

# Monroe Family Organics

## CSA Newsletter

OCTOBER 9, 2011

Hello everyone! It seems like summer all of a sudden came back again. It has been a nice week to work out in the fields, and I hope you folks had time to enjoy the outdoors as well.

### Farm Update

We have continued to plant in the coldframes as we take out more of the old tomato plants in the first tunnel and continue to turn under the stubborn crabgrass in the other. The rye cover crop is up and looking strong, and most of the cool season crops look very nice. We have also started plowing up the rest of the sod around where the pigs have pastured. This land will be planted next season for next year's vegetables, but we work it up this year to kill the grass seeds so they don't cause us trouble next year. Things have grown slower than I was hoping even with the warmer weather, and this share will have most of the same vegetables as the other. I hope this does not disappoint anyone because we usually try to change it a little each time. The peas and broccoli especially have been taking their time.

This week we scheduled the butchering date for the pigs, which is November 30<sup>th</sup>. They will be available the day after. We are having them butchered at Bellingar Packing in Ashley. We will have more information next week as we figure out more of the logistics



*The cover crop of rye grass is really taking off.*

and pricing, but you will have the choice of how you want the meat cut and prepared (you will be able to get smoked hams, sausage, bacon, etc.). If you are interested in buying a whole or half of one of the pigs let us know so we can contact you with more of the details. There are 13 pigs available and they will probably go quickly. They have been raised on organic grains, pasture, and leftover or imperfect vegetables. They have had no antibiotics, medications, synthetic chemicals, or GMO inputs of any kind and have been on pasture their entire stay on our farm since early April.

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

*517-896-6884.*

## Crop Rotation

A lot of people have heard about crop rotation, and most people's experience with it is seeing corn in a field one year and soybeans the next. This is the most common crop rotation in this area and the surrounding counties. Crop rotation simply means planting a different type of crop in the ground after a preceding crop. There are several reasons for crop rotation. One is that often there is at least a small amount of disease that often stays in the soil from the last crop, even if it is not very noticeable. Most of the time a plant disease likes to infect a particular crop, but will completely ignore another type of plant. If you plant the same type of plant right afterwards than the disease is already there ready to become a bigger problem on the next crop. Also, different crops have their own nutrient requirements and take different nutrients out of the soil. If you put in two plantings of the same vegetable right in a row, then the next crop is deprived of some of the needed nutrients that the first one took out. If you put this combination of lower nutrients and added disease pressure together, than it usually results in a poorer crop. Since we have so many small plantings of different crops, I like to put the ground into cover crop for the next planting if there is enough space as part of our rotation. If there isn't space, then I plant a different unrelated crop in the same spot. An example might be to plant lettuce and then after that plant a crop of beans. Crop rotation is especially important in organic production systems because we cannot rely on chemical fungicides or synthetic fertilizers to bail us out of the problems that occur with poor crop rotation. (Continued on next page.)



*These peas that are growing now are planted on ground that had lettuce on it earlier in the season.*



*The cilantro continues to do well.*

What we have started working towards this year is making the grazing of animals part of this crop rotation. The idea is that we can plant some type of forage crop or pasture after another crop, and then have the animals eat it and spread their manure on it at the same time. This still accomplishes the crop rotation and provides fertility at the same time for the next planting. There is also the benefit that the biological life in the soil is healthier if there are animals included in the rotation. For this last season we have just had them on the pasture that was already there, but next year we are going to start experimenting with pastures and forages that will provide more protein for the growing animals. About half of the new field for next year has been grazed by the pigs and chickens this year. It will be interesting to see next year the differences between the quality of the crops on the grazed versus ungrazed land. Hopefully this gives you a better understanding of crop rotation and also how it fits into our farm.

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

- ❖ Carrots
- ❖ Beets, turnips, or fennel
- ❖ Cooking greens mix, Swiss chard, or carrots
- ❖ Cabbage, bell peppers, or hot peppers
- ❖ Green onions
- ❖ Tomatoes, Brussels sprouts, cherry tomatoes, or a bagged option
- ❖ Salad mix, spinach, or head lettuce
- ❖ Dill, cilantro, parsley, or red mustard, or fennel leaf

### Recipe- Ukrainian Red Borscht Soup

This recipe was found at [www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com). It makes 10 servings, so you can make a bunch to eat throughout the week.

#### Ingredients

- 1 (16 ounce) package pork sausage
- 3 medium beets, peeled and shredded
- 3 carrots, peeled and shredded
- 3 medium baking potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste
- 3/4 cup water
- 1/2 medium head cabbage, cored and shredded
- 1 (8 ounce) can diced tomatoes, drained
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon white sugar, or to taste
- 1/2 cup sour cream, for topping
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley for garnish

#### Directions

Crumble the sausage into a skillet over medium-high heat. Cook and stir until no longer pink. Remove from the heat and set aside. Fill a large pot halfway with water (about 2 quarts), and bring to a boil. Add the sausage, and cover the pot. Return to a boil. Add the beets, and cook until they have lost their color. Add the carrots and potatoes, and cook until tender, about 15 minutes. Add the cabbage, and the can of diced tomatoes. Heat the oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the onion, and cook until tender. Stir in the tomato paste and water until well blended. Transfer to the pot. Add the raw garlic to the soup, cover and turn off the heat. Let stand for 5 minutes. Taste, and season with salt, pepper and sugar. Ladle into serving bowls, and garnish with sour cream and fresh parsley.

*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.*