

HARVEST TIMES



the Canticle Farm
newsletter

Winter &
Spring
Monthly
e-dition

Canticle Farm is a Certified Naturally Grown farm and is a ministry sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany (FSA). Its mission is to reverence, protect, and honor the sacredness of God's Creation. Canticle Farm, a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm, is committed to connect all peoples, to practice Earth-friendly habits, and to come to a realization of a Creation-centered spirituality.



February 2011

February is a planning month. Despite Nature's daily reminder that the arrival of warm WNY summer days will require patience, we all know what longer days lead to.

The first major seed order is in and the bed planning and scheduling now begins in earnest. Things that must be considered include: shareholder & customer preferences, past successes & failures, crop rotations based on what-has-been-planted-where over the past few years. The most popular vegetables and varieties always top the priority list, but there's room for different varieties as they become available or when varieties we've used in the past are not. For example: we'll be sticking with the very popular Bright Lights Swiss chard, the Zephyr summer squash, and the Costata Romanesco zucchini (an heirloom variety). We'll also be using many of the same snap bean varieties as last year, but one of our favorite shell pea varieties is not available this year. A pickling (or salad) cucumber that we've used in the past was also unavailable. When this happens we seek out varieties with the most similar characteristics.

Seed availability is determined by a number of factors. Certainly, supply-demand & cost play a role. Sometimes our suppliers cannot get them, or choose not to get them. Occasionally, crop failures result in seed unavailability for most or all seed suppliers. A failed crop in any given year means no available seed for the next season. We're happy to report that there are no seed shortages or

unavailability in the carrot department. Carrot varieties will not change this year.

Speaking of carrots ... the popularity of the Bi-weekly Barn Sales this year has far surpassed our expectations, so much so that we're now running low on carrots. Five beds await harvest under row cover and a healthy layer of straw mulch. Getting to them is another story altogether. We expect to have enough on hand for the upcoming sale, but desperately need a break in temperatures to harvest more before the second February sale and subsequent Barn Sales.

As we continue to harvest greens from the high tunnels, beds are used up or exhausted and the time for planting approaches. Scallions and lettuce mix were recently seeded. These will be the first transplants as we prepare for the Spring Share Program.



3 very popular varieties grown at Canticle Farm (top to bottom): Bright Lights Swiss chard, Zephyr yellow squash, & Costata Romanesco zucchini.

Food News...

Families Buying More Organic Products:

A 2010 study conducted by the Organic Trade Association and *KIWI Magazine* found that U.S. consumers are buying more organic products than ever before. Findings also suggest that consumers are buying a wider variety of organic goods. A U.S. Families' Organic Attitudes & Beliefs 2010 tracking study found that 41 percent of parents report they bought more organic foods than a year ago, up 10% from 2009.

Why? "Families are buying more organic because they see organic products as generally healthier, addressing their concern about the effects of pesticides, hormones, and antibiotics on children, or as

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Upcoming Barn Sale Dates

February 8th
March 8th
April 5th
May 3rd

February 22nd
March 22nd
April 19th

All days/times are Tue., 2-6 pm. See you there!

David Schummer—editor

Field & Fork Network's 2011 Farmer-Chef Conference

Field & Fork Network's 3rd Annual Farmer-Chef Conference will take place on Monday, February 21st at the Hyatt Regency Buffalo. The event aims to bring together food producers and food buyers, and facilitate long-term business relationships. This one-day conference provides numerous networking opportunities, educational workshops, and open dialogue for building a thriving regional food system in Western New York.

Sr. Joyce, Mark, and David will be attending the event and Canticle Farm will be taking an active part in the conference workshops again this year. Mark delivered a presentation on Season Extension at the 2010 Farmer-Chef Conference and will do so again at the 2011 Conference. Mark's workshop presentation will focus on high tunnel growing during the coldest months in WNY. This year David will sit on a panel with other local farmers to answer questions about various certification programs. David's role on the panel will be to address questions and issues related to the Certified Naturally Grown program.



Of particular interest to us this year, and anyone else interested in sustainable agriculture or the local food movement for that matter, is the opportunity to see and meet world-renowned speaker Joel Salatin. The Salatin family farm, Polyface Inc. ("The Farm of Many Faces"), is located in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley and has been featured in *Smithsonian Magazine*, *National Geographic*, *Gourmet*, and countless other radio, television and print media. Profiled on the Lives of the 21st Century series with Peter Jennings on ABC World News, his after-broadcast chat room fielded more hits than any other segment to date. It achieved iconic status as the grass farm featured in the *New York Times* bestseller *Omnivore's Dilemma* by food writer guru Michael Pollan. Salatin has also appeared in films such as *Food, Inc.*, *FRESH*, and others.

