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Genesee Valley Organic Community Supported Agriculture

<http://www.gvocea.org>

GVOCSA News

On the way to your stomach something happens to your soul.

September 2004



Notes from the Farm

By Elizabeth Henderson

This season inspires me to study fungi. Months of damp weather with low light, alternating cold nights with muggy days, have created the perfect conditions for mushrooms, fungal diseases and molds. The conditions have not been perfect for summer vegetables. When the temperature drops below 55 degrees, as it has on half a dozen nights, falling as low as 48 on July 25, tomatoes stop growing for a week or more. As of August 19, three 250-foot beds of midseason tomatoes were loaded with fruit – all green. Cantaloupe plants had melons on them the size of tennis balls. Eggplants were coming, but slowly, even in the hoop house. Powdery mildew was growing on the leaves of the summer squash plants and on some of the pumpkins. Phallic red growths emerged from the mulch on the rhubarb bed spreading a nose-tweaking smell resembling an

For those who have not paid in full, please drop your check in the box at Distribution or mail to Judy Emerson.

operating room undergoing disinfection – our first acquaintance with stinkhorn mushrooms.

The dreaded fungal disease – late blight (remember the Irish famine?) has struck our tomatoes and potatoes. As organic farmers, we are allowed to spray copper to prevent late blight. However, to be effective, it has to be applied after every rain, which this year means every other day. Our only spray equipment consists of two four-gallon backpack sprayers. To spray copper, which is very caustic, requires suiting up in goggles, mask, full rain suit, rubber boots and rubber gloves – not the usual garb worn on organic farms! It's hot, exhausting work and to spray our

thousands of row feet of potatoes and tomatoes every other day was not physically possible.

So, on August 18, after our Extension Agent, Carol MacNeil, confirmed my diagnosis of late blight, we began the sad process of

Member Action Items!

- For those who have not paid in full, please drop your check in the box at Distribution or mail to Judy Emerson.
- Mark your calendar for the annual GVOCSA Harvest Dinner Meeting – Sunday, November 14. Watch for announcement of location and time!
- Squirrel Bulk ordering is just around the corner – watch for announcements at Distribution in coming weeks.
- Pre-register for the 2005 CSA season at the annual GVOCSA Harvest Dinner Meeting. \$50 deposit required to hold your share for the next season – bring your checkbooks!
- Register for Winter Shares at the annual GVOCSA Harvest Dinner Meeting.
- Watch for and complete both the Veggie Questionnaire and End of Season Survey coming in the next newsletter. These are extremely valuable tools for improving our CSA.

Harvest Dinner Meeting

Mark your calendars for our end of season events! GVOCSA will hold our annual Harvest Dinner Meeting right after the Sunday, November 14, 2004 distribution. Site is currently up in the air. Watch for upcoming announcements on location and via email and at distribution.

Final Farm Distributions

Final distributions of farm produce will be Thursday, November 25 and Sunday, November 28, 2004 at Abundance.

ripping out most of the field tomatoes. We have also mowed off the tops of our potatoes to stop the spread of the blight to the tubers. To dispose of the tomato plants without further spreading the fungal spores, we placed them in a big pile, covered them with horse manure mixed with wood chips topped with hay and left them to compost. We are trying to save about 400 feet of field tomatoes with copper sprays: a reasonable amount to manage with a backpack.

The potatoes should keep well in the ground for several weeks, and you will have an ample amount in your shares. But because of the late blight and heavy pressure from other diseases this year, we will not be offering storage potatoes for sale. These diseases can't be detected on the surface of the potato at harvest, but develop over time. We'll just have to enjoy our potatoes fresh this year and hope for better growing conditions next year.

