



## MSU STUDENT ORGANIC FARM NEWSLETTER

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December 7, 2006

### IN YOUR SHARE THIS WEEK

- Onions
- Garlic
- Brussels sprouts
- Winter squash
- Carrots
- Lettuce
- Salad mix
- Radishes
- Tatsoi (Asian cooking green)

### FARM CALENDAR OF EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

The session is winding down and the last week has finally reflected the season we are entering. Our greenhouse crops have gone through a bit of a shock, suddenly plummeting from temperatures in the mid 60's for nearly two weeks into the 20s. We worked hard to batten down the hatches, so to speak, to make sure that all of the hoopouses were securely sealed and that this temperature swing would have minimal effect on the crops. So far the plants look alright. Luckily, the residual warm soil temperatures have helped to keep the plants warmer than they would have been if the ground had already frozen. But a challenge nonetheless and we seemed to make it through okay.

As the farm enters its quietest time—a three-week break after next week's pickup—we also are feeling a sense of calm before another kind of storm—the kickoff of the Organic Farming Certificate Program. We have our first cohort of students starting on January 5! You all will see this group of farmers for all of 2007. They will be helping to run the farm in all aspects of what we do. They will take turns in various rotations, sharing responsibilities including CSA. So the SOF is officially transitioning into a true educational farm. Of course, it has been an educational farm all along but now it is official. Students will be working out at the farm as well as taking classes to learn specifically how to be a small-scale organic farmer. We are gearing up and we are so excited to have this unique group of students join the farm family and offer their expertise and knowledge to all of us, as well as learn from us based on our various experiences.

We hope that you all will help us welcome this new class of organic farmers. As we get closer I will write about each of them in the newsletter so you will know who they are when you meet them. We are counting on them to bring new ideas and a whole lot of energy to the SOF.

### **Next Week's Share**

As I mentioned above, next week will be the last pick up for three weeks. Pickups will resume on **Thursday, January 11, 2007!** This is the time that the farm briefly goes to sleep. Generally, we will experience some of the coldest days of the year at that time and certainly the shortest days of the year, so we give the crops a break, let them hang out, and we don't harvest them.

With that being said, we have some ready crops—crops that if we didn't harvest now, we would lose over the next three weeks. So, what we are trying to tell you is that next week's share is going to be on the larger side. We will send out the list next week, but you can expect an extra large share (probably not as big as the Thanksgiving share, but large indeed). We wanted to let you know so that you could plan your next shopping trip accordingly. You may want to wait to see what you get before you go shopping!

### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Farmer Appreciation Party!**

The farmer appreciation party has been delayed! Due to crazy end-of-the-semester schedules and since we changed pick up from Wednesdays to Thursdays, the date that had been set last year was rescheduled. We apologize for any confusion that may have created.

**WEDNESDAY JANUARY 31, at 6:30 is the Farmer Appreciation Gathering!** It will be at the same place, in the conservatory of the Plant and Soil Science Building (on Bogue, cross street is Wilson, just north of the Children's Garden). Parking will be free in the Children's Garden lot off of Bogue.

Come show your appreciation for the student farmers who grow this amazing selection of year-round, organic produce for you! We will also be welcoming the new Organic Farming Certificate Program students at this event.

The party is a potluck, so here is your chance to show off your culinary skills. I have heard that the party is a great chance to share recipes and see how others turn these winter veggies into delicious treats.

### **RECIPES**

The following two recipes are from one of our members, Lynne Woods. They do not call for ingredients we give out at the farm, but are wonderful supplements to many of the winter veggies. Throughout the winter, it takes some creativity to come up with variations on how to "spice up" some of the standard winter veggies. Here are two good options!

#### **Cranberry Chutney**

**from the kitchen of Lin Bonacci, Ithaca, NY, 1978, via Lynne Woods**

Combine in large, heavy steel, enamel, or enamel-clad cast iron, or other nonreactive pot\*  
1 C water\*\*  
4 C raw cranberries  
1 C seedless raisins  
2 C white sugar  
½ tsp. powdered ginger  
½ tsp. ground cinnamon

Cook slowly 20 min, then add:

1 C drained crushed pineapple  
1 medium onion finely chopped

Cook slowly 20 min more. Serve warm or cold with fowl, pork, beef, or game. Keep in refrigerator.

