

August 26, 2004

The last week of summer shares

**This week's share:**

- Leaf lettuce (green, red\*\*, or butterhead) OR baby salad mix
- Carrots\*\*
- Green beans—the last for a few weeks, til the next planting kicks in—try freezing them
- Tomatoes
- Cucumbers
- Zucchini and/or Summer squash
- Eggplant (traditional purple, long purple, or white)
- Sweet onions
- Garlic
- Beets
- Purple potatoes
- Hot peppers – optional
- Kale or collards – optional
- Braising mix – optional
- Herbs: Dill, to go with the cucumbers! Also, your choice of any two herbs in the field for farm shares (U-pick)
- afternoon, contact us for an alternate day to come pick – there are greens in abundance!

\*\*denotes produce grown by Giving Tree Farm – see the article after the Announcements section about our produce trade this year

**Specials for U-Pickers:** Extra collard greens and kale, baby carrots (thinnings from the field—check with a student farmer before picking carrots), fresh flowers (\*lots of sunflowers!) for bunching, and weeds! If you come out to pick herbs, carrots, flowers, or greens, you may just be recruited to weed around them as you pick.... Consider yourself warned, and ask us for gloves and/or hoes if you'd like! ☺

**Announcements:**

**1. Thank you for joining us this summer! This week (Aug. 26) is the last week of summer CSA. Next week (Sept 2) is the first week of fall CSA.** Fall session will run Sept. 2-Dec. 16 (\*note: check your dates --last week, I wrote "Sept 2-Dec. 18" – oops!), for sixteen weeks, just like summer, and share sizes will be comparable, though we'll start getting into the heavier fall crops like winter squash, pumpkins, onions, rutabaga, etc. As you can see, tomatoes, peppers, squash, etc. is just starting to pour in, so get ready to can,

freeze, dehydrate, and have friends over for dinner this fall.

## **2. U-pickers wanted:**

**Sunflowers** abound! Not to mention snapdragons, statice (good for drying), salvia, a few Bells of Ireland, zinnias, gomphrena (globe amaranth), celosia of all types, and more. Please come out and cut yourself a bouquet to take home, including folks who pick up at PSSB – come out any day; it doesn't have to be Thursday. We'll provide shears and directions.

**Baby carrots** abound! We need help thinning the baby carrots – bring your favorite little ones, or just yourself, and come pick baby carrots – we'll show you how.

**Herbs** abound! Besides the dill in this week's share, there is plenty of basil: regular, lemon, and purple, as well as oregano, thyme, mint, lemon balm, chives, parsley, savory, and more. Just ask about your favorite culinary herb – it's probably growing at the farm, and we'll show you where, and how to harvest it.

**Kale and collard greens** abound! If you are a greens-fanatic like me (are you out there?), you might want more

greens than we put in the shares – come harvest kale and collards (and later this fall, Brussels sprouts greens – they're the best! Just wait til after the frost...) any time – student farmers will show you where and how to pick, but bring your own bag.

**3. Volunteers wanted:** There are still lots of volunteer opportunities at the farm, primarily weeding (farm is still weedy--Come on out!), but also Thursday morning harvest, daily tomato and zucchini harvest, hoophouse and tool maintenance, sign painting, and rock-picking. Email, call, or come by the farm to pitch in.

## **4. POTLUCK, Anyone?**

I'd like to have a Summer CSA potluck – it may happen the first or second week of September, well after the summer session ends, but hopefully you'll all be able to come together for a celebration, even if you don't rejoin for fall. Who will help organize and/or host a CSA potluck? See Michelle in person or via email about it this week.

## **5. It's almost time to preserve!**

The tomatoes, cucumbers, basil, etc. are just starting. If you are a canner, freezer, or dehydrator and would like an extra big batch of anything preserve-able, just let

us know, and we'll try to meet your needs. In the future, we may offer "preserving shares" made up of those things only, in bulk, specifically for that purpose, but for now, we'll just try to make sure all of our members (who want to and have time) can get at least one batch of tomatoes, cukes, chiles, or basil, or whatever else you preserve. "Eat what you can; can what you can't." Remember, if we have extra produce, it doesn't go to waste; we donate to the Greater Lansing Food Bank soup kitchen at Christ Lutheran Church nearly every week.

## **6. New Student Farmers**

**Wanted:** Fall semester is coming up, and with it classes, and with classes, fewer student farmers on the farm. The plants still need tending, though, and the CSA still needs staffing, so we'll be interviewing prospective new employees over the next month. If you or anyone you know is interested in working at the farm as a paid position (you can ALWAYS volunteer!), please contact John Biernbaum ([biernbau@msu.edu](mailto:biernbau@msu.edu)) as soon as possible.

## **Summer CSA Evaluation**

**Surveys** will be sent out via email next week – as we said at new member orientation, your

feedback is very important, both for our own farm improvement, and for our research – if we ever need to quote or use anything you say directly in a publication, we will get your permission and University approval. For now, however, your replies will stay on farm and be used to improve your CSA. Please take the 5-10 minutes required to completely fill out both sections of the survey when you receive it. Thanks!!

