



Field Notes

Volume 17 | Number 4 | May 18, 2012

Hello CSA Community!



I write to you on the tail end of a couple of beautiful days of rain and another gorgeous day of sun and warmth to wick some of that extra moisture off of the fields. It has been a truly blessed season here at the Ecosystem Farm; I cannot believe the good fortune we've had! I have really enjoyed seeing you all around the community, and have been feeling so welcomed by many of you. Thanks for your support!



The weather has afforded us some nice days to work in the greenhouses and do some substantial weed-pulling. Yesterday I came home filthy from a day of field work, cleaning out a dusty shed, and cutting bamboo. It was a wholly irritating, itchy, yet satisfying discomfort that is so fulfilling to wash off



Pick List

- Spicy spring mix
- Onion scapes
- Spinach
- Butterhead lettuce
- Asparagus (last week!)
- Strawberries
- Peas



at the end of the day. I was reminded that this is a life that I love, with its balancing act and its never-ending to-do list, for its visceral tasks. The sense of completion that I get from weeding an entire bed comes not only from the fluffy beds that are left behind, but the moist knees and the dirty hands. My father (who is volunteering Tuesdays now!) was reminding me this week that I was always in the dirt as a little girl, with worm collections and bugs in jars left about the house. I have fond memories of dressing up in frilly dresses and tights, only to climb the nearest tree or plop in the nearest mud puddle. It was in these spaces that I felt myself and I suppose, at the time, I was garnering an appreciation for nature that has only grown deeper and more sophisticated as I have grown older.

It has always seemed to me that farming is one of the most people-oriented and timely ways to be a nature lover. It is a profession, serving a human need, that has immense ramifications in both the human and natural world. I see more birds from the tractor than I would from a walk in the woods. After the big rain this week, on Monday we saw two snapping turtles, a few big black snakes, several wild turkeys, as well as the regular sightings of birds of prey and insects. It is a naturalist's paradise of songbirds alone at the Ecosystem Farm and we have enjoyed sharing our observations with each other as we work each day.

Farming allows me my personal connection with nature every day, as well as my visceral need to be caked in mud, and also a human connection in the most profound way. We not only develop an intimacy with the farm as an ecosystem and the food that we tend with care for you, but that food in turn goes to you for your health and your connection to the land. I hope you feel this care in your box this week!



An excerpt from *The Satisfactions of the Mad Farmer* by Wendell Berry:

Growing weather; enough rain;
the cow's udder tight with milk;
the peach tree bent with its yield;
honey golden in the white comb;

the pastures deep in clover and grass,
enough, and more than enough;

the ground, new worked, moist
and yielding underfoot, the feet
comfortable in it as roots;

the early garden: potatoes, onions,
peas, lettuce, spinach, cabbage, carrots,
radishes, marking their straight rows
with green, before the trees are leafed;

raspberries ripe and heavy amid their foliage,
currants shining red in clusters amid their foliage,
strawberries red ripe with the white
flowers still on the vines—picked
with the dew on them, before breakfast;

...What I know of spirit is astir
in the world. The god I have always expected
to appear at the wood's edge, beckoning,
I have always expected to be
a great relisher of this world, its good
grown immortal in his mind.

Cheers,
Farmer Becky

Upcoming Events (Complete details at www.accokeekfoundation.org)

Piscataway Park Paint Out | Saturday, June 2, 2012 | Dawn to Dusk
Rain Date: June 3

In celebration of National Trails Day, area artists will gather at the Accokeek Foundation at Piscataway Park to get outside and paint. Join us as plein air artists capture on canvas the historic buildings of the National Colonial Farm, the heritage breed livestock grazing in green pastures, the flora and fauna of this picturesque site, or the inspiring views of the Potomac River. Join in—or just watch—this exciting art phenomenon and be inspired by this unique and meaningful place.

A Passion For Place: Readings, Walks, and Reflections with Author Elizabeth Ayres Saturday, June 2, 2012 | 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. | Pre-registration required

The beauty in which you dwell is the truth that dwells within you. If you want to rekindle your passionate love for the myriad beauties of Southern Maryland—if you want to recover an intimacy with the natural world that heals and restores us to the truth of our wholeness—join Chesapeake Bay nature writer Elizabeth Ayres for a journey through the magical landscape that surrounds us. In celebration of National Trails Day, Elizabeth will read selections from her new book before leading a trail walk. Following the walk, participants will reflect and share about their experience outdoors. Come and discover that place of passion within and all around you.



