

Middleton Farm CSA News

Middleton Farm CSA

Volume 1, Issue 2



Eager To Get Growing

The days are getting longer. The ice fishing isn't as good as it was a few weeks ago. That must mean spring is not too far off. Around here, talk of summer and the kinds of plants we will grow is getting more and more common. Votes, for watermelon and sweet corn, are eagerly unanimous. When



Timeea with her watermelon.

we are choosing the different plants to grow, the kids want to try all sorts of different vegetables. But going by past experience, this is all just wishful thinking.

It won't be long now before we begin starting seeds indoors for planting in the beginning of April. The cold weather crops like broccoli, cabbage, lettuce, etc. can be started indoors in the last half of Feb, and be transplanted outdoors up to 4 weeks before the last frost. Other plants like onion, spinach, and carrots can be direct sown in March, as soon as the ground can be worked. Our goal is to take better advantage of the cool

weather crops to extend the harvest season and give our shareholders more deliveries of vegetables that they like. We would like to see deliveries start in June this year, with more cauliflower, broccoli, lettuce, and cabbage available to the members.

As each day goes by, everyone in our house is eager to see the snow melt and the leaves come back. We want to get out and get our hands dirty planting. We also want to see how well the new flower garden will grow. Hopefully, members can get some fresh cut flowers with their vegetables.

Hurry up spring!

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Trivia:

- *Argentina is the world's 2nd largest exporter of corn.*
- *Illini Extra Sweet sweet corn is a triploid corn. It has an extra sugar producing gene.*
- *Lemons contain more sugar than strawberries.*
- *Half of the world's population lives on a staple diet of rice.*

Did You Know...

You want to eat healthier, and support members of your community. So you decide to attend the local farmers market and help support some of the area farmers. Unbeknownst to you, not all farmers are created equal, and some of your

dollars end up supporting factory farms hundreds of miles away.

Unfortunately, few markets have restrictions on where the produce comes from. Many vendors are just produce resellers, and have

not grown anything in their life. If you were to attend the Eastern Market in Detroit, odds are that you would see some of the vendors from your local farmers market, buying produce that they intend to sell to you at your next local farmers mar-

Did You Know... cont'd

ket. I know, I was somewhat surprised also. But if you are shopping at a market in Michigan and see a “farmer” selling bananas, that should be a dead give-away.

Now these folks have a right to make a living. But they should at least be upfront about where their products come from. And some of them do flat out lie about their produce and where it comes from.

If you want to support local farmers and eat healthy locally grown food, then take the time and educate yourself about the foods you like and

how and when they are grown. Ask vendors questions about how the crops are grown. Ask to see photos, or visit the farm. Be wary of items that are out of season, like fresh sweet corn being sold in the middle of July.

Almost all vegetables have only one or two varieties that lend themselves to conventional farming. Usually they are not bred for flavor, but



resistance to disease and pests. If you avoid those, then chances are that you will be spending your money with a local farmer who has earned your dollars.

Because You Asked

Q: Do we grow organically?

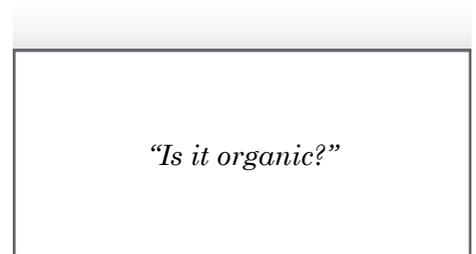
A: In a nutshell, “Yes”. We follow most organic farming practices, but some things are allowed in organic farming, that we don’t do.

Organic farmers are allowed to use some pesticides and herbicides. We choose not to for two reasons: 1. Most times, they are more dangerous to us or the environment than conventional products. Most of our weeding is done with a hoe, or tiller. With the wild bird population at the farm, we are not both-

ered much by insects. 2. It’s just not cost effective for us. So we haven’t had to use conventional or organic pest control.

Our fertilizer is supplied by the cattle and pigs (and chickens soon). When it comes time to use a side dressing of fertilizer, that comes from the compost pile. Everything else the plants need comes from mother nature.

NOTE: Because we use animal manure on the land that is used for growing vegetables, you must always wash your



produce before consuming.

Sounds Good

Have you ever been in the mood for a good beef stew, but just didn’t have the time to make it? Use a better cut of meat, and you won’t need to simmer as long to get the beef “melt in your mouth” tender. However, if you do have the time, then serve your stew in a fresh baked bread bowl, topped with a dollop of sour cream, or a handful of shredded cheddar.

See the stew recipe on the next page.



Matt's Beef Stew

Ingredients:

2 cloves garlic
1 medium onion
2 stalks celery
2 Tbsp olive oil
1 1/2-2 lbs of beef round or sirloin steak
2 tsp tomato paste
2 tsp fresh thyme or 1/4 chopped dried thyme
1 bay leaf
1 Tbsp fresh parsley, roughly chopped
Salt and pepper
2 cups beef stock
1 cup red wine
1 1/2 cups sliced carrots
10 small baby red potatoes, whole unpeeled
1 cup frozen peas
2 tsp potato starch or corn starch

Directions:

1. Roughly chop garlic, onion and celery and then chop in a food processor; cut beef into small, 3/4 inch cubes or cut into strips, the size of index finger; heat oil in a Dutch oven and sauté beef until browned.
2. Add chopped vegetables from food processor, tomato paste, thyme, bay leaf, parsley, salt and pepper; stir well to mix; add stock and wine and bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 45 minutes.
3. While meat is simmering, boil carrots and potatoes until tender-crisp, 5-10 minutes; drain and add to stew; add peas; the entire cooking time for the stew is 45 minutes; if stew is too thin, dissolve starch in 1 T cold water and whisk into stew; simmer 2-3 minutes and serve.

Give this stew a try, it's sure to hit the spot.

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Naturally the best!

We raise and sell only the best meats, fruits and vegetables around. And we do it without using any synthetic herbicides or pesticides. We use integrated pest management and other natural methods to control pests.

We do not use any growth hormones or antibiotics on any of our animals. We are committed to bringing you only the healthiest product possible. Our animals are treated with kindness and respect and we strive to make their time with us as pleasant as possible.