

STUDENT ORGANIC FARM CSA NEWSLETTER

December 2, 2004

In your share this week:

- Baby salad mix
- *Joan* rutabagas
- *Napoli* orange **carrots**
- Mixed turnips (white *Hakurei* and/or *Scarlet Queen* red) with greens
- Storage white or *Redwing* red **onions**
- *Oliver* **Brussels sprouts** with Brussels greens included
- *Mei qing choy* (“baby” pac choy)
- Fresh oregano

Announcements

1. Please come to the almost-end-of-season **PARTY and “awards” ceremony** tonight (Thursday, December 2) – help us celebrate nearly two years of year-round student organic farming. Farmers, CSA members, farm friends, family, and EFFS club members are all invited! Bring yourself, kid and adult friends, a dish or beverage to share, *your own place settings*, farm stories to share, etc. This is a good time to meet and talk to the student farmers who grow your food, as well as fellow CSA members and farm friends. **Where:** on campus, at the Plant and Soil Science Building greenhouse conservatory (enter the PSS Building through the back –south—doors next to Sparty’s flowers; look for signs directing you to the party). **When:** 6:45 – 8:45-ish p.m. (you don’t have to stay the whole time – come when you can; leave whenever you have to. Also, please come even if you can’t bring a dish to pass – just bring yourself!)
2. **WINTER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY:** CSA will take a break, and student farmers will be away, from mid-December to mid-January, while MSU takes its winter break. We need volunteers to open and close up hoophouses on sunny days, water if necessary, and keep an eye on things while we’re gone. Can you sign up for one or more days? You may not even need to come in – if it’s cold and cloudy, we leave the hoophouses closed all day, and we don’t water. But just in case we get sunny days, we need folks available to ventilate and water, so please sign up to be “on call,”

depending on the weather, for one or two (or more) days this winter. We will show you what to do – it's not too hard. Please check your calendar, and call the farm phone (517-230-7987) and/or sign up at CSA pick-up today.

3. **MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS** for Spring session (mid-January through end of April, same as MSU Spring semester): Current CSA members may renew your membership anytime before **December 2, 2004** to guarantee your share for spring. To renew your membership, please send a check for either the **full \$350** (for 16 weeks, same as fall session), OR a **deposit of \$175** (*note: the deposit amount has changed from \$150 previously to \$175 now) to Michelle at the address below. Make checks out to **MSU** with "Spring 2005 CSA" in the memo line. NOTE: We can only reserve your share for future sessions IF you are already paid in full for all current and past sessions – to check to see if you have an outstanding balance, please email msufarm@msu.edu

After Dec. 2, current members can of course still rejoin, but your share is no longer guaranteed. There are over 40 people on the waiting list for spring shares, and after Dec. 2, if there are any shares unclaimed (by current members), we will offer them to the folks on the waitlist, with priority going first to students, then to MSU staff and faculty, and last to non-MSU folks. We've changed from a strictly "first-pay, first-served" system to encourage *student* involvement on all levels at the *Student Organic Farm*. ☺

Send checks and all SOF correspondence to
Michelle Ferrarese
MSU Dept. of Horticulture
A288 Plant and Soil Science Building
East Lansing MI 48824

What's up at the farm?

Getting ready for two things: 1)the party tonight! I hope you'll all be able to make it – no need to RSVP, but if you need better directions, please call the farm phone, and we'll get you there. Also, if you need to pick up your share early today to have enough time to cook for tonight, please call the farm phone (517-230-7987) and let us know. And 2)Winter! After today, there are only two more weeks of fall CSA (Dec. 16 is the very last pick-up day), after which will be about a month break, while MSU is out for vacation, and CSA 'spring' session will resume mid-January. If you renewed your membership, you'll receive a

confirmation letter with reminders of the dates. **From mid-December to mid-January, student farmers will be on vacation, but the farm still needs TLC. CAN YOU HELP OUT YOUR FARM???** We need **VOLUNTEERS** to open and close the greenhouses on sunny days, water as necessary, check and re-set mousetraps, and scout for greenhouse damage while we're away. Please call the farm phone and/or sign up for a shift at CSA pick-up today. Thank you!

New Veggies and Recipes

Fresh herbs: Oregano. Use fresh oregano in any vegetable dish, cooked or raw – chop it coarsely and add to your salad. Add it to tomato sauce for extra flavor. Or you can dry it yourself to use later this winter. Hang the bunch upside down in a dark, non-humid place, and when it's dry, crumble leaves into a jar. Dried oregano is more pungent than fresh, as a lot of water is lost in the drying process, and this concentrates flavor.

Time to do your own Turnip Taste Test! You'll get two varieties of turnips in your bunches this week – I'm partial to the Hakurei white turnips, but I've started munching on the red Scarlet Queens, and they are growing on me (not literally; it's too cold for that now). What do you think? Remember, turnip greens of all varieties are delicious steamed, braised, or sautéed, with a little vinegar or lemon juice – yum. Speaking of greens, Brussels sprouts greens are delicious! If you have enjoyed collard greens or kale, you will LOVE Brussels greens – chop or chiffonade them finely, then steam or sauté til bright green (not grey and mushy), add a little lemon or vinegar or tamari, and enjoy!

I think the only new veggie this week is the **Mei qing choi**, a small variety of Pac or Bok choi, often sold in the store as “baby” pac choi (and not new to old members – remember this one?). Mei qing choi is a tender, juicy Asian green vegetable, delicious in stir-fry, soups, or enjoyed fresh plain or in salad. One of my favorite farm snacks is fresh mei qing choi leaves, snapped from the base of the plant – the juicy, almost-crispy stalks and the tender, flavorful leaves of this cold-hardy plant are especially wonderful on a cold winter day when it seems unlikely that any plant could be alive, let alone producing food.

My favorite Choi stir-fry (any variety of choi will do)

1 head Mei qing choi or other choi
1 small onion, chopped
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
1 Tbsp. fresh grated/minced ginger
Dash of hot red pepper flakes OR hot chili oil

Dash of tamari
Sesame oil, for frying
Chopped tofu (optional)
Dash of fish sauce (optional)

To cut the choy leaves: remove stalks from leaves. Coarsely chop stalks and leaves, separately. Heat sesame oil in a stainless steel wok or skillet over med-high heat. Add onion, sauté briefly, add garlic, ginger, and choy stems. Saute one minute or so. Add choy leaves and optional chopped tofu, if using. Saute another minute or so, til stems start to brown on edges, and leaves are bright, bright green and just wilted, not grey or mushy. Remove from heat, toss gently with optional condiments (hot peppers – even if you’re not a spicy-food-lover, try just a little hot stuff with this dish – leave it out next time if you really can’t stand it – , tamari, and/or fish sauce) and a drop or two of toasted sesame oil. Serve sprinkled with sesame seeds, if you like, or without. Serve with rice, or rice noodles, or whatever you like to eat stir-fry with (chopsticks).