On the brighter side, this cool weather has made for happy lettuces and a longer season of peas than we have had for some years. There have been lettuces for your salads every week but one. We were able to put peas – snow peas, sugar snaps and shelling peas – in your shares for 4 ½ weeks. Unfortunately, we discovered that the snow pea and sugar snap seeds were not pure. Shelling peas were intermixed with the other two. I have discussed this problem with the seed companies from whom we purchased the seed. CR Lawn of Fedco explained to me that peas are supposed to be self-pollinating, which means that you can grow different varieties fairly close to one another without having them cross. However, this turns out not to be quite true. Fedco returned our money, but that does not help those of you who had shelling peas mixed in with your sugar snaps. Please accept our apologies.

The tomatoes in your shares all through July and August came from our new hoop house, an investment paid for from the farm's capital fund to which many of you have contributed. Under one layer of plastic, the tomato plants grew as though they were racing for heaven. It was hard to keep up with tying them, as they sprouted a couple of feet every few days. Due to the blight, hoop house tomatoes will be all that we will have this season. No August tomato glut as in past years.

The Waterline and Drainage Tile

Our other saga summer has been the construction of a waterline through the farm to bring town drinking water to the homes along our road. The deep well water around here tends to be hard and sulfurous, requiring expensive filters, so it is understandable that most of our neighbors want the waterline. (Personally, I prefer sulfur to chlorinated Ontario water.) The first we heard about the waterline going through the Tear Drop Field near our barns was when, one morning, I discovered a gas company employee placing flags over the gas line. When I asked the construction foreman where the waterline was going, he explained that it would cut through many of our beds. I protested.

We called Becky Kraai to find out what she knew. Last winter, Becky had granted the town an easement for the waterline, but without realizing what that would mean for our fields. She assumed the line would go along the road as it does elsewhere and as it appears on the maps we all saw. After considerable discussion, the engineers changed the path somewhat to go closer to the edge of the field, clipping off 10 feet of each of 29 beds. We had already planted some of these beds and the construction destroyed part of those crops. After I made a nasty scene about what they had done, the crew

discovered they could make the strip they dug up much narrower. We lost no more beds, but we have had to live with the muddy mess all summer. They promise us that they will smooth it all out and reseed it. We have sent the town a bill for the value of the crops we lost and for the cost of replacing that much growing space.

Not all our relations with local authorities have been difficult. With the help of the county's new Natural Resources Conservation Service agent, Bill Jones, we received an Agricultural Management Assistance grant to cost share the installation of drainage tile to reduce wet spots in the Tear Drop Field. The tiling

GVOCSA Vision Statement

We envision the creation of a land-based community of people of diverse ages, backgrounds and incomes, farmers and non-farmers, who are committed to love, justice, equality, democracy and cooperation, and honor the intrinsic value of nature and food, and the dignity of labor.

The members of this community will work gently together to learn and teach others to live sustainably, in the broadest sense, for the health of all living creatures and the planet. We will practice an agriculture that supports a whole, healthy, sustainable and loving community.

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Editors:

Rick Griggs
rick_griggs@hotmail.com

Barbara Mitchell
akamitchell@hotmail.com

Mark Pierce
mark.pierce@rochester.edu

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Politics of Food

Are you a member yet?

GVOCSA began as a project of Politics of Food Program, Inc. and we are still intimately connected. We share the vision of a sustainable food system that supports farmers, consumers, and the environment.

As the urban sponsor of the GVOCSA, Politics of Food continues 30 years of education & advocacy, working with youth in our Rochester Roots School - Community Garden program, sharing information through our newsletter, and working toward a healthy, local food system.

Please join us by sending \$25 to:

Politics of Food, 121 N. Fitzhugh St., Rochester, NY 14614

should prevent standing water from accumulating in low sections of the beds after heavy rains. The grant will also help defray the expenses of cover crops and mulching for three years.

