

Journey School Food Community CSA Newsletter

Week 26: July 14, 2007

This has been a week of bliss for the Mathias farm family. We had promised ourselves for the last few weeks that this week, for sure, we'd spend the entire time in the garden - weeding, taking out Spring vegetables to make way for Fall vegetable planting, completing all transplants, and more weeding. Well, we were true to our word. The garden looks so wonderful right now, we take turns congratulating each other. It has been an great gift to grow in this space. We've officially been here a year. You may be surprised to find out that this is the longest amount of time that we have gardened in one spot. That kind of longevity makes all the difference in planning the spaces and crop rotations, weed control, and soil fertility. Thank you Andy, Jane, Amri, and Gwynne - our gracious hosts!

One of the benefits of a settled farmer is the diversity we will risk. For us, herbs have been one of those things we never quite get to as we try to ensure the harvest of cukes, zukes, squash, beans, and tomatoes among other primary vegetables. However, our food tastes so much better with the inclusion of fresh herbs, it is difficult to admit we ever treated them as secondary. Take this week's parsley for example. I've never been a big fan of dried parsley - it just didn't seem to make a great impact in my recipes. Jeff persevered and dedicated a whole bed to growing two kinds of parsley, both flat and curly. Wow! I do like parsley, I do like parsley!

"The delicious and vibrant taste and wonderful healing properties of parsley are often ignored in its popular role as a table garnish. Highly nutritious, parsley can be found year round in your local supermarket. Parsley is the world's most popular herb. It derives its name from the Greek word meaning "rock celery" (parsley is a relative to celery). It is a biennial plant that will return to the garden year after year once it is established... Parsley's volatile oils-particularly myristicin-have been shown to inhibit tumor formation in animal studies, and particularly, tumor formation in the lungs. Myristicin has also been shown to activate the enzyme glutathione-S-transferase, which helps attach the molecule glutathione to oxidized molecules that would otherwise do damage in the body. The activity of parsley's volatile oils qualifies it as a "chemoprotective" food, and in particular, a food that can help neutralize particular types of carcinogens (like the benzopyrenes that are part of cigarette smoke and charcoal grill smoke)." www.whfoods.org

We'll be traveling next week to southern Oregon to visit a natural building school named House Alive. We've heard there are great swimming spots and lots of neighbors working together to create a sustainable community. Check out their website www.housealive.org for some beautiful examples of cob construction. Have a safe and laughter filled week, Lisa, Jeff, Zoe, and Rae

- ❖ Combine chopped parsley with bulgur wheat, chopped green onions (scallions), mint leaves, lemon juice and olive oil to make the Middle Eastern classic dish, tabouli.
- ❖ Add parsley to pesto sauce to add more texture to its green color.
- ❖ Combine chopped parsley, garlic and lemon zest and use it as a rub for chicken, lamb or beef.
- ❖ Use parsley in soups and tomato sauces.
- ❖ Serve a colorful salad of fennel, orange, cherry tomatoes, pumpkin seeds and parsley leaves.
- ❖ Chopped parsley can be sprinkled on a host of different recipes, including salads, vegetable sautés and grilled fish.

Moroccan Beet Salad

Dressing:

1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1/4 cup red wine vinegar or balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon sorghum syrup or dark honey
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Salt to taste

1 teaspoon ground turmeric

Salad:

3 medium-large beets (about 2 pounds) with green tops
1 cup peeled, halved, seeded, chopped tomatoes
Salt and pepper to taste
1/4 cup chopped cilantro, without stems for garnish

To prepare dressing, combine all ingredients in a large bowl and whisk until thoroughly combined. Makes about 3/4 cup dressing.

To prepare salad, wash beets well, being careful not to break open their skins. Cut off the tops, leaving a stalk of about 1 1/2 inches. Reserve green tops and set aside. Place beets in a 3-quart sauce pan, cover with cold water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium, cover and cook until a knife can be easily inserted and removed, about 30 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool in cooking water. Slip off the beet skins, trim off the tops and cut the beets into bite-size pieces.

Toss beets and tomatoes with 1/4 cup of the dressing. Set aside to marinate. Wash greens. Transfer greens with some water still clinging to the leaves, to a large pot over high heat. Cook, stirring, until just wilted but still bright green, about 4 minutes. Drain greens and squeeze out excess moisture. Cool slightly and chop coarsely. Transfer greens to a medium bowl. Add 1 tablespoon of the dressing and toss to coat. Season greens with salt and pepper. Arrange tomatoes and beets in the center of a platter and surround with greens. Garnish with cilantro. Pass remaining dressing separately.

