



News from Provident Organic Farm



www.providentfarm.org

Season 4, Week 2

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

May 30th-June 6th, 2005

Notes from the Field, vol. 4, # 2

Hi folks. I am a Sun Gold cherry tomato plant. If you take care of me I will give you thousands of the sweetest cherry tomatoes you have ever tasted. Jay wanted you to raise me so you could have your very own supply of my delicious fruit and because he likes to be able to sell them at the farmers' markets where they fetch a premium price. You can plant me in a sunny location in your garden or in a container.

If you plant me in your garden, dig a hole about a foot deep and a foot wide, add compost at about $\frac{1}{2}$ the volume of soil removed from the hole, mix it thoroughly and set me in the hole. You can remove my lower leaves and plant me up to the second set of leaves. I will root from any portion of my stem that contacts the soil. This is called adventitious rooting. If you plant me in a container, it should be about the size of a 5 gallon bucket. Be sure the container has drainage holes in the bottom. Use the same ratio of soil and compost and planting instructions. I will need to be watered regularly, either by you or rainfall for the first few weeks as I get used to my new home. After I am established, I will need the equivalent of 1" of rainfall every week. You won't need to fertilize me until I start setting fruit because the compost is all I need.

I am an indeterminate tomato, which means I will continue to grow all summer and could reach a height of 12 ft. or more if you let me. Soon after you plant me, I will need a 6 ft. stake driven into the soil at least 10" deep and about 4" away from my stem. Call Richard England if you have trouble with this, he is an accomplished tomato stake driver. You want to do this soon so you won't damage my roots later. As I grow up, tie my main stem to the stake with string or cloth. It is best if you tie a loose knot around my stem and another tight knot around the stake with each piece of string or cloth. You can use a cage instead, but unless the mesh of the cage is at least 6" it will be difficult to pick my fruit. Concrete reinforcement

wire works well if you make a hoop about 18" to 24" round. If you use the cage system, you will need to stack one hoop on top of another and brace them with 2 stakes opposite each other. Wire or tie the hoops together and to the stakes. When I start to set fruit, I would like a drink of fish emulsion every other week. Most garden centers sell fish emulsion, be sure to use the recommended rate on the bottle. You can also feed me through my leaves. You can use the fish emulsion at about $\frac{1}{4}$ the rate for drench feeding to spray on my leaves. I also love compost tea. You can make compost tea by immersing a "bag" made from cheesecloth and filled with mature compost in a bucket of water for 24 hours. Put about a quart of compost in the piece of cheesecloth (an old pillow case works well, too) and tie the 4 corners around a stick and twist the stick to close the bag. Hang the bag of compost in the bucket of water. A dark colored bucket placed in the sun to warm the water works best. The mixture should be stirred and strained before you spray it on my foliage. Compost tea also helps me defend myself from fungal diseases. If you mix a little dish soap with the tea, it will stick to my leaves and provide a barrier between my leaves and the spores that land on them. The best time to do this is on a warm sunny morning as my stomata open so I can absorb the mixture. When I reach the top of the stake or hoops, you can prune me to stop my growth. You can use a pair of hand pruners to tip prune each of my terminal branches or you can use a pair of hedge shears and whack them which is much faster and easier. I will continue to make fruit. These are some of the instructions I have given Jay about how to care for me since we met in his greenhouses years ago. If all of this sounds like a lot of work, you're right. But I can assure you, it will be worth the effort. So, I hope you find the time to take care of me and enjoy the fruits of your labor. Most of all, have some fun.

“Shipping is a terrible thing to do to vegetables. They probably get jet-lagged, just like people.”

Elizabeth Berry

Turnip and Potato Gratin

A good use for those sweet salad turnips in your share this week.

1 lb	turnips (without greens)
1 1/4 lb	Yukon Gold potatoes
3 tbsp	butter
1/3 c	grated pecorino Romano cheese, divided
pinch	ground nutmeg
--	salt and pepper

Butter a 11"x 7" gratin or baking dish.

Bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Add turnips and potatoes and cook until tender, about 30 minutes; drain. Cool vegetables slightly and peel. Cut into large chunks and place in food processor. Add butter and process until smooth, scraping down sides of bowl occasionally. Add half of cheese and a pinch of nutmeg; blend to combine. Season to taste with salt and pepper and spoon into prepared dish. Sprinkle with remaining half of cheese.

Bake at 425 degrees, uncovered, until hot and golden, about 20-30 minutes.

Serves 4.

Notes A gratin dish is usually oval, but any shape – square, round, trapezoid – will do. That old quiche dish you haven't used in years should work nicely, as does a large pie plate. Use freshly ground nutmeg, if possible. If you don't have a food processor, mash vegetables with a wooden spoon until smooth. Do not attempt to use a blender or you will end up with paste.



Spinach with Sun-dried Tomatoes


1 c	coarsely crumbled fresh breadcrumbs from crustless French bread
2 tbsp	olive oil, divided
2 tbsp	grated parmesan cheese
1 lb	fresh spinach
2 tsp	minced garlic
2-3 tbsp	thinly sliced, drained oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes

Heat a medium nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add breadcrumbs and drizzle with 1 tablespoon oil. Stir until breadcrumbs are golden brown, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Sprinkle with cheese and toss; set aside.

Rinse spinach thoroughly and remove coarse stems. Shake dry but leave some water clinging to the leaves. Heat remaining tablespoon of oil in a large, heavy pot over medium heat. Add garlic and stir 30 seconds. Add spinach and sun-dried tomatoes; increase heat to medium-high and stir just until spinach wilts, about 3-4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer to a serving bowl and sprinkle with crumbs.

Serves 4.

Adapted from *Bon Appétit*, April 2000.



NaturalLawn[®] of America

THE LEADER IN ORGANIC-BASED LAWN CARE

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The logo for NaturalLawn of America features a stylized green mountain range under a yellow sun with a white bird flying above it. The text "NaturalLawn of America" is in a green, outlined font. Below the logo, it states "THE LEADER IN ORGANIC-BASED LAWN CARE". Contact information for Joe Lieb, Branch Manager, is provided at the bottom.

In your share this week:

Sun Gold tomato plant, lettuce, spinach, salad turnips, arugula, scallions, bok choi, strawberries

Comments & Contributions

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