## **Collaborative Crop Trade with Giving Tree Farm in Lansing**

Have you ever gardened in a cold pocket? Or on solid clay? Ever wished you had two gardens – one in a cold pocket to grow lettuce all year, and one on a hot, south-facing slope to get a longer tomato season? The Student Organic Farm has teamed up with a local non-profit farm, Giving Tree Farm in Lansing, to try to make those conditions possible for both of us. As you may know, the SOF is situated on pretty heavy clay soil for the most part. And we're not in a cold pocket. These things mean that root crops like carrots, that love loose soil, and cool season crops like lettuce, that love lower temperatures, usually don't do as well as we'd like them to do here. Of course this cool

summer has been an exception, and we've had lettuce most of the year, and it hasn't even bolted yet! Weird.

Giving Tree Farm is situated on muck soil, which is high in organic matter, and very loose – I sank up to my ankles in dry soil there once! They're also located in a cold pocket, and can get frosts as early as August. This means that longer, warmer-season crops like tomatoes and squash don't do so well there.

So we're joining forces – SOF is growing tomatoes and winter squash for both of us, and GTF is growing carrots and lettuce for both of us (not the baby salad mix – that's SOF). Last week was our first trade – some of the lettuce heads were from GTF, and some were from us. This week, they are supplementing both our lettuce and carrot shares. We've been faithfully toting our extra tomatoes (don't worry, you still get first dibs) over there after Thursdays, and when the winter squash ripens, we'll do the same with it.

Yes, GTF is a certified organic farm; Sue Houghton, the farmer there, is also an inspector for organic certification, so you know their practices are up to standards. For more information on their farm and CSA, see the description of the farm on the Local Harvest web page:

<http://www.localharvest.org/farms/M3631>

### New veggies?

Well, I don't think anything is new this week... no, that's not true – **Garlic** is new this week! For those of you who did not participate in the garlic braiding workshop, this will be your first distribution of garlic. In order to keep everyone in alliums (onions, garlic, leeks, shallots, scallions, etc.) through the winter, we'll be rationing garlic distribution, but you can look forward to one head at least every other week – if you don't use that much, don't worry; you can take less, and our stash will last that much longer that way. I cannot, however, imagine anyone using less than one head of garlic in a week – put it in everything! I've always wanted to write a cookbook called "First Saute the Onions and Garlic," in which every recipe starts that way – which is how most good food starts, in my experience. So do, sauté it, grate it, chop it fresh onto salad, veggies, make garlic bread, and for a delicious treat, try roasting it – cut the top, pointy end off the head, so the top of each clove is exposed, douse with olive oil, and bake at 350 for 45 min or so. You can wrap it in foil or use a garlic roasting dish (looks like a clay

pot, glazed inside, turned over on a plate) to keep moisture in.

Check it before 45 min if you like – it's done when it's soft and spreadable, and time depends on size of head. Spread it on toast, bread, carrots, or anything else you enjoy eating – be creative.

According to *Food Lovers' Companion*, garlic's medicinal claims have included "cures for toothaches, consumption, open wounds, and evil demons." It is known to be a preventative or medicine for the common cold (boosts immune system), a natural insect repellent (through both internal and external use), and keeps away vampires, so what's not to like?

Everything else in the share this week you've seen before – but not all at once! We are truly at the peak of summer harvest, so please enjoy the bounty, store away what you can't use now, enjoy everything else, and for those of you re-joining us for fall, look for sweet corn next week!

Thanks again for your support and enthusiasm for our CSA – we couldn't, wouldn't, do this without you, and it is an honor to grow food for you, while stewarding the earth and teaching and learning from each other.

**Just to reiterate, please pass along to farm friends who don't get the newsletter.**

**Thanks!**

**SOF Wish List :**

We've been working up a SOF Wish List – mostly items that we could buy, but prefer to reuse if you've got them and are not using them. Check your garage, basement, shed, etc. and see if you can donate any of these items:

1. Used pickup truck or van, to be used on-farm only (i.e. not for use on roads), for running produce and supplies from the back to the front of the Hort Farm and vice versa. We've been using my truck, which is fine as long as I'm here, but I'll be leaving next year.
2. A tune-up, oil change, and car wash for my truck ☺
- 3.
4. Large coolers (ice chests, not walk-ins, though one of those would be nice, too!)

5. Thanks for the  
LAWNMOWER!

6. Useful hand tools:

shovels/spades, a large mulching pitchfork, digging/spading forks, a machete, a heavy-duty old-fashioned hoe, fencepost pounder

7. Thanks for the PAINT!

Still need paintbrushes

8. Weatherproof shelving unit, i.e. plastic Rubbermaid upright shelves with locking doors

9. 5-gallon plastic buckets, preferably from food products

10. A large Gardenway cart

11. Wheelbarrows

12. Sawhorses

13. A battery-operated drill

14. Extra-long (150 ft. or more) tape measure

15. A 4-ft. segment of 18-24" diameter PVC or other heavy-duty pipe (not concrete)

16. Miscellaneous: old towels/rags, large (long) knives, large (1/2 gallon or more) glass jars with lids, sponges, rubber boots, watering cans, and snacks – thanks so much to those of you who have brought snacks out to the farm! The farmers appreciate any and all snacks all the time.

17. Massages: we'll take donations or barter extra produce for massages for farmers.