

CSA Newsletter

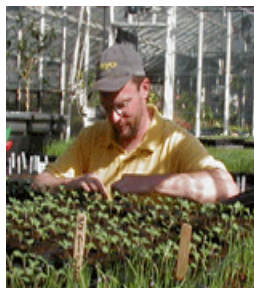
WALTHAM FIELDS COMMUNITY FARM

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NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Farm Manager's Welcome to the 2003 season



I'd like to welcome all new and returning CSA members for the 2003 season. We have seen many CSA members already this year — at the Spring Fling, at Third Sunday Gatherings, on farm tours, and volunteering in the fields and greenhouse. Thank you.

The 2003 season began one week early for the Sunday pickup. The

cool-weather-loving, spring crops like spinach and lettuce have responded well to the rainy, cloudy climate so far this year. However, if this pattern continues, I will begin to worry about the sun-loving summer crops like melons and eggplants.

The weather has also suppressed the pest that is usually the bane of our springtime brassica plantings — flea beetles. Even with the dearth of flea beetles, we still applied more than 9,000 feet of white floating row cover, much of it to the brassica crops like broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and turnips. The gauzy material that you may hear us refer to on second reference sometimes as Remya (a trade name) also protects against extremes of heat and cold.

We also apply floating row cover over summer and winter squash plantings to make a physical barrier against the striped cucumber beetle, a pest that ravages young squash plantings. So far this year we haven't seen any of these beetles either, so that may be another unanticipated benefit of the weather. As farm manager, I haven't been here long enough to observe the rise and fall of the cucumber beetle populations from season to season to be able to make an informed guess about whether it's the weather or some other reason that the populations of this pest are fluctuating.

Floating row cover has to be used with care by organic farmers though because it has its drawbacks. While it's climate-controlling effects prompt the vegetables to grow quicker, it also gives a boost to fast-growing weeds. Removing and replacing Remya to weed the beds can be a time-consuming chore that falls by the way in the busy spring season. I'm happy to say that because of the

DISTRIBUTION WEEK: 3
June 22-26, 2003



WHAT'S IN THE SHARE*

Greens (green kale, red kale, collards)

Lettuce

Garlic scapes (good for saute or stir-fry)

Zucchini

*It's not always possible to know in time for publication exactly what will be in the share each week, but your share is likely to contain at least some, if not all, of the vegetables in the list.

increased help we have had this year from volunteers, there has been time and energy to manage the weeds beneath the row cover.

The other drawback is that while Remya creates a barrier between the crops and the pests, it also can be a barrier between beneficial predators and pest insects if the pests do get under the cover — resulting in a population explosion. Aphids seem to be the pest that can really get out of hand in this kind of a situation.

Happily, the issue of pests has been a small one for us this year. We've only had to use two organically approved pesticides this year, diatomaceous earth and Bt variety kurstaki — both times on the tomato transplants, and both times to control cutworms. Bt is a naturally occurring bacterium that is found in the soil. When the bacteria gets in the gut of a caterpillar, it produces a toxin that kills it. It is grown and sold commercially as an organic pest control. Diatomaceous earth is comprised of fossilized diatoms — single cell organisms that lived in the sea millions of years ago — that are mined and sold for organic pest control. To soft bodied insects, it's like crawling through shards of broken glass, but to humans, it feels like a fine, soft powder. If you have any questions about pest control or weed control, it's your farm and your food, and it's our mission to educate, so I strongly encourage you to ask any questions you may have, and we'll do our best to answer them, or find the answer if we don't know.

Enjoy the season.

— John Mitchell, *Farm Manager*



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OUR FARM:

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

I first learned of the farm – your farm – last fall, when I stumbled across a list of organic farms in Massachusetts. I was fascinated that there was a small community farm only a couple of miles from my front door. I read as much as I could on CFO's website and my girlfriend, Kendra, signed on for a share.

At that time it was still your farm. As the months have progressed, though, we've been learning about the farm, meeting new people and becoming involved in new projects. Almost too quickly, it seems, we've seen your farm turn into our farm. No matter how inept we looked when we first picked up a scuffle-hoe, there was someone there to kindly teach us and to share the work with us. Even though we're convinced that our help isn't really that helpful, we've always been made to feel like the farm couldn't function without us. Even aside from fieldwork, we've found that some of our other skills and hobbies have been eagerly welcomed (even encouraged) by the farm regulars.