Skipping from Spring to Fall

Crops for the fall are looking good. We planted 4600 bed-feet of broccoli, cauliflower and Savoy cabbages. Rain fell as we transplanted them making us a bit muddy, but preventing transplant shock. When broccoli gets good nutrition, adequate water and grows steadily, the heads usually turn out large, tender and sweet. We have planted 10 beds of spinach, several beds each of Asian greens, Swiss chard, kale, and beets and 6300 row feet of carrots. We even managed to set out decent kohlrabi plants this year. While not as giant as last year, the onion crop is ample. Because of the wet, we had to cure the onions in the greenhouse to get them to dry down without rotting. The stingy amount of sunshine hurt the winter squash. The plants flowered like crazy, but not until mid August, so the fruit they set may have been too late to mature before the cold. Root crops, though slower than on warmer years, have been growing well. We will have plenty of carrots, leeks, beets, rutabagas, fall radishes and turnips and even a few parsnips.

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

One of the basic tenets of cooperatives is that they should cooperate with other cooperatives. That is the happy state of affairs between the GVOCSA and Abundance Cooperative Market. We are very fortunate to be able to use the back room at Abundance for distribution. Parking is far better than at our previous sight, the warehouse space has gotten larger as Abundance has expanded, and members can do their other shopping at the store. In return, Abundance enjoys some of its best evenings for business when our distribution is underway. A lovely sense of community has grown among our members and the shareholders in Abundance. We partner successfully with other groups as well: the Southeast Ecumenical Ministries, which picks up left over shares for distribution to seniors in the neighborhood; Politics of Food, our sponsoring organization; and the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA-NY). In an effort to preserve the farm, we are entering into a new partnership with the Genesee Land Trust.

Back in May of 2003, Rebecca Kraai offered to sell the entire 135 acre Humbert Farm to the Peacework farmers. At that time, we

farmers asked for a few months to think about it since we were very busy with planting and the start of the season. In the fall of 2003, Becky renewed the offer and we replied that we were very interested in continuing to work this wonderful land. However, Ammie, Greg and I have chosen not to seek personal ownership of this property. Our equity is in the farm business, not the land. All too many farmers view their land as an investment they can cash in to finance their retirement. We view the land as part of the commons shared by all humanity. This land is prime farmland in a region with adequate rainfall, a resource all too scarce on this globe. For the long term food security of our region, this farm and many others must remain available to grow food for human beings. Greg, Ammie, and I must finance our retirement (if we choose to retire) some other way, not by selling off land to the highest bidder. We also want to be sure that younger farmers will have access to this land. If our financial investment in our farm business is small, that makes it easier for a younger person to join our partnership.

To meet this goal we began negotiations with the Genesee Land Trust to see if it might be possible to assure that the farm remain as farmland forever. In the course of

our discussions with Gay Mills, the Executive Director, we have developed a plan to have the Land Trust purchase the farm for its permanent protection and then lease the land back to us. Throughout the winter, I did research on land leases. Kirby White, a staff person with Equity Trust, offered us a model land lease that he has been working on with other farmers in our situation. We have modified it somewhat, and shared it with the Land Trust. While questions remain on both sides, we agree on the basic concepts.

By our next newsletter we hope to have more news on the progress of this endeavor. If all falls into place, we hope that you will consider contributing to the purchase and permanent preservation of this fine piece of farmland. Held in trust, this land will be available to feed our families for many generations to come.

Perspective

Maybe we should think about this year as the growing season without a summer. Excellent spring crops will be followed by good fall crops. A great year for greens, even green tomatoes! We hope that sharing the risks with us does not prove to be too painful for you to digest. The Farmers' Almanac has been all too accurate about the weather so far. It predicts a cold and wet fall, so be forewarned. The only way we can change this weather is by working together to reduce global warming. Peacework is committed to reducing our use of non-renewable resources so that our negative impact is as small as possible. We hope that you will continue to support us despite the hardships of unseasonable weather.



GVOCSA and the Internet

GVOCSA has a number of excellent resources on the internet. Our website is located at:

<http://www.gvocsa.org>

There you can find recipes, news and events, schedules for the farm and distribution, past newsletters, and much more!

