



NEWS TO GROW ON

Ag Day
2011
Extra!

Vol. IV, No. 1

A seasonal newsletter of the Connecticut Farm Fresh Cooperative Association

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Pickle lovers rejoice over passage of new law benefiting CT farmers

With the support of CT Farm Fresh, the CT legislature passed what is familiarly called, "the Pickle Law" in 2010. This means that, in addition to the homemade jams and jellies which beckon at farmers' markets around the state, we can soon look forward to fresh-from-the-farm "acidified foods," including pickles, salsa and hot sauce, which can now be made on premise at residential CT farms, (without requiring the farmer to clear all the hurdles mandated for commercial kitchens). We relish the change!

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There's nothing quite like the taste of foods made right on the farm, as this young market visitor would agree.



These sheep seem to be asking, "Is it Spring yet?" and so are we. Happily, lots of CT farmers are getting a jump on spring these days, with row covers, cold frames, and green houses – making that first taste of spring come all the sooner.

Inside this special Ag Day 2011 issue:

- Seasonal recipes
- Scenes from Ag Day 2010
- Pest alert
- Virtual visit to the farm
- **Even more good reasons to buy local. . .**

Curried carrot soup w/roasted garlic

- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 4 large carrots, peeled, cut into thick slices/rounds of equal size
- 1 red onion, peeled and diced
- 1 clove roasted garlic (you can use fresh, but roasting the garlic ahead of time gives it the taste that the soup has been cooking all day)
- 1-2 cups veggie stock
- 3-4 cups water
- 1 baked potato, skin removed and flesh chopped (opt., but adds a creamy texture to the soup)
- healthy Tbl. of curry powder
- generous grind of your pepper mill
- pinch of red pepper flakes

Heat the oil in a medium-sized pot and add in the onions until translucent and/or brown on the edges.

Add the carrots and cook for 5-10 minutes to soften slightly. Add the curry powder and pepper. Add the broth and water, bring it to a boil and bring down simmer for 25-30, or until the carrots are cooked through. Add the potato and cook for one minute more.

Remove from heat and blend with an immersion blender, or allow to cool slightly and carefully place in a regular blender, to create your desired texture. Return to pot and warm through before serving. Serve with homemade croutons.

- a vegan recipe by Alexandra Gross; visit her blog to get more eco-bites about all things food, farming + sustainability:

<http://speakwithyourfood.blogspot.com/2010/02/cooking-procrastination-go-to.html>

Submissions welcome:

We'd like to include photos taken by our farmer's market visitors next issue. Please email your pictures to the editor, aliceely@optonline.net, and include your name, phone number and the name of the market where you took the picture. We'll publish our favorites, with your name if you like, in an upcoming issue.



Above: feathery mizuna greens, appearing this spring in farmer's markets. Photo courtesy of foodnetwork.com

Eating Green: Mizuna & Other Delights

Here's a quick and delicious seasonal salad idea from Dana Angelo White, registered dietitian, culinary nutritionist, local food junkie, stalker of farmer's markets and all-around great cook.

You may not know it, but you've probably tried mizuna. Commonly found in salad mixes, these feathery leaves are my new favorite salad green. Here's why you should pick some up at your farmers' market this weekend.

This Japanese green is no stranger to mesclun mixes, but you can also find solo bunches of the leafy vegetable at farmers' markets and specialty food shops. Also referred to as "siu cai" or "California peppergrass," these greens have a mild, peppery flavor, and the pointed leaves give salads wonderful texture.

To store, wrap in a paper towel and plastic bag and store in the fridge for four to five days. When ready to use, wash to remove any dirt and dry well. When I came home from the market, I threw together a salad with mizuna, fresh spinach, candied pecans, goat cheese, diced leftover grilled chicken and a drizzle of citrus vinaigrette. It was so delicious, I made it again for lunch the rest of the week.



Dana Angelo White

(See Dana's blog at healthy eats.com)



Adults are approximately 5/8" long.

Have you seen this bug?

Unfortunately, you probably have, and this bit of news does stink. This is the **brown marmorated stink bug**, which was introduced from Asia and has no known predators – yet – in the U.S. The insect has been spreading rapidly, and is a triple threat: It sucks plant juices, damages crops, and is resistant to pesticides. They overwinter by invading houses, where you may discover them in a wall or window crevice. Catch them gently in a tissue – they don't bite, but they sure do stink if disturbed – and dispose of them by drowning, in a jar of soapy water, or with a quick flush.