Farm Manager:
Becky Seward

Apprentice Farmers:
Susan Cook
Sky Harman

Photos Credit:
Wilson Coudon

Registration Coordinator:
Kim McCurry

Accokeek Foundation
3400 Bryan Point Road
Accokeek, MD 20607
301.283.2113

www.accokeekfoundation.org

Haiku #5

planting summer fruits
sun rises high in the sky
flower petals fall

Ecosystem Farm

Movie and Potluck Night

Sunday, June 3 * 6 to 8:30 p.m.

You're Invited!!

Accokeek Foundation

Greetings CSA Family,

We invite you to spend a relaxed evening on the farm on Sunday, June 3, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. for a potluck and screening of *What's on Your Plate?* Please bring snacks and finger food to enjoy while watching the family-friendly *What's on Your Plate?*, a film about two middle school youth exploring where their school lunch comes from. The potluck and film will be screened on the Ecosystem Farm or, in case of rain, in the Accokeek Foundation Education Center. Please RSVP to accofound@accokeek.org by Wednesday, May 30. We look forward to having you there!

— Ecosystem Farm Team

According to the website (<http://www.whatsonyourplateproject.org/>), *What's on Your Plate?* is a witty and provocative documentary produced and directed by award-winning Catherine Gund about kids and food politics. Filmed over the course of one year, the film follows two 11-year-old multi-racial city kids as they explore their place in the food chain. Sadie and Safiyah take a close look at food systems in New York City and its surrounding areas. With the camera as their companion, the girl guides talk to each other, food activists, farmers, new friends, storekeepers, their families, and the viewer, in their quest to understand what's on all of our plates.

The girls address questions regarding the origin of the food they eat, how it's cultivated, how many miles it travels from the harvest to their plate, how it's prepared, who prepares it, and what is done afterwards with the packaging and leftovers. They visit the usual supermarkets, fast food chains, and school lunchrooms. But they also check into innovative sustainable food system practices by going to farms, greenmarkets, and community supported agriculture programs. They discover that these programs both help struggling farmers to survive on the one hand and provide affordable, locally-grown food to communities on the consumer end, especially to lower-income urban families. In *What's on Your Plate?*, the two friends formulate sophisticated and compassionate opinions on the state of their society, and by doing so inspire hope and active engagement in others.

Relationships between children and the food they eat have become more complicated and more important than ever. In a free-market system in the richest and most culturally diverse country in the world, the stakes could not be higher when it comes to who controls food production, distribution, cost, and quality. So, how do kids feel about food — accessing it, choosing what to have, preparing it and eating it — as an element of their daily lives? How do kids feel about contending with the life-threatening epidemics of childhood obesity, heart disease and diabetes that are so prevalent in their families, schools, and communities?

What's on Your Plate? shows city kids opening their lunch boxes and digging in, families unpacking groceries bought at the supermarket and at the co-op, adults who are learning with children how to take care of their food, their bodies and the environment all at the same time. Sadie and Safiyah visit restaurants supplied with locally grown food, an upstate New York carrot farmer hoping to sell his local harvest to the New York City Department of Education school lunch program, and a local CSA. The film will culminate with a delicious local meal that the girls will cook with their classmates.

When it comes to food production, children and families need much more knowledge to combat the industry's financial interest in keeping their practices secret, with no concern for consumers or the planet. The filmmakers are committed to helping children and families of all backgrounds, classes and locations learn about where their food comes from so that they can make healthy, informed choices about what they feed their bodies. The purpose of this documentary film project is to educate, enlighten, and inspire our community, and will address health concerns, issues of class and race as they relate to food availability, questionable food production and consumption practices, and general food consciousness in terms of cultivating a taste for local food within a community.



Creamed Spinach on Toast

This is a great recipe for featuring the flavor of spinach. I have adapted it so the spinach is not cooked for so long, which allows it to keep its fresh flavor and gorgeous vibrant green.

Ingredients

1/4 cup cream

1-2 cloves of garlic

1 bunch spinach

Salt and pepper to taste

Toast, buttered

Chop the garlic until fairly well minced. Heat cream and garlic on low heat in a sauce pan for about 7 minutes, until the cream bubbles a bit and the garlic softens. Chop the spinach and add it to the pan. Simmer for another 7-8 minutes with the pan covered. Blend the mixture together for a smooth texture (*I prefer an immersion blender*). Pour mixture back into pan, add salt and pepper to taste, and simmer just so some of the liquid cooks off. Toast and butter your bread, cut it into desired shapes. When the creamed spinach is ready, pour it on the toast. Delicious!