



News From Provident Organic Farm

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Season 5, Week 7

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

June 5th – June 11th

Notes from an environmental desk job...

Jay is catching up on paperwork this weekend and asked me to fill in....I've been spending a lot of work and volunteer time for the past several months working on issues related to growth and development on the Shore. It's been an enlightening experience to say the least. I know that I'm not the only one who gets upset when driving around Salisbury these days and sees all the houses popping up on what used to be farmland. It's disheartening to sit in on Wicomico County Planning and Zoning Commission hearings or County Council hearings and watch them approve project after project. Never mind that most acreage is developed *outside* the metro core (the area where growth is *supposed* to be directed), in areas zoned agriculture, but the projects going up *inside* the core are of tremendous magnitude! For instance, at the last P & Z meeting, over 1,000 units were pushed along the approval process, all in the city of Salisbury, in just *one* 2-hour meeting. What will be the cumulative effects of all this growth on schools, infrastructure, the sewage treatment plant, emergency services, not to mention farmland and the rural integrity of this region?? I don't know the answers but I know it's time for Wicomico County citizens to get proactive about the future of their county. They might take a lesson from their Worcester County neighbors who seem to have a much better strategy in dealing with growth pressure than their counterparts in Wicomico County (see their new 2006 comprehensive plan on the web, and while you're there, make a mental note that Wicomico County's 1982 comprehensive plan is slated to be "coming soon" on the web).

The Eastern Shore, up and coming beltway and retirement community for Baltimore/DC, Philadelphia, and Norfolk, is currently and will continue to face enormous growth pressures. We need to be ready if we want this to remain a place worth living. Witness the incredible public opposition to the 3,200 unit development near the Blackwater Wildlife Refuge. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation was able to garner 12,000 signatures in opposition to that project. *Hundreds* of folks have been turning out for public hearings related to the development. We need to see this kind of momentum all over the Shore – and I don't just refer to opposition, but merely *public involvement* in the planning process. A project is looming on the horizon in the Pittsville area – close to 1,000 units – out in the middle of nowhere, complete with package sewage treatment plant (sort of a glorified community sewage system that is to be run and operated by a private group and then turned over to the *homeowner's association*) slated to spray its effluent on our dear neighbors in Worcester County (put **this** in your comprehensive plan!). Local conservation groups are geared up for action on this one, but what about all the other projects that are coming down the pike? Which ones are worth a fight and who's willing to take the lead? The CBF office recently launched a campaign that calls on local government officials to put more money into agricultural preservation and push 50% of new development into locally designated growth areas. An online petition has yielded just over 100 signatures (the petition can be accessed at www.cbf.org/hotc - **please sign now!**). I don't know about you, but that number is an indicator to me of immense apathy! Only 100 people in Wicomico County care about the future of agriculture in the area???

A different approach is also gathering momentum - a Green Infrastructure workshop to be held in early October. Green Infrastructure refers to lands critical to Maryland's long term ecological and economic health. The concept is to be used to help guide *cooperative* environmental decision-making and local and regional planning. GI concepts can be used by local governments across the Shore to provide a more holistic approach to planning, which involves evaluating where our most precious resources currently lie, how we can protect them and, most importantly, how we can connect them. It will be interesting to see how many local officials and community leaders show up for such an endeavor!

I hope that we can all take a bit of time to get involved with our local governments, whether via a letter, e-mail, participation in a meeting, involvement with citizen action group, or by whatever means that you feel comfortable. We're going to be faced with some big changes in the coming years and I, for one, want to have a voice in how those changes occur. Heck, it's better than sitting around complaining!

Onward,
Lori



How to deal with all those greens?????

When we first joined the CSA five years ago, my husband and I were extremely overwhelmed by all of the lettuce and other assorted salad greens that Jay was giving us on a weekly basis. We'd bring our haul home and stuff everything right into the refrigerator figuring that we'd eat it later on in the week. However, our first (of many) appointed "salad days" would roll around and we'd open the plastic grocery bag to get out a head of lettuce and we'd reach in to a pool of green, slimy muck. Lettuce has a way of tricking you – made up mostly of water it needs to breathe to stay cohesive and non-slimy - - yet too much breathing and it dries out and gets crispy and non-edible in a completely different way. A few veteran salad eaters helped us to find our way to lettuce happiness with a magic sentence: "Buy a good salad spinner and use it!" The simple

trick to keeping your lettuce happy and edible for the entire week is to deal with it as soon as you get it home and store it properly. Once these two things have been taken care of you'll no longer find bags of green goo in your fridge.

Once you get home with your lettuce (or as soon as humanly possible once you get home) clean your greens well by soaking them in a sink full of cold water. "Tickle" the loose greens in the water, swishing them around, to get rid of the sand and dirt that invariably clings to them. Drain them well, and then **repeat**. (A bite of salad that grits is an unpleasant bite of salad!)

Put your washed and drained lettuce/greens into your new salad spinner and spin, spin, spin them until they're nicely dry. (NB: you can achieve the same spinning and drying effect with a clean pillowcase or large dishtowel and some super wrist action – but be sure to do this outside as it will fling water everywhere!) Once your greens are dry, spread them out on a single layer of paper towel (or again a clean dishtowel) and roll them up into a neat tube. Tuck the tube into a plastic ziploc-type bag, seal, and put in the fridge. The combination of reduced water, the absorption of the paper towel/dishtowel, and the sealed bag will keep your lettuce happy for days on end!

Roasted Beet Salad with Beet Greens and Feta

6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 1/2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1 tablespoon minced garlic
7 medium-large beets (about 3 inches in diameter) with greens
1 cup water
2 tablespoons chopped drained capers
3/4 cup crumbled feta cheese (about 3 ounces)

Preheat oven to 375°F. Whisk oil, vinegar and garlic in a small bowl to blend. Season dressing generously with salt and pepper. Cut green tops off beets; reserve tops. Arrange beets in single layer in 13x9x2-inch baking dish; add 1 cup water. Cover; bake until beets are tender when pierced with knife, about 1 hour 10 minutes. Peel beets while warm. Cut beets in half and slice thinly. Transfer to large bowl. Mix in capers and 1/4 cup dressing. Season with salt and pepper. Cut stems off beet greens; discard stems. Wash greens. Transfer greens, with some water still clinging to leaves, to large pot. Stir over high heat until just wilted but still bright green, about 4 minutes. Drain greens; squeeze out excess moisture. Cool; chop coarsely.

Transfer greens to medium bowl. Toss with enough dressing to coat. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Arrange beets in center of platter. Surround with greens; sprinkle with feta.

Drizzle with any remaining dressing.

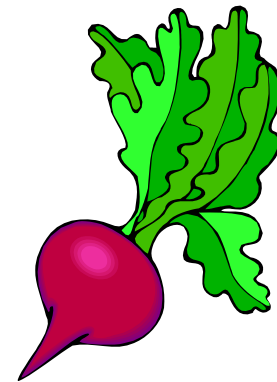
Serves 6.

Bon Appétit
March 1997

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.

In Your Share



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