Salatin will deliver the Conference Keynote Address: *Building a Local Food System that Works*. Lunch will include a screening of the film *FRESH*. Complete conference schedule and registration information is available at:

<http://fieldandforknetwork.com/>

Donated Share Program Explained

As a ministry of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, Canticle Farm is dedicated to serving all members of the community. This includes not only those who can afford locally grown, fresh produce, but also those who cannot. One of the Farm's most successful outreach efforts has been our Annual Donated Shares Program. By now we are all well informed about the state of the local economy and economy at large, the now steady high unemployment rates, and the resulting poverty in our own communities. A growing need for those with the means to do even just a little to alleviate the suffering of others must be apparent to all. Canticle Farm has responded to these needs for over 10 years, but this has only been possible through the generous donations of others.

Through grants and private donors a portion of the Canticle Farm harvest is given to those who need it most. Each year these efforts allow area food pantries and shelters to offer fresh, locally grown produce. The donated produce is often delivered in the form of a prepared meal, but it is also given away as fresh produce at pantries where most vegetables come in the form of processed, canned goods. Additionally, some of the tender greens that are provided cannot be processed; lettuce, Swiss chard, and kale would be absent otherwise.

Last year the Farm provided 35 large summer shares to 13 organizations in the counties of Cattaraugus (NY) and McKean (PA) for each of the 18 weeks of summer distribution. This totaled 11,550 lbs. of produce. Putting things in perspective, a large share provides the vegetable portion of meals for approximately 4-5 people/week, so 35 large shares feeds 140-175 people/week. The 11,550 lbs. of produce provided the vegetable part of 12,600-15,750 meals, with an average vegetable portion/meal of about 13 oz.

Of the 120 large shares sold last summer, 35 (nearly 30%) were donated shares. Neither shareholders nor Farm customers play any role in subsidizing these donated shares. No portion or component of our shareholder fees or retail prices pay for these donated shares. Nor does the Farm simply donate the produce. No farm or business (for profit or non) could afford to donate 30% of their product to charity. Instead, the Farm solicits grants and donations to pay for these shares. Donations are then used to pay the Farm for shares. Donated share fees are the same as those of shareholders.

Canticle Farm has provided fresh produce to local organizations every year since its inception in 2001. As we enter our 11th season won't you consider donating to this worthy cause and help us to continue to build upon the successes of past years? Donations in any amount will be accepted and greatly appreciated. And because we are a not-for-profit organization all donations are tax deductible.

(“Food News...” from page 1)

providing a means to avoid highly processed foods and/or artificial ingredients,” according to the 2010 survey conducted from Aug. 11-27.

Price disparity or “sticker shock” of many organic products continues to be a concern for consumers. Such conditions provide an opportunity for farmers and marketers to educate consumers on the value of these products above and beyond the raw dollars-and-cents price tag. Demographically, the studies show that consumer education level is a more significant predictor of food purchasing habits than income level.

(Source: *Weekly Harvest Newsletter*, 12/10, ATTRA)

New USDA School Lunch Standards:

The USDA unveiled its first significant upgrade to school lunch programs in 15 years this past month. Tougher meal standards for the National School Lunch & School Breakfast Programs aim to reduce both childhood hunger and obesity. Recently signed into law by President Obama, the new guidelines are a part of the 2010 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act.

Changes include more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, as well as fat-free or low-fat milk in federally subsidized meals. Saturated fats, sodium, calories, and trans-fats are also on the chopping block in the new legislation.

Produce industry advocates are enthusiastic about the new standards citing potential increases in sales and the potential for creating a generation more open and accustomed to seeing fruits and vegetables on their plates. The latter, it should be noted, would also likely result in increased sales.

The new standards are not without controversy though. The low-fat/fat-free milk requirement includes provisions that would permit flavored varieties (strawberry & chocolate, for example).

A public comment period regarding the new standards will continue through April 13th, 2011. More information can be found at the USDA's Food & Nutrition Service (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/>). The new standards could be in place as early as this fall, in time for the 2011-2012 school year.

(Source: *Food Safety News*, 01/11, www.foodsafetynews.com)

GE Alfalfa Deregulated:

Genetically engineered (GE) alfalfa regulation has been the subject of a national and legal conversation/controversy since 2005. A lawsuit filed by the Center for Food Safety against the USDA reached the US Supreme Court this past April. The basis of the suit was rooted in concerns over cross-pollination and seed/crop contamination of non-GE alfalfa crops. In a 7-1 decision the USSC decided that a lower court's ruling to ban GE alfalfa was too restrictive and ordered the USDA to conduct an Environmental Impact Study (EIS). The USDA's EIS was completed in December, resulting in two options: (1) full deregulation of GE alfalfa planting, or (2) partial deregulation with a focus on isolating GE alfalfa to geographic areas where seed

contamination of non-GE alfalfa would be unlikely. Expectations were that the USDA would adopt the partial deregulation option. Instead, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced in January that the USDA will allow GE alfalfa to be planted without restriction. This includes Monsanto's Roundup Ready® GE alfalfa.

