

the
Canticle Farm
 newsletter



HARVEST TIMES

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.



week of June 28, 2010

Week #3 of 18

How's it GROWIN'?

with Mark Printz

by David Schammer

Vegetables are the normal subject matter for the *Harvest Times* but this week we'd like to turn your attention to some new Farm tenants. Six young chickens (one hen & five roosters) are now residing next to the barn. They arrived a few weeks ago from a local chicken grower and will be staying with us until the weather turns cold in the fall. We move their coop once a week to ensure a fresh supply of ground grubs, worms, etc. They also free range about the Farm beds during non-distribution hours.

As projected the peas are in, right on schedule. Pea plants put on a rather heavy first set of peas, are picked 3-4 times, and are then done. We plant several four-bed sets of peas and harvest one planting of peas each week for about four consecutive weeks. If our timing is right, beans will be coming in as the peas are ending.

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Zucchini, yellow squash, and cucumbers could be found at the Farm Stand and the Olean Farmers' Market last week, but were not available for a full distribution. There was a similar occurrence with regard to spinach last week – available at the Farm Stand and at the Choice Table, but not everyone received a bag.

Additionally, a full distribution of peas was offered last week on Friday, but not Tuesday. This provides an opportunity to explain why such things occur.

Let's first have a look at some numbers. With over 120 large shares to distribute per week we would need a minimum of 240 squash, cucumbers, pints of peas, and bags of spinach in order for the small shareholder to receive one each of those items. When a large shareholder receives 2 zucchini, for example, the small shareholder receives 1. We cannot distribute 1/2 a zucchini or cucumber, and while we could distribute 1/2 bags of spinach and pints of peas the amount of each would be disappointing. If we plan to distribute twice the amounts listed above then the quantity harvest doubles to 480 (then 720, 960, ...).

Despite our best efforts we've yet to convince Nature to abide by our distribution days so let's now address the issue of timing. When the last of the spring spinach was harvested from the field there remained enough as a choice and Stand item, but not enough for a full distribution. We might very well experience the same thing as the fall spinach becomes available – enough to pick, but not enough to offer as a full distribution for the first week. The first of our pea beds were ready mid-week last week. That is why Friday's distribution offer contained peas but not Tuesday's. Because pea distribution began on a Friday we will be sure to end it on a Tuesday so that all shareholders will receive the same quantity of peas regardless of their pick-up day.

BOOK REVIEWS

"Fruitless Fall," by Rowan Jacobsen (Bloomsbury, 2008, 288 pp., \$25, HC): "Fruitless Fall" deals with the collapse of the honeybee colonies. I learned there is an indigenous wild squash bee that's a better pollinator for cucurbits than an alien honeybee. There are tips in the Appendix for amateur naturalists to help experts learn what species are in your area. In a timely reference to Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring": "chemical destruction of hedgerows and weeds are eliminating the last sanctuaries of pollinating insects, and breaking the threads that bind life to life."

Also in "Fruitless Fall," Kirk Webster states, "Bee-keeping now has the dubious honor of becoming the first part of our system of industrial agribusiness to actually fall apart. Let's stop pretending that something else is going on. We no longer have enough bees to pollinate our crops. We blame everything except our way of life and our degradation of the whole environment. We are losing the ability to take care of living things."

"Animal, Vegetable, Miracle," by Barbara Kingsolver (Harper Perennial, 2008, 400 pp., \$15.99, SC): Kingsolver entertainingly articulates the differences between traditional, organic, or ecological farm practices and fossil fuel dependent, monoculture, and genetically engineered agriculture. Her book briefly addresses the main difficulties with mainstream agriculture including genetic engineering of seeds. These seeds reproduce, spread their pollen, and in various ways contaminate normal organisms. Some organizations that work to stop genetic engineering are listed. One that is not listed is www.responsibletechnology.org, founded by Jeffrey Smith. Smith is energetically waging a Campaign for Healthier Eating in America and is optimistic that when enough people understand about the health risks of genetically engineered foods, the consumers will stop it.

Reviews by Barbara Casey

Read a good book lately? Send a review to *Harvest Times* (djs56@pitt.edu). Please limit to 250 words or less.

