

News...Fresh from the Farm

Spring 2008

One Step at a Time Gardens ❖ libland@frontiernet.net ❖ www.ostgardens.com
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Sign up now for a 2008 Farm Membership!

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through APRIL 1...no joke!

Complete member form is posted at
www.ostgardens.com

Unique tools for unique farm size

Winter inspiration has led to plans for a number of new tools and strategies for this season. At 5.5 acres in cultivation, we are big enough to need more than just hand work, but small enough that some automated systems we've seen don't fit. We will introduce two new pull carts to increase harvest efficiency and reduce hauling heavy totes, trial a pressure washer to speed veggie washing process for select vegetables, and build two tractor implements - a subsoiler for deep soil work and a bedlifter to help harvest of deep rooted items such as carrots, garlic and potatoes . Stay tuned for reports.

No confusing labels here!

Concluding an interview about confusing product claims on food labels, a dietician commented: "*Just stick with whole foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables and you won't have to worry about what has and hasn't been added to your food.*"

We couldn't agree more; food fresh from the earth grown by someone you know and trust is guaranteed not to confuse!

❖ More that's new for the 2008 Season ❖

Seeding has started – While winter lingers, young plants have already been started in anticipation of this coming season. Our start/grow areas are filling and we're hoping for warmer weather to allow us to move some of the flats out to the greenhouse.



A Trial to Taste! – As one of three cooperators' in a Practical Farmers of Iowa tomato trial, we will be exploring different management practices to minimize impact of blight on tomatoes. We will also track labor, costs, and yield for each practice. The three practices include traditional caging, a trellising on cattle panels (the way we grow most of our field tomatoes), and a Florida weave technique (gradual building a twine fence as tomatoes grow). We are using Cherokee Purple, one of our favorite heirloom varieties in this trial. There will be results to eat as well as read about!



Food & Farming in Costa Rica - While most of Iowa wrestled through repeated blasts of winter in February, Jan spent 10 days in Costa Rica as part of the Iowa State University/University of Costa Rica exchange. Jan and 21 other travelers visited these farms: organic vegetable, strawberries, leather leaf fern, banana, pineapple (still remembering the sweet, juicy pineapples we sampled...YUM!), sugarcane, tilapia, mango, and melon. This summer's *Weekly Notes* will include insights from this fascinating trip.



Wildlife on the farm – We will take the first step toward a wildlife monitoring project on the farm this summer and look forward to ways our members can participate.

Looking for a share partner?

We occasionally hear from members who want to share a share, but haven't found a partner. If you would like to split a full share with someone, but haven't been able to find that share partner, let us know - we may be able to help. Please indicate which pickup site you prefer. Contact us at 641/495-6367 or libland@frontiernet.net