Also, GVOCSA has an electronic mailing list to which you can subscribe. This is a wonderful way to receive timely information regarding special orders, news from the farm, recipes and special events right in your e-mail inbox! Also, it provides a method of actively conversing with the membership. In order to join, point your browser to:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/gvocsa/>

Attack of the Green Tomatoes

By Rick Griggs

As anyone with a garden knows, the end of the growing season presents both bounty and deluge. A related issue is not-yet-ripe produce, especially when the growing season hasn't been exactly cooperative. Tomatoes will fall squarely in this category this year. My tomato plants are loaded with beautiful green fruit. Unless we get a dandy of an Indian summer, I needed to prepare for the dreaded green tomatoes. So, off I went to the modern-day "library" – the Internet. One of my first stops was www.about.com; there's lots of good information about many things on that site. After that I used a search engine (www.google.com) to find resources. Thanks also to Genevra Piedmonte for your suggestions!

According to what I learned surfing the Internet, tomatoes with any blush on them (looking at the blossom end opposite the stem) are good candidates for ripening indoors. Techniques run the gamut:

pulling the entire tomato plant, stripping the leaves, and hanging the plant upside down where the temperature will remain between 55 and 70 degrees F (watch out for falling ripe tomatoes); putting green tomatoes in a single layer in a box, covering with newspaper, and leaving them in the same temperature range; putting a few in a paper bag with a piece of apple or ripening banana; or simply leaving them on the counter. Many people have wide-ranging variations on these themes; I wouldn't begin to suggest a "best" method. If you want to learn more, I'm sure many GVOCSA members would be happy to offer their suggestions.

According to my research, tomatoes that are thoroughly green will never ripen, so the above-mentioned techniques won't work. But, take heart; green tomatoes are edible!

What do green tomatoes taste like? Well, you can always taste one and see, but just for the record, they're tart, or sour. That's because the tomato has not converted

enough of itself to sugar, balancing the flavor (otherwise known as “ripening” to all of us non-scientists). So, that’s a given – you need to deal with the tartness. The best way to balance tartness is, of course, with sweetness. Sweetness can be achieved by adding a sweetener (your choice, of course), or by cooking, through the process of “caramelization” where whatever sugar is in the food is concentrated, bringing its sweetness out. With green tomatoes, though, there isn’t much sugar to begin with, so I wouldn’t expect much from caramelization. Fried Green Tomatoes (the dish, not the movie), so popular in the South, uses caramelization to add a little sweetness (although the cornmeal that the tomatoes are dredged in probably provide more sweetness than the tomato itself).

Recipes abound for green tomato pie, green tomato crisp, and the like. I guess the best analogy I can make here is to treat the green tomato as you would a very tart apple. Achieving a sweet/tart “balance” is very much an individual thing, so taste as you go along to make sure it meets your standard. Be aware, though: green tomatoes are more gelatinous (gooey) than apples, so you will need to adjust for that in any recipe where you’re substituting green tomatoes for apples (or other tree fruit).

You can use the tartness of green tomatoes and complement it with other flavors, achieving a savory flavor balance. This is exactly what is done with tomatillos, those hard, green tomatoes with dry, papery husks that we’ve seen in our Fall shares the last few seasons. This is the domain of the salsas, relishes, chutneys, chow chows, and green tomato “ketchups.” These toothsome treats are meant to be flavor enhancers, adding just the right “zing” to foods. They can be spicy hot, vinegary, tartly refreshing, or even sweet. They’re great on

burgers, hot dogs, sandwiches, as chip dips – use your imagination! The vast majority of recipes I found for green tomatoes dealt with using up garden bounty and preserving it for the winter. Recipes for chunky sauces abound. Check out the Internet, ask GVOCSA members, call your local Agricultural Extension office, or go to the library to find recipes.