(Source: *Food Safety News*, 01/11, www.foodsafetynews.com)

Food Environment Atlas Update:

Ever wonder where your community stands when it comes to food availability? Poverty levels, availability of grocers, farmers' markets, and fast food restaurants, access to public transportation, and a number of other factors all contribute to our “Food Environment”, and ultimately the health of our local community. Current data and statistics for every county in the U.S., including yours, is available at:

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/FoodAtlas/>

Where's the Spinach ... (or) Show Me the Spinach!

However you want to look at it the message is that we had a bit of difficulty with spinach at the last Barn Sale. There wasn't any. Temperatures were so low and sun so scarce in the past month that our high tunnel spinach had not grown. It's still there, it simply didn't grow enough to make harvesting for the last January sale worthwhile. Mark and David gave it a go and quickly concluded that we were cutting leaves so small that (1) we'd end up with very few bags and would run out within the first hour of the sale anyway, and (2) letting it grow would increase the chances of a better harvest for the first sale in February. After all, every leaf cut is a leaf that has no chance of growing larger. Our bets were on more growth, better plant health, and in the end more spinach for all.

The temperatures since that day have not increased by much, but the days are getting longer, and the leaves that we would have harvested for the last sale are still there. So we're hoping on a good spinach harvest for the next sale.

These several spinach beds will remain well into the early spring months. As the temperatures rise and high tunnels warm up the plants will spring to life and flourish.



Medium-Sized Spinach Leaves: similar in size to that available at recent sales

2011 Farm Hands & Volunteers Needed

The Farm has interviewed a number of intern and apprentice applicants, and openings for these positions are now closed for the 2011 season. A need still exists for paid Farm Hands and Volunteers.

Farm hand work includes seeding, cultivating, harvesting, washing, & sorting of vegetables as well as general field & bed maintenance. Farm hands work a set schedule for a predetermined time period during the growing season. The Farm currently has both full-time and part-time openings.

Volunteers may assist the Farm in various ways. Tasks could include farm work (harvesting, washing, weeding), hosting a table at a local health fair, writing an article for the Harvest Times, serving on a Farm Committee, etc. Volunteering is also a great way to become acquainted with a specific crop. Every year folks who want to know more about growing garlic volunteer for the garlic harvest. They then take that knowledge into their own backyard gardens. Others have learned how to grow potatoes in the same way. Volunteers painted the several beautiful signs used last year to identify the Pick-You-Own beds. Volunteering requires no long-term commitment and one need not be a shareholder to be a volunteer. On-farm & field work volunteer opportunities will remain very limited for the coming months, but don't be afraid to ask about other things. We're always looking for motivated folks who are willing to share their special talents with us.

**Please visit our website or
call for more information**

2011 Shares Now Available

Spring, Summer, and Fall Shares are now available. The 2010 Spring shares sold out in March last year, so don't delay. More information can be found on the website, at Barn Sales, or by calling/emailing the office.

**A Sample
Small Share
from
Spring 2010
(week 3 of 5)**



— Basic Roasted Beets —

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Wash unpeeled beets in warm water. Remove top and the bottom tap root, and quarter into equal sizes. Wrap beets in packets of foil (several beets per packet). Place on a baking sheet; bake until beets are slightly soft to the touch, 45 minutes to 1 hour depending on size. Cool beets in packets, then rub off skins. Serve immediately or cool and dice for a colorful and tasty addition to salads, coleslaws, etc.



Roasted Garlic Heads w/ Grilled Bread:

- 4 whole garlic heads
- ½ c water, or chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 long baguette, cut on the bias into thin slices
- 3 Tbs extra-virgin olive oil, extra for the toasts
- Salt



1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Peel off papery cover from garlic without separating cloves. Cut a ½ in. slice from top of each to expose cloves. Place garlic heads in small baking dish. Add 1/8 in. water or stock. Drizzle 2 Tbs. oil over garlic & sprinkle with salt to taste. Cover with foil.
2. Bake 25 minutes. Remove foil & continue baking until garlic is quite tender & golden, ~15 min. Remove baking dish & drizzle remaining tablespoon of oil over garlic. Cool garlic until comfortable to handle.
3. Meanwhile, lightly brush bread slices with oil & grill over med. fire or toast on baking sheet in 400 degree oven until lightly browned on both sides. Squeeze garlic cloves directly from skins onto bread & spread.

Pickled Carrots:

- 1 lb carrots, peeled & cut into thin sticks
- ½ c apple cider vinegar
- ¼ c sugar
- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- Kosher salt
- ¼ c fresh mint leaves, torn



1. Bring a large saucepan of water to boil. Add the carrots and cook for 2 minutes; drain and run under cold water to cool. Transfer to a bowl.
2. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, combine the vinegar, sugar, coriander and mustard seeds, ½ tsp. salt, and 1 ½ c. water and bring to a boil. Pour over the carrots and let cool to room temperature. Add the mint and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

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learn more about the Farm at:
canticlefarm.org or [facebook.com/CanticleFarm](https://www.facebook.com/CanticleFarm)