

Monroe Family Organics

CSA Newsletter

JULY 22, 2012

Hello everyone! I hope you had a good weekend!

Farm Update

Our hens are finally laying eggs, and this last week we have started to get more and more eggs. They have started out small at first and are getting larger one day to the next, which is fairly typical as hens begin their egg production. We should have a few eggs available at the drop-offs but there will not be many at first. As for the crops, we have had deer that have been eating a few things in the back field, so we are keeping an eye on it to see if it gets any worse. The recent cooler weather has been nice, and the rain definitely helped our recent plantings for our fall crops. The blueberries are still coming on very strong and should be available for a couple weeks yet. If you are interested in getting a large amount of blueberries, just send us an email or let us know at the drop-off, and we can harvest some for you. For orders of 10 pounds or more, the cost is \$3.20 per pound. The field tomatoes are getting close to ready, and the first ones have started to ripen in the third cold frame. The sweet corn is also getting close (if we can keep the deer out of it), so you should start seeing sweet corn in your share pretty soon!



The first of the field tomatoes are starting to ripen.



What to Expect in This Week's Share

- ❖ Green beans
- ❖ Salad mix or head lettuce
- ❖ Cherry tomatoes, carrots, or cabbage
- ❖ Potatoes
- ❖ Basil, parsley, cilantro, or beet greens
- ❖ Cucumbers or garlic
- ❖ Beets, broccoli, kale, or chard

Have questions or comments? Email us at mfororganics@yahoo.com or call Michele at

517-896-6884.

How to Preserve your Share

It will be very likely that during the season you will have some vegetables left over from the last week that you are unlikely to use before getting your next share. The key to getting the most out of your share is to be able to preserve what you have left for another time. There is no truly good way to store lettuce long term, but for other items there are more options. Listed below are some of the quickest ways to preserve the smaller quantities you may have left over in your share.

Freezing

During the springtime there are a lot of greens available and leftovers are very easy to freeze and put away for later. Simply put on a cookie sheet and slide into the freezer. Then take the frozen greens off the cookie sheet, put in a freezer bag, and get as much air out of the bag as possible. Also make sure the bag has sealed well. You can do this with bok choy, kale, spinach, Swiss chard or any other standard cooking greens.

Drying



For something like herbs this works especially well. Simply take a bunch of herbs like dill, cilantro, parsley, or basil, and put in a small paper bag. Then wrap a rubber band around both the herbs and the bag, and put some holes in the bag to allow air to move freely in and out. Put the bag someplace that will get a lot of air movement. We have not tried this method since we have a dehydrator, but if you don't have one, you can still dry the herbs using the bag method. Part of the reason to use the bag instead of just hanging it is that the bag will catch any leaves that fall off. Also make sure to have thin bunches for drying as moisture may get trapped in a tightly bound large bunch and cause rot. (Continued on next page.)



The watermelons are really coming along, and we can't wait until they are ready to eat!



Despite the heat, the chard is still looking nice out in the field.

Saving Root Vegetables

With root vegetables that will not be used immediately, cutting the tops off is key to giving them extra life in your fridge. Carrots, beets, radishes, and turnips all benefit from having the leafy tops completely removed. The root should be washed and put into a bag without excess water, because putting wet root vegetables in a bag will cause them to rot if they are kept in sitting water. We now have radishes that are three weeks old that are still in great condition in our fridge. Also the tops of these root vegetables can be used to make soup stock.

Lacto Fermentation

This is something many people have not heard of, but it was the traditional method of preserving vegetables years ago before widespread refrigeration. Traditional sauerkraut and kimchi were and still are made in many parts of the world using salt. The benefit to preserving in salt is that the vitamins (like vitamin C) are preserved and are not cooked out or diluted. What happens is that a strain of beneficial bacteria that lives on the vegetable produces lactic acid under these high salt conditions. This lactic acid preserves the vegetables and makes them more digestible as well. There is no alcohol present in this process and is actually the healthiest way to store cabbage, pickles, and other non-sweet vegetables. There is a lot of information about this online and in a book called "Nourishing Traditions", by Sally Fallon. We have used this method often, and also prefer it because it is often less time consuming than canning. You can ask us more about this method at the drop-off if you are interested.

Recipe: Tomato Pizza Rolls

This recipe is from the August 2012 issue of Better Homes and Gardens (it's on page 146 if you're looking for it in your copy.) Also, the dough needs some time to rise, so make sure you start a few hours before you intend to eat.

Ingredients:

2 cups warm water (105-115 degrees F)
2 packages active dry yeast
6 cups bread flour or all-purpose flour (you can partially substitute whole wheat flour too.)

2 ½ tsp. fine sea salt
1 large garlic clove
3 cups cherry tomatoes, halved and/or quartered
½ cup finely grated parmesan cheese
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 tsp. finely shredded lemon peel
½ tsp. finely ground black pepper
2 to 4 oz. finely sliced prosciutto (cooked bacon works too.)
1 cup basil leaves
Olive oil
Snipped fresh basil

Directions:

1. In large bowl combine water and yeast; let stand for five minutes. Add flour and 2 tsp. salt, stirring to combine. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead 6 to 8 minutes to make a moderately stiff dough that is smooth and elastic. Shape dough in a ball. Place in a lightly greased bowl; turn once to grease surface of dough. Cover with a kitchen towel; let rise at warm room temperature 1 to 2 hours until doubled in size.
2. For sauce, while dough rises, mince and mash garlic with a large pinch of salt to a paste. Stir together with tomatoes, parmesan, ¼ cup oil, lemon peel, pepper, and remaining ½ tsp. salt.
3. Position racks in the upper and lower thirds of oven and preheat to 425 degrees F.
4. Place raised dough on a well-floured work surface. Stretch or roll dough to a 22x14-inch rectangle. Scatter prosciutto and basil leaves on dough. Place tomato sauce along the lengthwise center of dough. Fold bottom third of dough over tomato sauce, then fold over top third of dough. Cut dough crosswise in 10 pieces. Transfer rolls cut sides up to two baking sheets, gently pressing dough to expose some of the filling. Space about 2 inches apart.
5. Bake rolls 25 to 35 minutes, switching baking sheet positions midway through baking time, until crust is golden and hollow-sounding. To serve, drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with snipped fresh basil. Makes 10 servings.

If you have ideas for an article, or you would like to contribute a recipe to a future newsletter, please email mforganics@yahoo.com or call Michele at 517-896-6884.