\*Do not use an uncoated aluminum pan—the aluminum reacts with the acids in the cranberries and pineapple and you get a peculiar taste.

**\*\*Note from Lin:** “I use the \*pineapple juice to replace the water. Also, I’ve used chopped, peeled, fresh tart apples instead of pineapple—it’s also very good.”

**Note from Lynne Woods:** The chutney will keep well in the refrigerator for at least a week. I don’t know whether it freezes well; have never tried. Let me know if you experiment.

I use half dark and half golden raisins, decrease the sugar by at least a third, increase the ginger to at least a teaspoonful (and I use fresh grated ginger if possible), and increase the cinnamon to 1 t. I also use 2 medium onions or 1 large.

This is useful stuff. It makes a fine sandwich with whole wheat bread and aged Cheddar, Swiss, or cream cheese, and it is very good on sweet potato or pumpkin biscuits, muffins, or pancakes. If you are lucky enough to have access to real wild rice, try it with a wild rice pilaf.

### *Infused Curry Oil*

This is much easier to make if you have a gas stove or a friend who has one. Plan to hover if your stove is electric, as the flavor paste can burn easily. The original recipe was developed in the 1980’s by Charlie Trotter, and I think I remember finding it in a newspaper during a layover at O’Hare, but the recipe has evolved over the last 20 years or so, and I am no longer certain what is Trotter and what is evolution.

The oil is wonderful on sautéed, broiled, roasted, or grilled fish, chicken, pork, or vegetables. Brush eggplant slices, broil or grill, and serve with onion/zucchini couscous with a bit more oil drizzled on. In the summer, brush ears of corn before grilling them lightly. Right now, brush on squash slices before roasting or grilling.

For about a cup of flavored oil:

2T to ¼ C minced shallot or sweet onion  
1 tsp. minced garlic, or a bit more if you love garlic, but don’t overdo it or you unbalance the flavors  
1–2T good olive oil, and 1C more  
½ C peeled, diced sharp crisp apple (Granny Smith or Northern Spy)  
2 tsp. curry powder (mild if you don’t like spicy food, hot if your palate can take it)  
1t ground cumin  
1t ground turmeric  
1t sweet paprika (Hungarian or Spanish—paprika with a flavor, not just red stuff)  
½ tsp. coriander seeds (toast a bit in a dry heavy pan until fragrant, then cool and grind or pulverize in a mortar)  
½ t chili powder (hot or not, per note re curry powder)  
2 pinches salt  
1 pinch finely ground black pepper  
1–2 pinches cayenne pepper (leave out if you don’t like spicy food)  
⅓ C warm water  
1T lemon juice

Over low heat, put shallot/onion and garlic in the 1–2T olive oil in a nonreactive small heavy saucepan, then cook slowly until soft but not browned. Add the apple and cook for a minute or two, stirring as needed to keep from browning.

While the shallot/onion and garlic are cooking, put the spices in a small bowl, mix, and add to the shallot/ garlic/ apple mixture, then cook for another couple of minutes, stirring slowly and constantly. Add the water and lemon juice. Mix well. Lower heat to very low and simmer slowly for about 15 min (watch carefully so the mixture does not burn), until you have a thick, lumpy paste. Remove from heat and cool.

Put cooled paste into a blender with  $\frac{1}{3}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$  C of remaining oil, cover blender container, and blend on low while adding remaining oil slowly, in a thin stream. Let blender run for a minute or two after all oil is added. Transfer oil into a glass container; refrigerate, tightly covered, for a day or two.

I use the oil as is, because I like the texture of the flavoring ingredients. The original directions were to strain the oil through a fine strainer lined with moistened cheesecloth, let drain for a few hours, and discard the solids. The oil should be kept in the refrigerator and used within a week or so.

### **MSU Student Organic Farm Contact Information**

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