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We'd like your input on the newsletter! Please send recipes, related news items, related book reviews and reading lists, etc to carolyn@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com

1) In Your Box this Week

Arugula
Asparagus
Beets
Carrots
Chard
Garlic
Pea Vines (Wed) – a springy salad addition
Romaine Lettuce
Spring Onions
Tomatoes (Sat, and possibly Wed)

2) Farm News

- The greenhouse that arrived recently is taking shape. Thanks to Will's welding skills our tractor has become a crane which can lift the support arcs onto the sides. We all agree it's much taller than we thought it would be!



- We harvested all of the garlic – 3 loads with the truck bed and trailer full! It's now hanging in the packing barn to dry, keeping the vampires away.



- We are learning how to do mechanical cultivation – this means fun with spider gangs, tine weeders, and vegetable knives. With 150 beds at 285 feet long we gotta leave those hoes behind...



- You already knew that we're the hippest farm in town, well now we have a Myspace page! Be our friend: www.myspace.com/johnsonsbackyardgarden

3) Upcoming Events

Annual CSA Potluck – Sunday May 4

Potluck Dinner from **5 – 7pm**, feel free to come early to see the farm, or stay late just to hang out! Held in the pecan grove at the farm, this is a great chance to meet the faces behind your CSA box as well as other CSA members. We'll have live music and activities for the kids. Please bring a dish to share, as well as place settings for you and yours.

RSVP through the Evite invitation we sent out last week (didn't receive it? Send us an email and we'll get you on the list!).

Outstanding in the Field Dinner – October 5 *SOLD OUT*

For more information, please visit: <http://www.outstandinginthefield.com/>

Also checkout this explanatory video profiling Jim Denevan, sand artist and founder of Outstanding in the Field: <http://youtube.com/watch?v=9pVOUrJYt04>

4) New Website Features and Reminder Email

This past week you may have received an email reminding you to pick up your CSA box. This is a new feature of our website that we're pretty excited about. If you'd like to opt-out of the reminders, you'll see a link to do just that at the bottom of the email.

Another new feature of our website is expanded information on the items in your box. In the listing on the home page, you'll notice some of the veggies are hyperlinked (Collards last week, for example). Click on that and it will take you to a recipe we've found online, a picture (for the more mysterious veggies) or some other interesting tidbit.

5) Farm Wish List

- Used PC or Laptop (and you thought farmers spent their day in the field)
- Laser printer
- Bunk Beds (we have 4 more interns on the way...)
- Vacuum Cleaner (and they are dirty)
- Washing Machine (for salad greens!)
- Fans (to prevent interns from wilting!)

Have something you could donate or give us a good deal on?

Email farm@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com

6) Intern Perspective – Caroline Hummer

Okay, I admit it, when I say that I live on an organic farm, specifically Johnson's Backyard Garden, I'm bragging. To me, life anywhere else just wouldn't be as fulfilling right now. But it's not just the access to fresh vegetables grown with skill and respect. Nor is it the land itself, teeming with happy dogs, exuberant crickets, abundant ladybugs and beautiful trees. It's the people who have woven the ropes that tie me here.

In our society today, most of us don't live with our extended families as our ancestors did, and I think that many of us, believing whole-heartedly that our new-found independence is normal, think it important to live life without the help of others. But we humans are social animals, almost pack-like in nature, and in order to thrive we need strong ties to others. We need their support, their love, and their need for us. We need kids running around to remind us how fun life can be, and older folks to teach us about life. This is the fulfillment I get at Johnson's Backyard Garden.