Collard Greens (can substitute kale or chard)

2 lbs collard greens, tough stems discarded, leaves chopped
2 Tbsp medium onion, chopped
1 large garlic clove, minced
2 teaspoons bacon fat
2 Tbsp olive oil
2 Tbsp dark sesame oil (Dynasty or comparable)
Chili pepper flakes, a pinch
Salt, a couple pinches
Sugar, a couple pinches

Use a large skillet with a tight fitting cover. Melt bacon fat and heat olive oil on medium heat. Sauté onion until transparent, a couple of minutes. Add garlic and sauté until fragrant, about 20 seconds.

Mix in the greens, sesame oil, chili pepper flakes, salt, and sugar. Cover and cook until tender, 8-10 minutes. Serve with barbecue sauce.

Wendell Berry: Food and Consequence Minneapolis Star Tribune,
July 11, 2007
www.startribune.com

Wendell Berry is a celebrated author, an advocate of sustainable agriculture and himself a small farmer in Kentucky. He

was in the Twin Cities recently to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Land Stewardship Project, a Minnesota nonprofit that supports small farmers and environmental stewardship. He spoke with editorial writer Dave Hage.

Q A few years ago, in an essay about globalization and the economics of food, you coined the phrases "total economy" and "local economy." Can you explain what you meant?

A Yes. The total economy is an economy in which people do nothing for themselves. It's an economy in which they pay for everything; they are total consumers. A local economy is one that exists by virtue of people's willingness to take back a certain amount of economic initiative and do things for themselves. It's a way to recapture economic choice. It's self-determination.

Q Do you see our society today in a struggle between those two?

A It's not a struggle yet, but there is a movement toward the local economy. And it's coming about as a response to people's understanding of the costs to the world of an economy based entirely on long-distance transportation. They say that the average distance that food travels from the field to the dinner plate is 1,500 miles. And this has a cost in fuel depletion and pollution. It's a part of the permanent drawdown of necessary resources that are the basis of an industrial economy.

Q There's a good deal of talk today about community-based agriculture and buying local. Is this significant?

A Well, it's the most reasonable thing going on in agriculture. To shorten the distance as far as possible from the farm to the dinner plate just makes sense. But it also begins to elevate food in human culture back up to where it ought to be. We've allowed it to decline from a kind of sacrament and a kind of center of conviviality, through commodification, to a kind of stuffing.

Q But some people would say, gee, I like having fresh tomatoes in January, even if they come from Mexico. Does this mean Minnesotans would get fresh tomatoes only in July?

A Yes, but it also means you like them better. (Laughs) Of course people like to have things out of season. It's part of the general culture of self-indulgence. If you want a raspberry, why shouldn't you have a raspberry? But the present economy doesn't give people any idea of the true cost involved. So, yes, you want the raspberry. The question is do you want to pay the cost-in pollution, in the drawdown of resources, in the damage to the environment?

Q You've been writing for a long time about sustainable agriculture. Do you think the concept is gaining ground?

A Yes, no question. The concept is gaining ground. But it's still a losing side. I mean, who's for it? Where are your champion politicians who are willing to talk about sustainability? I saw Al Gore's movie-there's nothing in that movie about sustainability. The assumption is that we can keep on living the way we're living in an economy that is necessarily destructive and wasteful, yet somehow make adjustments to keep the glaciers intact. I think we've got to face the possibility that the industrial economy is essentially destructive.

Q Would that mean going back to the kind of life that our grandparents led-where you can your own vegetables and don't fly on airplanes?

A. Canning vegetables is not a bad idea, and it's not a difficult science. So, yes, that's a possibility. But we're not going back to anything. That's not a possibility. Our grandparents lived the way they did because they knew how, and they were by and large far more skillful than we are and had better use of their own minds than we do. But we can't be them.

Q Absent leadership from the public sphere, what can an individual do to bring about a sustainable economy?

A Well, it's fairly limited. There's none of us without sin on this-my wife and I own two vehicles. We live in the country; we have different duties in different directions. That's just the way it is. It would make sense in a lot of ways if we didn't have any vehicles, but the fact of the matter is that my great-grandfather had better public transportation than I do-true! But individuals can learn something about their food economy. And the first thing they learn is how extraordinarily difficult it is to learn anything about it. If you

wanted to find out where your December head of lettuce came from and what it cost, to the people and the land it came from, you'd have a hard time.

So the next thing they ask, if they can't find out much about the mainstream food economy, is where can I find food that I can learn about?

And that's your local food economy: Where can I find a farmer who could sell me a quarter of beef? Where can I find a farmer's market? How can I join a local community-supported agriculture enterprise? Or where are the restaurants that buy from local farmers? Those questions, nearly everywhere in the United States, now have answers

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