Recipe ROUNDUP

Grilled Lettuce Hearts

- 1 Lettuce Heart (Romaine, Butterhead, etc.)
- 1 Tbs vegetable oil
- Pinch of pepper
- Pinch of salt
- Sesame Salad Dressing (see below)

Using a napkin or paper towel, spread oil over grill grates. Remove outer leaves of lettuce head and store as you normally would for salads, etc. Slice the remaining lettuce head lengthwise (each half should contain some stalk). On medium heat (300-350F), place cut side down. Grill uncovered for 2-3 minutes or until grill marks appear. Do not overcook. Serve cut side up, dressed with an oil/vinegar-based dressing. Each lettuce heart serves two.

Sesame Salad Dressing

- 6 Tbs sesame oil
- ¼ c rice wine vinegar
- ¼ c soy sauce
- 3 Tbs sugar

In a bowl, whisk all of the ingredients. Cover and store in refrigerator. Yield: 1 cup. [Source: Taste of Home]

Visit www.canticlefarm.org for more recipes.

Q&A Q: "What are garlic scapes?"

A: Garlic scapes are the immature garlic plant flower. Like most Alliums, garlic is a biennial and produces a single flower in its second season. Planted in the fall, garlic cloves sprout, die off and winter over until the next season. The plants then want to reproduce and produce a flower for that purpose. We remove this scape to ensure that the plant spends its energy developing a large healthy garlic bulb rather than an impressive flower. While most farmers discard the garlic scapes we offer them to our members & customers so that they can enjoy the mild garlic flavor and whet the palate for the more potent garlic bulbs to come.

(Submit questions to David at djs56@pitt.edu and receive a response in a coming newsletter.)

"Nature bats last."

— Joel Salatin

WISH LIST

- Functional coolers for transportation of delicate greens to local farmers' markets.
- Reams of colored, legal-sized (8½x14) paper for Harvest Times printing.
- Letter-sized clipboards for educational events and general farm use.
- Appropriate books & videos for the new shareholder library. Items should be topical (related to sustainable farming issues and shareholder interests).

THANK YOU!

To: The anonymous donor who dropped off several plastic lettuce knives and fulfilled one of our many Wish List items.

David Schammer's Education Blog

📖 We're going to give parsnips a try this year. Over half of Education/Research Bed #1 will contain up to three varieties of parsnip. You'll not see them offered at Summer or even Fall distribution because they require several hard freezes before sweetening up. If all goes well, a limited supply will be available during our bi-weekly Winter Sales.

📖 Wildlife & Plant Biologist Michael Schummer, PhD will be joining us for the weed identification/control portion of the July 31st Organic Gardening Workshop. David and Michael will walk the fields prior to the Workshop, identifying common and especially pesky weeds. While we at the Farm know some of the weed names and what to do to control most of them, Michael's knowledge of species types, propagation details, and origin will make for a complete presentation and discussion.

Coming Events

• **Ice Cream Social:** Monday, July 12th, 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Adult sundaes - \$3; Children - \$2.

• **Children's Craft Fair:** Printing from Nature will be held during the Ice Cream Social from 6:45-8:15 pm, on Monday, July 12. After a short talk and demonstration, students will create a beautiful composition by printing with natural leaves and flowers collected on the farm. They will take home a finished piece of art that will last for years to come. Class for ages 3 to adult (children under 8 need adult assistance). Other adults are also encouraged to participate. Workshop taught by Joan Pingitore, local artist and educator. Space is limited – call the Canticle Farm office today to register. Workshop fee is \$3 per person.

• **Garlic Harvest Day:** Sunday, July 18th, 10 am to 4 pm. Come harvest the 2010 Garlic. Shareholders: These hours will count toward your participating shareholder obligation. Contact Mark for more information.

• **Session II of the Organic Gardening Workshop Series (beginners):** Saturday, July 31st from 12-4 pm. We will be covering pest & weed identification and control, trellising, harvesting, & plant/soil maintenance. Registration deadline is July 23rd and space is very limited (more information is available online or at distribution).

Corrections

Please note the time change for the Ice Cream Social event (begins at 6:30, not 6:00).

Volunteer Information

Regular volunteer days and times are as follows:

- Mondays & Wednesdays, from 4 to 7 pm
- Saturdays, from 9 am to noon (Call David at 904-1832)
- Call Mark for other times.