



# News from Provident Organic Farm



[www.providentfarm.org](http://www.providentfarm.org)

Season 4, Week 5

“dedicated to a safe, just, and sustainable food system”

June 20<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>, 2005

## Notes from the Field, vol. 4, no. 5

### Nature Deficit Disorder

This week's editorial is a summary (so that it will fit) of an article entitled "Nature Deficit Disorder" by Bill Wiser. To read the full text please visit the website of the Bruderhof Communities<sup>[1]</sup> ([www.Bruderhof.com/us/Articles/index.htm](http://www.Bruderhof.com/us/Articles/index.htm)). Summary by Charlotte England.

Bill Wiser takes his title from a book by Richard Louv (*Last Child in the Woods*) where "nature deficit disorder" is used to describe the modern child's alienation from the natural world. In our plugged in, highly wired culture Wiser argues that we need to change the way we educate our children to prevent them from losing their connection to Nature. He quotes with approval the nineteenth century founder of the modern kindergarten, Friedrich Froebel (a forester by trade):

*"I would educate human beings who with their feet stand rooted in God's earth, whose heads reach even into heaven and there behold truth, in whose hearts are united both earth and heaven." Froebel's advice to us today? 'Protect the new generation: do not let them grow up into emptiness and nothingness, to the avoidance of good hard work, to mechanical actions without thought and consideration. Guide the young away from the harmful chase after outer things and the damaging passion for distraction.'"*

Wiser notes that Froebel's desire to free children from distraction is difficult to achieve in our 'stuff-intensive' world. But if we don't make the effort, we run the risk of depriving our children of a valuable gift: the ability to be struck by wonder. Citing Rachel Carson's *Sense of Wonder*, Wiser urges parents and educators to become people with whom children can share amazement at the beauty and mystery of the world around them:

*"All it takes is an understanding heart, a curious mind, and a willingness to let the child become freely and completely absorbed in exploring nature... Carson says that exploring nature with your child 'is largely a matter of becoming receptive to what lies around you. It is learning again to use your eyes, ears, nostrils, and finger tips...' This 'not knowing' is key because it will lead adult and child to the next clue together. Together they will learn more about the life and ways of an animal, bird, or tree. Together they will delve deeper into the mystery of how and why as they view the heavens. This is what companionship is all about."*

Wiser goes on to acknowledge that making this connection to the natural world can be a challenge for those living in urban environments, but he has several suggestions for overcoming the limitations they impose. He suggests sharing the growth of a plant from seed, examining the lifecycle of common insects, using a hand lens to see the wonders of leaf and snowflake patterns. The real challenge is not finding things to look at, but giving them our full attention when we are distracted by a media-driven, entertainment-focused culture.

*"Writing decades before the onset of the information age, Jewish philosopher Abraham Heschel described this sense of awe as the root of faith and belief: 'As civilization advances, the sense of wonder declines. Such decline is an alarming symptom of our state of mind. Mankind will not perish for want of information; but only for want of appreciation. The beginning of our happiness lies in the understanding that life without wonder is not worth living. What we lack is not a will to believe, but a will to wonder.'"*

For Wiser, fostering this sense of wonder is crucial, not only to the happiness of our children, but to the health of our society and our planet:

*"Without a sense of awe and reverence for the mysteries hidden in nature and in the heart of the human soul, the earth and its people become mere commodities to be abused and disposed of when their usefulness has been expended. Life loses its purpose and meaning and the lives of others have no value. How else can today's random violence, corrosive greed, and the resulting destruction of our planet be explained except through a loss of this reverence and awe? But to the extent that we recover this sense of wonder—rediscovering it together with our children—there is hope for their future and the future of the earth they will inherit from us."*

<sup>[1]</sup> The Bruderhof communities describe themselves as "an international movement of communal settlements dedicated to non-violence, simplicity and service". You can visit them on the web at [www.bruderhof.com](http://www.bruderhof.com) for further information about their activities.

## Mashed Zucchini Potatoes

3/4 lb	zucchini, about 2-3 medium
1 lb	boiling potatoes
1 1/2 tsp	finely chopped fresh thyme
2-3 tbsp	butter
1 tsp	<i>finely</i> grated lemon zest
-	salt and pepper

Cut zucchini crosswise into one-inch slices and potatoes into chunks. In a large saucepan, cover potatoes with salted cold water. Bring to a boil and simmer, covered, until tender, about 30 minutes. Transfer potatoes to a colander and reserve cooking water. Return water to a boil and add zucchini. Simmer until tender but not too soft, about 6-8 minutes. Drain well.

When potatoes are cool enough to handle, peel and put in a large bowl with zucchini. Add thyme, butter and lemon zest and mash by hand with a potato masher or large wooden spoon. Season with salt and pepper. Reheat gently to serve.

Serves 4.

**Notes:** Redskin or Yukon Gold potatoes are a good choice. Mixture should have some texture. May be made a day ahead: cool completely, cover and refrigerate. Reheat gently before serving.

## Cabbage and Parsley Salad

1/4 lb	Bibb or leaf lettuce
1 1/2 tbsp	white wine vinegar
1 tsp	Dijon mustard
1/2 tsp	salt
1/4 tsp	sugar
1/8 tsp	black pepper
4 tbsp	olive oil
1/2 lb	thinly sliced cabbage, about 4 cups
1 1/2 c	thinly sliced mushrooms
4 c	loosely packed fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
1 tbsp	finely chopped fresh chives

Wash and dry lettuce; tear leaves into medium pieces. Wrap loosely in a towel and store in refrigerator until ready to serve.

In a large bowl, whisk together vinegar, mustard, salt, sugar and pepper. Add oil gradually, whisking constantly, until thick and emulsified. Just before serving, add remaining ingredients and toss well.

Serves 4.

**Notes:** Red and green cabbage mixed are delicious in this salad.

### In Your Share

Beets, if we can wade our way through the weeds  
Summer squash  
Red and green cabbage  
String Beans  
Cucumbers  
Cherry Red Potatoes



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*When the sun rises, I go to work. When the sun goes down, I take a rest. I dig the well from which I drink. I farm the soil which yields my food. I share creation, Kings can do no more.*  
Chinese Proverb, 2500 B.C.E.

## Comments & Contributions

We welcome your comments and contributions, including recipes! Please send to [ubuubok@dmv.com](mailto:ubuubok@dmv.com) or Provident Organic Farm CSA, PO Box 62, Bivalve, MD 21814.