

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 September 3, 2007

week # 14 of 20

Kids Can Cook!

by Elizabeth Thompson

One of the many beautiful things about Canticle Farm is the way that it opens the door to the world of agriculture, plants and their fruits to adults and children alike. Children are most expressive of the grounding and life that this experience imparts. Each week, I see children jump out of the confines of their seat belts and run towards the distribution center, looking often first for the cats, then wandering among the produce with parents, asking about new vegetables, then taking to the fields to harvest with their own hands extra beans, cherry tomatoes, basil or flowers.

When school groups come to the farm, I have children tell me that they hate spinach, then eagerly try a fresh spinach leaf that they were able to pick themselves, declaring it delicious. Or, pulling up carrots with such excitement that one would think they were upside down ice cream cones stuck in the soil! Their excitement is palpable and they want to get their hands on every plant, picking and tasting for themselves. This phenomenon carries over into the kitchen, where children who are involved in preparing food or a meal are more likely to eat it with excitement and enjoyment, even if it contains some of children's less popular vegetables.

As shareholders at Canticle Farm we give our children the beautiful experience of obtaining their vegetables from a real farm, and add more blessings to this experience by involving them in the preparation of those vegetables in our home kitchens, the place where families used to gather and spend much quality time together. Families may involve children in baking sweet treats, but rarely involve them in preparing savory foods, something they are very capable of doing and enjoying with some supervision and a little instruction. Even very young children can snap beans, tear lettuce, mash potatoes, cut with a cookie cutter or plastic knife, wash vegetables and mix with a spoon. Older children, especially if involved in the kitchen from a young age, can prepare many simple recipes by themselves and even invent some recipes themselves! You may want to make a family recipe together, sharing family stories as you work, and, hence, preserving the heirloom recipe and stories.

Involving our children in our kitchens builds their self-confidence and creativity, encourages them to try new foods and teaches them cooking skills that will serve them throughout their lives. In working with St. Bonaventure University students at the Warm-

ing House, I am surprised at how many do not know how to cook. In this age of convenience foods and busy life styles, cooking is a lost art and families cooking and eating together is a dying culture. In an increasingly fragmented world, this culture is worth preserving for the health of our relationships with each other, with our food and with our earth.

Below are a few recipes from the cookbook, *Kids Cook 1 - 2 - 3, Recipes for Young Chefs using only 3 Ingredients*, by Rozanne Gold. This book is available at the Olean Public Library along with other cookbooks.

HARVEST RECIPES

Grape Tomato Skewers with Pesto Dip

(You will need 8 long frilly toothpicks.)

8 cherry or grape tomatoes
¼ cup plain yogurt
1 tablespoon pesto

1. Wash the tomatoes and dry them with a paper towel. Spear each tomato with a toothpick. Place on a plate
2. In a small bowl, mix yogurt and pesto thoroughly. Add salt and pepper to taste.
3. Place in a small bowl and dunk the tomatoes. Serves 1

Crunchy Fried Tomatoes

4 medium-size firm tomatoes
(red, yellow or green)
1 cup stone ground yellow cornmeal
Vegetable oil for frying

1. Wash the tomatoes and dry well. Slice off the top and bottom ends. Cut each tomato horizontally into 3 thick slices.
2. Place the cornmeal on a flat plate. Dredge both sides of each tomato slice in the cornmeal, pressing down lightly. Make sure the cut surfaces are thickly coated (sides will not get coated).
3. Heat ¼ inch of oil in a large skillet. When hot, carefully add the tomatoes in one layer - you may want some adult assistance here.
4. Cook over medium high heat for 2 minutes on each side, or until crispy and golden brown. Do not overcook, as you want the tomatoes to retain

their shape. You may need to do this in two batches, adding oil as needed.

5. Drain the tomatoes on paper towels. Sprinkle with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Serve 3 slices per person. Serves 4.

Green Beans Almondine

- 1 pound green beans
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3 tablespoons sliced almonds

1. Wash the beans and trim the ends. Using a small, sharp knife cut the beans in thirds across the width. You may also leave the beans whole.

2. Choose a saucepan large enough to hold the beans comfortably. Add enough water to fill by two-thirds and bring the water to a boil with a teaspoon of salt. Add the beans and cook for 3 – 4 minutes if you've cut them, and 5 – 6 minutes if you've left them whole. Drain them immediately into a colander. Pat dry with a paper towel.

3. Put the butter into a saucepan in which the beans were cooked and melt the butter over medium heat. Add the almonds and cook just until they take on some color, about 2 minutes. Then add the drained beans and ½ teaspoon salt, and cook for about 2 minutes, tossing until the beans are coated with butter. Add freshly ground black pepper and serve. Serves 4 or more.

Come to Canticle Farm's Annual Community Auction

Saturday, September 8 at 7:00 PM at the St. Elizabeth Motherhouse, 115 E. Main Street, Allegany

- Everyone welcome — bring your family and friends!
- Free admission, desserts, and beverages
- About 100 prizes expected
- Chinese auction style — anyone who plays can win!
- Theme baskets
- Gift certificates
- Items from local businesses and community members
- Guest speaker: Joan Petzen from the Cornell Cooperative Extension
- "Balloon Man" — entertainment for kids
- Presentation on proper kitchen knife usage

Come have fun, support your Canticle Farm, and maybe take home some great prizes! For more information call the farm at 716-373-0200 x3358.

Volunteer Opportunities

- Brassicas weeding party, Saturday, September 8th from 10am – 2pm
- Onion toppers needed all week.
- Harvest Helpers always hoped for!

How's it GROWin'?

by Garrett Dadley

With the help of a few volunteers last Wednesday, your farm crew put the finishing touches on this year's field planting. In one last hurrah of the summer, we spent a full morning of work sticking in lettuce, spinach, pac choi, and napa cabbage transplants. From now on we move out of the field and into the high tunnels where we will be able to extend our growing season considerably.

But this changing of the guard doesn't necessarily mean we slow down – two days later we had to score a shorthanded goal with a full lettuce harvest. It takes two men and one dog (thanks, Jasmine) plus two hours of labor to turn three productive beds into \$400 of saleable product!! Go team Canticle!

Nine Mile Scout

by Garrett Dadley

Last week Tim Putze, a student at Jamestown Community College, joined the crew as the last hire of the season. Tim is a veteran of veggie farming, having worked under Mark and Stephanie last season. Though I had to instruct him in the fine art of potato harvesting, he speaks fondly of pulling frozen wash station duty last fall – so I know he'll fit right in here. Welcome back, Tim!

Quote Box:

"Since our existence is primarily dependent on farming, we cannot entrust this essential activity solely to the farming population—just 2% of Americans. As farming becomes more and more remote from the life of the average person, it becomes less and less able to provide us with clean, healthy, lifegiving food or a clean, healthy, lifegiving environment. A small minority of farmers, laden with debt and overburdened with responsibility, cannot possibly meet the needs of all the people. More and more people are coming to recognize this, and they are becoming ready to share agricultural responsibilities with the active farmers."

from *Farms of Tomorrow. Community Supported Farms, Farm Supported Communities* by Trauger M. Groh and Steven S.H. McFadden, Kimberton, PA: Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association, 1990. p. 6

"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