I would be remiss if I didn’t share an important nugget of information I came across on www.about.com. Although green tomatoes are wonderful when cooked or pickled, they should be avoided in large amounts when raw. Green tomatoes contain large amounts of solanine, a toxin also found in another member of the nightshade family, green potatoes.

Those green gems from your garden make for wonderful eating, adding variety and spice to your culinary adventures. As with all bounty, be happy when it comes your way. Like the saying goes, when life gives you green tomatoes, make chutney!



Why Sign Up Early for 2005?

Please consider making a \$50 deposit to reserve your share for the 2005 season. This advance means a great deal to the farm. Your accumulated deposits add up to our seed money for the coming year.

Over the winter and early in the spring, at a time when no money is coming in, we spend a third of our operating budget on seed, soil amendments, supplies, and equipment repairs. Many farms have to borrow money every winter to cover startup expenses and then pay interest to a bank on that money. Through the generous support of GVOCSA members, Peacework Organic Farm has remained debt-free, significantly reducing our operating costs.

By making a deposit this fall, you not only secure your spot for 2005; you also free your farmers from the burden of going into debt to finance next season’s startup costs. So, please sign up this fall to share in our harvest for 2005!



GVOCSA Harvest Dinner and Final CSA Meeting

Please join us for the annual GVOCSA Harvest Dinner and final CSA member meeting for the 2004 season on November 14, 2004. Come and be a part of the discussion about the future plans for your CSA! The site is still being finalized; however, here is what you can expect:

- *Distribution of Sunday shares will take place at the site of the dinner prior to the potluck.*
- *Dinner is a potluck supper*
 - *Bring a dish to pass with the recipe on a 3x5 index card (for any food sensitivities)*
 - *Bring a place setting, silverware, and mugs for hot drinks for all in your party*
 - *Hot and cold beverages will be provided*
- *A review of the 2004 season will be given (usually accompanied by a slide show of recent photos from the farm)*
- *Early Bird signup for the 2005 CSA season will be available - \$50 deposit will hold your place for next season and help our farmers tremendously!*
- *Signup for Winter Shares will be available; watch for upcoming announcements*

What else to bring:

- *Any last payments for shares, if applicable*
- *Your checkbook!*
- *Your appetite!*

Thursday Farm Schedule

Updated 9/16/2004

	26-Aug (Kids)	2-Sep	9-Sep	16-Sep	23-Sep (Kids)	30-Sep	7-Oct
Brown	500	Wobus	134 Carleton	360 Catlin	7 Phillips	128 Stone	23 Knoll
LeBeau	500	Beller	134 Beddoe	91 Korfmacher	308 Bryce/Janezic	399 Carleton	360 Schaefer
Fahey	135	Demarle	179 Hauptly	132 Lalik	166 Heywood	998 Brophy	105 Vankerhove
Austin	92	Demarle	179 Platt	161 Yaworsky	16 Helms	175 Hauser	414 Vankerhove
Toates	92	Meaker	165 West	116 Yaworsky	16 Platt	161 Hauser	414 Newkirk
Hetzke	92	Alinger	123 Arcarese	402 Yaworsky	16 Bichi-Narvaez	121 Higgins	180 Newkirk
Andrews	514	Basch	123 Riggo	402 Allinger/Baush	123 Bichi-Narvaez	121 Higgins	180 Skinner
Robbins	514	Couch	56 Arcarese	402 Darkow	8 Raley	191 Goetz	162 Mills/Edwards
Reeb	51	Roch Roots	22 Herkstroeter	68 Anderson	1 Antinore	70 Goetz	162 Mills/Edwards
Fahey	135	Roch Roots	22 Hannen	80 Perkins	386 Moncada	66	
Pollack	515	Hauptly/Gilbert	132 Bichi-Narvaez	121 Frey	72 Burke	57	
Pollack	515						
Morton	149						
	14-Oct	21-Oct	28-Oct	4-Nov	11-Nov	18-Nov	
Holzbach/Rick	18 Knoll/Skinner	148 Knoll/Skinner	148 Carlson	17 Sommer	102 VanMeenan	27 VanMeenan	27
Perry	33 Reagan/Smolinsky/Wt	146 Reagan/Smolinsky/Wt	146 Keevert	81 Couch	56 Mills/Edwards	171 Wattie	142
Holzbach/Rick	18 Kormacher	308 Kormacher	308 Tremblay	2 Couch	56 Mills/Edwards	171 Goetz	162
Mott	119 Brophy	105 Brophy	105 West	2 Holzback/Rick	18 Mills/Edwards	171 Ford	100
Mott	119 Perkins	386 Perkins	386 Helms	175 Klassen	67 Klassen	67 Ford	100
Bauman	540 Platt	161 Platt	161 Ernst, Celine	67 Klassen	81 Keevert	81 Raley	191
Bauman	540 Bauman	540 Bauman	540 West	116	Fox	304 Raley	191
Lalik	166 Bauman	166 Bauman	166 Anthony/Miller		Fox	304	
Lalik	166 Ernst, Celine	166 Ernst, Celine			Fox	304	