In an age where so many of us feel powerless in society, an organization that so welcomes us and our input is exciting. A breath of fresh air, you might say.

I've found myself looking forward to our trips to our farm. Not only because it gives me a chance to get my hands dirty and to feel like I'm actually doing something, but because I know that – no matter who's there – I'll be among friends. *Clayton Carter, CSA Shareholder*



News Flash! Autumn Hills Orchard in Groton will again be dispensing **apple shares** at the Waltham Fields distribution site this year. You don't have to be a

member of the CSA to buy an apple share. The price will be \$58. Apple share distribution starts in late August/early September (depending on how the season goes weather-wise). It runs for nine weeks. Recipients collect a 1/2 peck bag of apples weekly. The share features a diversity of apple varieties, which this year will include Cox' Orange Pippin, Golden Delicious, Ginger Gold and Rhode Island Greenings. Depending on the usual farming variables, there may also be peaches. If the orchard has a surplus, there may be a bonus 10th week distribution.

How to sign up

Sign up will be on Thursdays and Sundays at the farm CSA distribution tent. Ask the distribution coordinator for the enrollment form. Please pay at the time you sign up. Apple shares are not distributed to the box share distribution sites, so you must be able to pick up at the farm on Thursday or Sunday.

*Thanks go to CSA shareholder Rachael Rosner for these tips on **cooking with greens**. She writes, "Here's what I do with kale, and it's based on a formula I learned from my friend Ilana..."*

1. Kale with white beans: Wash the kale and cut out the center stems. Rough chop it. Take a pot, or a pan, whatever's handy, and put in some olive oil and minced garlic. You can also use lard or the fat from bacon (if you eat meat). Heat it up until the garlic is fragrant, and then add the kale. Sautée. Like spinach, the kale will shrink dramatically in bulk as it cooks. Once it has reduced by about half in size, add a can (or two, depending on the amount of kale you're using) of white beans. Season with salt and pepper. Add a little balsamic vinegar, or rice wine vinegar, or lemon juice (anything acidic), depending on your preference, and cook until heated through. Drain if necessary. Yum. We eat this with rice.

2. Variation on a theme: Follow above for washing and cutting kale (the amount of kale can vary). Put in a steamer, or in a pot with a little bit of water, cover and simmer on a low flame until the kale becomes soft. Drain (if necessary) and set aside. In a separate pan, sauté garlic in some olive oil. Chop some extra-firm tofu (we use the brick you get at any grocery store) into small squares and sauté. Add salt and pepper for seasoning. Continue sautéing (add more olive oil if necessary) until lightly browned. Remove from pan and set aside. At the same time (you can be doing all of these things at the same time) peel and chop into small squares a sweet potato or two, depending on the amount of kale and tofu you're using. Fill a separate pot with water and bring to a boil. Place the sweet potato in the water and boil until soft. Drain. Put the steamed kale, the sautéed tofu and the sweet potatoes into a large serving bowl. Add lemon juice and garlic powder to taste. Sometimes we use rice vinegar instead of lemon juice. Serve with a crusty bread. Enjoy.

This formula works with any number of variations: Any bitter or very flavorful green, any kind of starch (potato or sweet potato, usually), and some kind of protein (tofu, or salmon, or tuna, etc.). We have made this with Swiss chard, salmon and potatoes and grilled the salmon in a honey-mustard sauce. Then we added a mustard/balsamic vinegar dressing to it. It was delicious.



FARM-RELATED HAPPENINGS

Saturday, June 21, Summer Solstice

Sunday, June 22, Farm Safety Training with John, 4:00. Open to everyone, strongly recommended for regular fieldwork volunteers.

Wednesday, July 2, CRAFT at Appleton Farm, 3:00-5:30, potluck dinner on the beach afterwards. Open to regular volunteers, staff and wanna-be farmers. See <http://www.emasscraft.org/main/> for details.

Sunday, July 20, 3rd Sunday Gathering at the farm, byo picnic and beverage, 12:30.

Monday, July 21, CFO Board of Directors Meeting, 8pm at the farm.

August 8-10, NOFA (Northeast Organic Farming Association) summer conference in Amherst. See <http://www.nofamass.org> for details.

• **Sundays, 10am and 1:30pm** • **Mondays, Tuesday and Thursdays 9am** • **Wednesdays, 10:30am**

Brief Orientations to Fieldwork - Every week beginning the week of May 4th, these short orientations will provide a review of farm safety and instructions on specific farming tasks scheduled for the day. Rain or shine.

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