Get to Know "The Clean 15": (Least likely to be contaminated by pesticides)

- Onions
- Avocados
- Sweet Corn
- Pineapple
- Mango
- Asparagus
- Sweet Peas
- Kiwis
- Cabbage
- Eggplant
- Papayas
- Watermelons
- Broccoli
- Tomatoes
- Sweet Potatoes

Source: Environmental Working Group

Alice's No-Brainer Spinach Egg Drop Soup*

**also known as Stracciatella Florentine, if you can believe that anything this simple can sound so elegant*

Serves 4; 15 minutes prep time



Here's a great soup to use with lovely spring greens.

- 4 cups good quality chicken stock
- 3-4 cups spinach, (OR escarole, tosoi, or chard), ribs and stems removed, washed and roughly chopped
- 4 very fresh eggs
- ¼ tsp fresh ground pepper
- ½ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

Heat the stock to boiling in a pan. Meanwhile beat the eggs, adding in the pepper, and grated cheese. When the stock boils, turn it down to simmer. When the stock boils, turn it down to simmer, add the greens and cook for 1-2 minutes. Then add in the beaten egg/cheese mixture, stirring for just a moment, to form the "rags" that give this soup its Italian name. Salt to taste.

Served with a hunk of good bread, this soup is as nourishing as it is delicious. The recipe is incredibly simple, but the flavor comes from using the freshest, highest quality ingredients (although using good canned stock is fine).



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Virtual Visit to the Farm



Riverbank Farm, Roxbury CT

Riverbank Farm, in its twentieth year of operation, comprises 45 acres, picturesquely situated along the Shepaug River valley in northwestern Connecticut. (Fortunately, the flood waters in early March did not damage the farm's spring crops). From twelve acres of fertile river bottom soil, a small orchard, and two large greenhouses, David Blyn and Laura McKinney grow a full variety of certified organic seasonal vegetables and cut flowers, and keep chickens, bees and goats as well. You can find their produce at Connecticut farmer's markets, natural food stores and local restaurants. In the farm's commercial kitchen, their chef creates seasonal vegetarian prepared foods, and canned goods, that are sold at the farmer's markets year-round. Both David and Laura have a large knowledge base of all aspects of sustainable agriculture, as well as a deep love and commitment to their work. In fact, that's what brought them together in the



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first place: David originally moved to the farm in 1989, in hopes of running a carpentry business. Although the barn and house were in poor condition, David was drawn to the landscape and river bordering the farm, and decided to call it home.

As David began to work on the barn, he also decided to grow a half acre of vegetables. The half acre increased each year, until David began farming full time in 1991. He continued to farm on his own, jumping from tractor to tractor as he managed his small, diversified operation with old cultivating equipment and an array of farm machinery. In the summer of 1996, while delivering produce during a full moon in Long Island, David met Laura. She had come east for the summer after finishing sustainable agriculture studies in Santa Cruz, CA. Laura knew she wanted to farm, but never anticipated being on the east coast. Their love for farming, and each other, blossomed into a bountiful farm. Through hail storms, deer damage, late work nights, frosts, unpredictable weather patterns, and bug and weed outbreaks, they have learned to build a resilient farming operation and truly enjoy the harvest. They now have three apple-cheeked girls, Lily, Alice and Stella, who add love and laughter to each farm day. Already up and growing in the greenhouse this spring are: lettuce, tomatoes, onions, peppers, eggplant, herbs, chard, kale, beets and more. Meanwhile, the farm's maple trees are being tapped for maple syrup. Visit their blog for the latest word from the farm at riverbankfarmct.wordpress.com, or on their new facebook page, riverbank farm.



David and Laura believe that once you eat vegetables from the farm, the farm becomes part of you.

Scenes from Ag Day 2010 in Hartford. . .



The CT Farm Fresh table at the 2010 Ag Day event included information and samples of the bounty from CT farms.



Bob Pellegrino, Executive Director for the CT Dept. of Agriculture joins Terry Jones, Jones Tree Farm, and Guy Beardsley, CT Farm Fresh board member, enjoy a moment together over cider doughnuts by the CT FF display during 2010's Ag Day gathering.



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