

A Spring in our Step - May 4, 2009

Springtime News from

One Step at a Time Gardens

www.ostgardens.com

Out and About on the Farm

After that quick warm up in mid-April, the past two weeks have found us dashing in and out of the fields between rains. Our rainfall here was not too disruptive and so far, this spring is a far cry better than last year's cool, wet and then flooded experience! As of late last week, the hoophouse has been planted with all the greens and tomatoes it can hold. We've got over 4,000 bed feet of potatoes, several beds of lettuce and spinach, first snow peas are up, the first sugar snap peas are planted, green onions are up, onions, leeks, radish, kohlrabi, and more are all in. This week will see another wave of crops going in.



Each season we find some new ways to do things better. One of this year's innovations has been tractor mounting our dibble. The dibble pre-marks planting spacing on beds. Made from a lawn roller, the dibble has marking rings welded on to it and originally was fitted with a handle that two people used to pull the dibble (rolling as it went) down the bed. But two people often walk in a less than direct line of travel and our beds have reflected that. While not changing the spacing between rows, it does challenge the cultivating tractor. This spring Tim was able to disassemble the old handle and set the dibble up to fit on our 3-point hitch,

as pictured here. Not only do we now have much straighter markings, the dibbling is done in $\frac{1}{4}$ the time of previously.

2009 Membership Update

Please tell your friends, colleagues or family that we do still have memberships available.

To refresh returning members and introduce new members - Here's how a typical delivery works. The delivery (vegetable boxes and any other items) arrive according to specific site schedule and are either unloaded into a store, onto a porch or right out of the back of the van. The driver is on hand for a short period at the beginning of the delivery time (Jan does DM/WDM and Tim does Garner, Clear Lake and Mason City). A member check-off list will be available that lists member names and the weekly dates. Members find their name and any pertinent deliveries for the week (according to your order, you may have more than just a box of vegetables to pick up and it will be listed with your check off). Check off your name for the respective week, pick up your share(s) and you're done. We ask for boxes to be returned after they are empty. Many members opt to bring a cloth bag with them to the delivery site to unload boxes and return the box right there, which eliminates having to keep track of the box until the next delivery.

New pick up tip! Use the cooperative nature of this program to your benefit by coordinating with other members who live in your area and share pick up tasks – saves time and fuel and makes getting your vegetables more convenient. We have some members from the Johnston area just beginning to explore this idea. If you are interested in helping organize this from your area, contact Jan and she'll help you get in touch with other members from your area.

Cooking up Great Taste

In the winter, I dream about green salads – I heard this comment from a man describing his life and gardening in Weisman, Alaska, north of the Arctic Circle. He described eating stored potatoes and carrots, but longing for the greens of the spring. Eating locally and seasonally creates times of great celebration as new crops come on the scene. That is this time of year as new crops such as early asparagus and rhubarb and soon new greens and other vegetables from the farm are just starting to be available. For this week, celebrate emerging rhubarb with a new coffee cake recipe.

Big Crumb Rhubarb Coffee Cake (from Farm News – www.farm-news.com)

8x8 pan, grease, preheat oven to 325 degrees

Rhubarb filling:

1/2 lb. rhubarb, *cut into 1/2 in. pieces (1.5 C.)*

1/4 C. Sugar

2 t. cornstarch

1/2 t. ginger – *toss all together, set aside*

For the crumbs:

1/3 C. brown sugar

1/2 t. granulated sugar

1 t. ground cinnamon

1/2 t. ground ginger

1/8 t. salt

1/2 C. melted butter

1 3/4 C. flour - *mix all together, set aside*

For the cake:

1/3 C. sour cream

1 lg. Egg

1 lg. Egg yolk

2 t. vanilla extract – *mix all together*

1 C. flour

1/2 C. sugar

1/2 t. baking soda

1/2 t. baking powder

1/4 t. salt – *mix together*

6 T. softened butter, cut into 8 pieces – *add butter along with sour cream mixture to dry ingredients in two batches, mixing thoroughly between. Scoop out 1/2 C. batter and set aside. Pour remaining batter in prepared 8x8 pan, spoon rhubarb over batter, dollop set-aside batter over rhubarb. Break topping mixture into big crumbs (1/2 to 3/4 in. size) and sprinkle over cake.*

Bake until done – 45-55 minutes.

News and Opportunities

*One feature that's important to build into our growing local food system is accessibility for all economic levels. Several of our members are able to take advantage of sponsored shares made possible by generous donation by one of our member families as well as Local Foods Connection. **Local Foods Connection** is a not-for-profit program out of Iowa City that supports sponsored farm memberships – covering the cost and providing diverse educational resources to their participants. Participants are also requested to make a farm visit. Most Local Foods Connection sponsored shares are in the Iowa City and Cedar Rapids area, but the program has begun branching out into the Des Moines area and they are hoping to increase their donation base there. Local Foods Connection sponsors several shares through our farm, and we are inviting our members to support this important work. Donations to Local Foods Connection can be made directly to: Laura Dowd, Exec. Dir., Local Foods Connection, P.O. Box 2821, Iowa City, IA 52244-2821. Check them out at www.localfoodsconnection@yahoo.com for more information.*

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