed out of the industry, and a failing family farm not 10 miles upriver, maybe I should just run from the world of agriculture. But farmers are by nature stubborn creatures: we are told to plant one way and do the opposite in spite, we get tired and hungry but just keep working, and when life beats us down we get back up and dance (thanks, Grandpa). So maybe I am a farmer after all. Either way, I guess I can't run away very fast with those size 10 shoes. See you at the farm.