

CSA Newsletter

WALTHAM FIELDS COMMUNITY FARM

A project of Community Farms Outreach

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Notes from the Field:

The Farm Renewed

There is a definite cycle to every farming season, experienced most vividly by the folks who work the farm daily, but visible and palpable to anyone who spends time around it. It usually goes something like this: April and May are times of blissful planting, communion with the land, bare feet in the soil, tractor work and hand work making efficient headway in soil preparation and early cultivation. Potential is everywhere—in the field, in the greenhouse, in the expectations of the farmers. June is the beginning of fruition—all the heady growth of spring brought back to earth in the season's first harvests. The farmers and CSA members are excited to see one another after the long winter's separation. There are strawberries and flowers everywhere.

And then July hits. Particularly for farms with droughty soils like ours, July means irrigation, sweaty moving of pipe from place to place where small plants need it most and weeds seem to take it in much more efficiently. Pests and weeds explode into the forefront of our attention. Spring's potential gives way to the realities of the season—some disappointing, some astounding. Weeks of harvest are behind us, and weeks lie ahead. Many categories of shortcomings become apparent—in the soil, our equipment, each other. It becomes harder and harder to feel rested in the morning when the alarm goes off at 5 A.M.

The *Stella Natura*, the biodynamic planting calendar, suggests an appropriate "virtue" for farmers to meditate on each month throughout the year. For April, the virtue is "devotion becomes the force of sacrifice." Its opposite, also helpfully supplied by the calendar, is "no concern, spring fever." Thinking about the virtue of devotion feels powerful in April, when farmers are coming out of hibernation and buckling down, committing to the long season ahead after months of relative sloth. For May, one of the farm's most hectic months, we are advised that "inner balance becomes progress," while its opposite is "externals take over, too busy." Also valuable advice. In July, however, just when tired farmers are hoping for a break, what does the calendar advise? "Selflessness leads to catharsis." Wonderful, we think sarcastically, just what we needed to hear. Be careful, the calendar cautions, of the opposite of selflessness, "self-absorption and willfulness." Oops.

July 11–15, 2004 (Distribution Week #6)

This week's share may contain:

Beets	Carrots	Spinach
Lettuce	Chard	Summer Squash
Cucumbers	Arugula	Green garlic

Pick your own:

Basil Cilantro Dill Parsley Beans Flowers

It is particularly good for us, then, that the farm is renewed at this time of year by someone else's energy, since our own is flagging. The arrival of Cambridge Adventure Day Camp on the farm July 5, and of the AmeriCorps team Fire 3 on July 7, brought new life to our dry fields and new energy to our serious weeding projects. The participants in the children's program, staffed this season by Teri Hoxie-Keough with help from board member Judy Fallows, workshare Robyn D'Avignon, and the farm staff, spend time harvesting, exploring bugs, cooking, playing games and doing crafts—a wonderful reminder that there is life on this farm beyond our thirsty plants. The AmeriCorps team will be spending time on the farm as well as doing projects for our partner organizations, including the University of Massachusetts, the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (owner of the Lyman Estate land), Re-Vision House urban agriculture project, for whom we are growing 50 low-income CSA shares this season, and other local farms and hunger relief organizations. Board member Justine Kahn and farmer Meryl LaTronica have put tremendous effort into organizing these off-site service learning opportunities for the team.

This new vigor in the fields will help carry us through the nadir of the season, the point of lowest energy and maximum effort. It will bring us into the season of bountiful harvests and diminishing weed growth, force us to turn outwards to avoid "self-absorption and willfulness." We are grateful to these two programs for their efforts and energy on the farm. Please help us make them welcome.

The Farm Staff—Amanda, Meryl, Ryan and many dedicated volunteers

A message about the pick-your-own flower and herb garden:

Please visit the flower and herb garden during pick-your-own hours, 3:30-6:30 PM on Sundays and 4-7 PM on Thursdays. Use scissors when cutting flower stems; knives can crush stems and cause permanent damage to the plant. Please pick flowers carefully -- DO NOT CUT DOWN THE WHOLE PLANT! Watch where your feet go and where your children's feet go. Please be courteous and leave flowers for the next harvester. And please, please ask if you have any questions! Enjoy our beautiful flowers and tasty herbs.

Thanks—The Farm Staff



Roasted Beet Salad with Oranges and Beet Greens (from *Bon Appétit*)

The delicate beet greens—which are an excellent source of potassium, folic acid, and magnesium—make this dish even more healthful.

- 6 medium beets with beet greens attached
- 2 large oranges
- 1 small sweet onion, cut through root end into thin wedges
- 1/3 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon grated orange peel

Preheat oven to 400°F. Trim greens from beets. Cut off and discard stems. Coarsely chop leaves and reserve. Wrap each beet in foil. Place beets directly on oven rack and roast until tender when pierced with fork, about 1 hour. Cool. Peel beets, then cut each into 8 wedges. Place beets in medium bowl.

Cook beet greens in large saucepan of boiling water just until tender, about 2 minutes. Drain. Cool. Squeeze greens to remove excess moisture. Add greens to bowl with beets. Cut peel and white pith from oranges. Working over another bowl and using small sharp knife, cut between membranes to release segments. Add orange segments and onion to bowl with beet mixture. Whisk vinegar, oil, garlic, and orange peel in small bowl to blend; add to beet mixture and toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper. Let stand at room temperature 1 hour. Serve.

Makes 6 servings.

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3rd Sunday Picnic

The next 3rd Sunday Picnic will be on July 18th at noon at the farm. Bring a picnic lunch and something to drink. The Outreach Committee will provide dessert.

Community Farms Outreach is a nonprofit organization dedicated to farmland preservation, hunger relief, and education.