In an age where neighborly relations are often indifferent if not non-existent, out here I feel like I live in a community, a part of an ever-growing whole. Brenton and Beth were kind enough to let me live on their property with Will, but their generosity extends well beyond allowing me to live with my awesome boyfriend; they have welcomed both of us into their lives. Brenton, Beth and their children, Lila, Drew, Ada and Jim are a constant source of enjoyment and bring happiness and fun to the farm. It is not uncommon for Will and me to spend an evening with them, talking about the farm, their lives and ours. I remember a very happily spent Sunday afternoon lying on Beth's living room floor coloring with Drew and Ada while Will played chess with Lila and Beth helped Jim navigate the carpet. Beth herself is a constant source of amazement and inspiration- she raises four happy, healthy kids, feeds her entire family and is still free-spirited. Beth and I have exchanged recipes, books and food. Brenton and Will frequently trade bad jokes and a hilarious outlook on life.

Our other neighbors, Steven and Grit, are no less amusing and kind people. I have forced Chocolate Beet cake on them many a time and they always graciously accept it (even compliment it!). It is not uncommon for me to come home at night to find a ½-dozen blue and green eggs in our fridge, freshly laid by their hens that morning.

In the past month we have been graced by 2 new faces, Carrie and Carolyn. Both of these women are kind, hard working and fun to talk with. I am looking forward to getting to know them better as they become more and more integrated on the farm.

The people involved with Johnson's Backyard Garden understand the possibilities available when we lean on each-other for support. Steven is currently helping Brenton design a master architectural plan for the farm. Will helps Brenton during working hours but also does a lot of work after hours, just because he wants to. A few weeks ago, Steven and Will took down a rotted-out tree in Steven's yard. Both Will and I have watched Brenton and Beth's kids and twice a week I take their eldest to school (she really brightens the morning commute!). Beth has fed both Will and I some wonderful desserts. On my days off from work I help out around the farm with whatever odd jobs Brenton needs done. Brenton frequently offers to fix things around the house for us and has generously donated some of our first garden plants. And then there are the volunteers, without whom Wednesday and Saturday mornings would be a nightmare. Not only are the volunteers hard workers who are knowledgeable about farming, they are kind and interesting people who have welcomed Will and I into their tight-knit community of dirty clothes and fresh-picked vegetables.

It is comforting to know that community exists not just in the soil microbial life, and among the birds and mammals, but among the people as well. Many people say that singing to their plants makes them grow better, and in the same vein I think the plants on the farm sense the love and happiness between the people that tend them and consequently produce the tastiest, most beautiful vegetables around (just look to the broccoli and rainbow chard for proof).

7) Vegetable Storage Tips

We aim to grow and package our vegetables to maintain the highest taste and nutritional quality possible. However, once they've left the farm it's up to you to keep them fresh and nutritious. There's no refrigeration at the CSA drop points so it's good to pick up your box as early as possible, especially as the weather heats up. Here are some additional tips for storing this week's share:

- **Asparagus** is delicate and should be used within 2-3 days, wrap in a damp towel and store in plastic bags or bins.
- **Spinach, Kale, Chard, Lettuce, and Cooking Greens** have the same crisper life and should be kept in plastic bags. Any bunch greens can be freshened by cutting an inch of the bottom stalks and soaking the entire bunch in cold water for 10 minutes. Place in a plastic bag in the fridge for a few hours to revive.
- **Salad Greens** should be washed immediately then spin dried. Rebag them and place in the refrigerator.
- **Tomatoes** should be kept uncovered at room temp, but can be refrigerated if very ripe. All other fresh vegetables belong in the refrigerator.
- **Carrots, Radishes, Turnips, Beets, and Parsnips** should be stored in plastic bags. They'll last two weeks in the fridge. Take tops off carrots before storing, leave greens on radishes, turnips and beets, with both roots and tops in the bag.

Checkout our [storage tips](#) on our website for a more complete guide, and of course feel free to contact us with any questions.

8) Recipes

**We would love to share your recipes too! Please email your favorites to carolyn@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com

It's not easy eating green...trying to eat local and in season means a lot of greens in the spring time. Since moving to the farm I have taken to eating greens three meals a day – otherwise I can't keep up with my weekly share on my own. In addition to sautéed greens, stir fries and soup, I've started adding greens to hummus and cornbread, and I've come to love a good breakfast salad (fried egg and bacon on top, can't be beat). Here are some creative recipes from fellow CSA members to help you through the green phase.