If you have not yet scheduled your work, please call Geneva Piedmonte at 461-9557 or e-mail at Happyg89@hotmail.com

If you need to change your shift, please refer to schedule and member list to arrange a switch. You are responsible for finding a replacement. Please notify Geneva of any Changes.

Thank you!!!!

Sunday Farm Schedule

Updated 9/16/2004

29-Aug (Kids)	5-Sep	12-Sep	19-Sep	26-Sep (Kids)	3-Oct	10-Oct
Chesley 108	Klein 244	Gleason 73	Maker 96	McDonald 125	Trabold 71	Tracy 143
Cross/Kamin 127	Klein 244	Blakely 504	Maker 96	Fabinski 74	Griggs 163	Schwenk 226
Cross/Kamin 127	Klein 244	Adams 190	Alescio 172	Peloquin 40	Hagen 36	Karimi-Tabriz 28
Schiffitto 357	Adams 190	Fabinski 74	Killmer 38	Peloquin 40	Prince/Scott 45	Karimi-Tabriz 28
Schiffitto 357	Griggs 163	Kowal 79	Prince/Scott 45	Ruscitti 99	Ruhlin 82	Randel 167
Clifford 26	Bayer 347	Rubin 157	Prince/Scott 45	Ruscitti 99	Ruhlin 82	Coltre 147
Cole 48	Hanscom 313	Fry/Soresen 59	Ford/Perry 33	Child/Orsagh 300	Peters 124	Coltre 147
Cole 48	Statt-Hanscom 313	Fry/Soresen 59	Ford/Perry 33	Child/Orsagh 300	Peters 124	Ryan 125
Cole 48	Garrison 138	Sevenler 413	Michael 417	Hagan 36	Peters 124	Youngerman 151
Hood/Nieves 109	Garrison 138	Sevenler 413		Hagan 36		
Fogarty 12	Garrison 138	Sevenler 413		Barton/Diamond 544		
Sciortino 12						
Kamin 127						
17-Oct	24-Oct	31-Oct	7-Nov	14-Nov	21-Nov	
Tracy 143	Tracy 143	Randel 167	Fogarty/Sciortino 12	Adams 190	Holland 114	
Caine 228	Benkert/Lee 49	Rossen 174	Griggs 163	Sigelow 85	Lang 110	
Karimi-Tabriz 28	Frey 174	Morgen 174	Drew 182			
Tharett 158	Frey 174	Morgen 178	Shafer 183			
Hand 131	Carr 178	Morgen 178				
Elmer 150	Carr 178	Morgen +1				
Elmer 150	Drew 182					
Alampi 11	Shafer 183					
Alampi 11	Holland 114					

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OPEN
SEVEN DAYS
M-F 8-8
Sat 9-6
Sun 11-6

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GVOCSA
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