



FIELD NOTES

JUNE 10, 2009 • VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

Weeds. It is the season for weeds, and our existence seems to be centered around attempting to keep up with them. Our fields were in hay production prior to being converted into vegetables, which is a real plus in the realm of soil fertility, but can make for tough farming from a weed standpoint. Most of our irrigation water comes from the Leyner Cottonwood Ditch, which is fed by Little Dry Creek, which in turn is fed by South Boulder Creek. Any weeds that grow between the headwaters and our farm drop seeds into the water. When land is in a perennial crop like hay, the majority of the weeds are suppressed and often don't get a chance to germinate. When the ground is plowed, however, the soil is loosened, the competition (alfalfa or grass) is removed, and the seeds are hit with a flash of light, which is often just what they need to germinate. The result? Years' worth of deposited weed seeds are germinating in our produce right now!

On an organic farm, weed management during production times comes down to good old-fashioned hoeing, hand pulling and tractor cultivation. For the latter, we spent the winter months resurrecting a couple of vintage Farmalls that were designed specifically for food crop production in the 1940s. Between my father and us, we have three Farmall Super Cs, each one set up to cultivate a specific row width or bed, so that we don't use up time switching sweeps around to accommodate the different crops. These old tractors are great because they go very slow, and the tools are mounted in front where you can see them, enabling the operator to get close to the plants. Though we don't use them for much other than cultivating weeds, they sure are a pleasure to run—and give me a chance to reflect on my heritage.

In 1947 my grandfather bought a new Farmall A to pull his hay baler. When Dad was very young, he would help his father feed cattle with it in the winter. Grandpa would put the tractor in gear and get off, leaving dad to steer through the cows while the hay was getting unloaded. Dad was too small to reach the pedals, but he could steer, and if there was trouble he could reach the kill switch and shut off the engine. The A was also the first tractor I ever drove. I was probably around 7, and one of my jobs as a kid was to mow the pasture with it. We still have the tractor, and there are few things I enjoy doing more than taking it out to mow some grass or weeds. We could probably get a better tractor to mow with, but I just really love the old A. Besides, these Farmalls have been killing weeds on my family's farm since the 1940s, which is considerably more experience than I have. —Jason Condon



WHO'S GROWING YOUR FOOD?

This week, our featured employee is Remy Van Grack. Remy's passion for growing food started after wwoofing (Willing Workers on Organic Farms) in Fiji, New Zealand and Australia, and doing environmental



conservation work in Laos and Cambodia, among other places. Those far-flung travels brought him right back to Colorado State University, where he currently is studying Horticulture, with a food crops concentration, and minoring in Organic Agriculture. "My life's goal is to start a farm growing herbs, vegetables, poultry and swine, and what better way to gain experience than to be part of Isabelle Farm!"

Remy loves movies as much as he loves plants and seems to relate everything to something that happened in a movie. Kind of weird for a guy who loves farming...

MEET THE OATES FAMILY

The Oates family decided to join our CSA after spending a year in Italy. "The food is not processed there, and there are lots of farmer's markets." They also gained insight into what it takes to eat with the seasons when they read the book *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver.

"We are excited to have a CSA close to home," explains Chris. "Bethany and I were both city kids and are always excited to come to the farm." The Oates, who now live in Erie, have made many visits to the farm and enjoy the farming process and teaching their sons, Brian and Matthew, about



where food comes from. No wonder: Understanding how things

work is a part of who Bethany and Chris are: Chris is a physicist in Boulder for NIST and Bethany was an atmospheric scientist before becoming a professional mother. It's great to have the Oates and their enthusiasm as part of our inaugural CSA.

FOOD FACT

The ancient Greeks believed that lettuce induced sleep, so they served it at the end of the meal. The Romans continued the custom. However, the dictatorial Emperor Domitian (81-96 AD) served it at the beginning of his feasts, so he could torture his guests by forcing them to stay awake in the presence of the Emperor.

If you're picking up at the farm, please remember to bring a tote or basket!



IN THIS WEEK'S SHARE [★]

- Braising Mix = 1 lb.
- Garlic Scapes = 1 bunch
- Green-Leaf Lettuce = 1 lb.
- Radishes = 1 bunch

★ This is an example of a half-share box.

Full-share boxes will receive an additional pound of greens and 2 varieties of radishes.

GARLIC SCAPE PESTO

- 3 garlic scapes, chopped and simmered for a few minutes in 1/2-inch water (you can skip the simmering if you are not afraid of strong garlic flavor)
- 2 1/2 Cups fresh basil
- 1/4 Cup pine nuts, lightly toasted
- 1/3 Cup parmesan cheese, cut into small chunks
- 1/3 Cup olive oil
- Sea salt and fresh pepper to taste

Pulse the scapes, basil and pine nuts in a food processor. Add the cheese and pulse a few times more. With the processor running, add the olive oil. Turn of the processor, scrape down the sides and turn it on again, until the sauce is smooth. Use immediately or store in the refrigerator for up to a week.

BRAISED WILTED GREENS

- 1 thick slice smoky bacon
- 1/2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 large clove garlic, minced
- 1 medium sweet red onion
- 3 tbsp. chicken stock
- 2 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 1 quart mixed braising mix
- 1/4 cup toasted pecans

Serves 4 / In a large, deep skillet or wok over medium heat, cook bacon until crispy. Remove and drain on paper towels. Crumble and reserve. Add olive oil to bacon drippings in skillet, heat and add garlic and onions. Sauté for 3-4 minutes, until onions and garlic are softened. Stir in chicken stock and vinegar. Add greens and mix. Stir-fry for 2-3 minutes, until leaves are coated. Cover and cook several minutes more, until leaves are wilted and cooked tender-crisp. Top with bacon and chopped pecans. Serve hot.