Arugula Pesto

From CSA member Kay Rolfes

4 cups washed arugula leaves (about 6 ounces)
1/4 cup pine nuts, toasted (or keep it local and use pecans!)
1/4 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese
1/4 cup olive oil
salt and pepper to taste

Blend arugula, pine nuts, and parmesan cheese in food processor until almost smooth. With machine running, gradually add olive oil. Process until well blended. Season pesto to taste with salt and pepper. Serve tossed with cooked pasta, or put a dollop on broiled fish or chicken breast.

You can make this ahead, it keeps in the refrigerator for one day after making it, or can be frozen to keep longer. I freeze it in zipper-lock bags, then just let it thaw out to room temperature before using it.

Farm variations: my pesto generally ends up with several other greens thrown in – it's a great way to use up extra kale and spinach. Usually I use pecans instead of pine nuts and when I'm not feeling like making a trip to the store I leave out the parmesan all together and add raisins and lemon juice. -Carolyn

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### **Whole-wheat Spaghetti with Swiss Chard and Pecorino Cheese**

Shared with us by CSA member Christine Fernandez

Olive oil  
2 onions  
2 bunches swiss chard  
3 cloves garlic  
1 can diced tomatoes  
1/4 cup dry white wine  
1/4 t crushed red pepper flakes  
salt and pepper  
8 oz. whole-wheat spaghetti  
1/4 pitted kalamata olives, chopped  
2 T freshly grated Pecorino cheese

2 T toasted pine nuts

Sautee onions in oil on medium heat until tender, about 8 minutes. Add chard, sauté until it wilts, about 2 minutes. Add garlic, saute until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in tomatoes with their juices, wine and red pepper flakes. Bring to a simmer. Cover and cook until tomatoes break down and chard is tender, about 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Meanwhile, cook the spaghetti.

Add spaghetti to chard mixture, toss to combine. Sprinkle with olives, cheese and pine nuts and serve!

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I went to the library for some new cookbook inspiration, but ended up coming away with yet another Mollie Katzen...this recipe make my mouth water just reading it.

Asparagus Crepes with Mushroom Sauce

From Mollie Katzen's *Vegetable Dishes I Can't Live Without*

1 large egg
1 ¼ c milk
1 c flour
¼ t salt
butter
1 ½ pounds asparagus, trimmed and steamed until tender

Whip egg milk flour and salt in blender until smooth.

Heat a 6 – 7 inch nonstick crepe or omelet pan. When warm, brush with butter. Wait another 30 seconds or so until pan is quite hot. When hot enough to sizzle a bread crumb, pour in ¼ c of the batter. Lift the pan and tilt in all directions until batter thoroughly coats the bottom, pouring off any excess batter.

Cook one side until set (about 20 seconds), then turn it over and cook for another second or two.

Turn crepe onto a plate and repeat until you've used all the batter.

To fill, place 3 or 4 stalks of asparagus on one side of each crepe, and roll or fold the other side over. Serve warm or at room temp, with hot or warm mushroom sauce puddle onto plate underneath and/or spooned over the top.

Mushroom Sauce

3T unsalted butter
1 pound mushrooms, thinly sliced
6 medium shitake mushrooms, stemmed and thinly sliced (optional)
½ t salt (more to taste)
3 T brandy or dry sherry
3 T flour
1 ½ c warmed milk
black pepper

Melt butter in medium skillet, add all mushroom and the salt. Cook over medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add brandy or sherry, cook 5 minute more.

Gradually sprinkle in flour as you whisk the mushroom mix. Whisk and cook for another 5 minutes over medium heat.

Stir in warmed milk. Cook over low heat, stirring often, until thickened and smooth (about 5 more minutes). Season to taste with pepper and salt.

9) Subscribe/Unsubscribe To Newsletter

If you would like to subscribe or unsubscribe to our email newsletter click [here](#).

10) Johnson's Backyard Garden Contact Information

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