

# Monroe Family Organics

## CSA Newsletter

AUGUST 12, 2012

Hello everyone! I hope you are enjoying the summer bounty!

### Farm Update

This week was obviously very rainy, so we were stopped from doing a lot of field work. It gave us a good break, but there is a lot to be done out in the fields right now. We are still getting a lot of eggs, although the hens laid a few less during the really rainy days. The pigs have loved the cool down and are eating ever more. They are scheduled to go to the butcher on October 17<sup>th</sup> and we will be sending more information about the availability of getting a half or whole pig soon. Even though the fields are wet we have not seen any disease showing up yet, but are keeping a lookout since conditions are favorable for a lot of foliar diseases. One crop that has struggled is the salad mix and lettuces, which took a hit from the rain a couple weeks ago and have not grown almost at all over the last 3-4 days due to the weather. We hope to be back into it soon but this week we won't have much. What is coming is a lot of tomatoes, and this week's share will reflect that. If you are interested in canning or freezing, we will have extra basil for \$10 per pound (1 pound minimum) and Roma tomatoes by the half bushel for \$12. Next week we will have green beans available for freezing as well.



*The lettuce didn't benefit from all the rain; it grows better when there is a lot of sun.*



### What to Expect in This Week's Share

- ❖ Sweet corn or large tomatoes
- ❖ Cherry tomatoes or carrots
- ❖ Broccoli, Cabbage, or endive
- ❖ Kale, chard, beets, or eggplant
- ❖ Potatoes or green beans
- ❖ Cucumbers or onions
- ❖ Green pepper or hot peppers
- ❖ Basil, cilantro, or parsley

*Have questions or comments? Email us at [mfororganics@yahoo.com](mailto:mfororganics@yahoo.com) or call Michele at*

*517-896-6884.*

## Heirlooms, Hybrids, and GMOs: What's the Difference?

I was asked by the produce buyer at the East Lansing Food Co-op, who is a customer of ours, if we used any genetically altered varieties. This reminded me that you all would probably be interested in knowing what varieties we grow and what the differences are in breeding techniques. There are three main types of vegetable varieties to choose from: open pollinated (often are heirlooms), hybrids, and genetically altered varieties often referred to as GMOs. Open pollinated varieties are such that you can save seed from one year to the next since the plant will always be basically the same from year to year. Examples of open pollinated varieties that we grow are "Black Prince" tomato, "Parris Island" (the green lettuce in salad mix), "Black Cherry" tomatoes, "Provider" green bean, and "Bull's Blood" red beet greens. These varieties are also heirlooms, which means they are older and have been around for a while.



Hybrid varieties occur when a breeder has taken two parent plants and bred them together with traditional breeding techniques that have existed for centuries. This seed is then planted by me, the grower, who likes the desired traits that this hybrid plant may exhibit, such as disease resistance, pest resistance, better flavor, higher yield, and better color. We use a lot of hybrids because of quality, and being organic we want varieties that have natural resistance to disease and pests. Examples are our hybrid bell peppers that are bred for disease resistance and large size, or our hybrid sweet corn that is bred to have tight wrapper leaves on the corn to make it harder for worms to penetrate.



*"Black Cherry" tomatoes and "Bull's Blood" beets are two of the heirloom varieties we use.*





*Double tomato bruschetta! Yum!*

Finally there are genetically altered plants. These varieties are created by plant breeders who put genetic material not naturally found in the plant into the variety for some advantage such as pest resistance. We do not use any genetically altered varieties. The reason we don't is because these varieties are often meant to be used in combination with certain chemical sprays used to control pests. The farmer is then reliant on the chemical and the purchase of the usually expensive seed, which is patented. Also, when genetic material is put into the plant from some other life form, it changes what we are ingesting and how the environment deals with the consumption and breakdown of plant tissues. These genetic changes are seldom well studied before their release into our farming system and rural environments. Through this way of farming, usually a larger chunk of the financial gain goes to agribusiness firms far removed from our local community. The above reasons are why many other countries do not allow farmers to grow genetically altered crops, and sometimes they won't import crops that have

been grown from GMO seed. This is why we do not use genetically altered grains in our animal feed either, only local non-GMO sources. Our farming system is GMO-free, and that is the way we intend to keep it. Hopefully, this gives you a better idea of how we choose varieties and our commitment to growing what is most natural and best for our bodies and our local community.

### **Recipe: Double Tomato Bruschetta**

This recipe was taken from allrecipes.com.

#### **Ingredients**

- 6 roma (plum) tomatoes, chopped
- 1/2 cup sun-dried tomatoes, packed in oil
- 3 cloves minced garlic
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 cup fresh basil, stems removed
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 French baguette
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese

#### **Directions**

1. Preheat the oven on broiler setting.
2. In a large bowl, combine the roma tomatoes, sun-dried tomatoes, garlic, olive oil, vinegar, basil, salt, and pepper. Allow the mixture to sit for 10 minutes.
3. Cut the baguette into 3/4-inch slices. On a baking sheet, arrange the baguette slices in a single layer. Broil for 1 to 2 minutes, until slightly brown.
4. Divide the tomato mixture evenly over the baguette slices. Top the slices with mozzarella cheese.
5. Broil for 5 minutes, or until the cheese is

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