

CSA Newsletter

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Shumei CSA Newsletter: Fourth Issue

“Nature can teach
us everything.”

-Mokichi Okada

Hello and welcome to the fourth issue of our CSA Newsletter! We appreciate your support of our farm; this support is one of our most invaluable assets, and allows us to continue to serve our community.

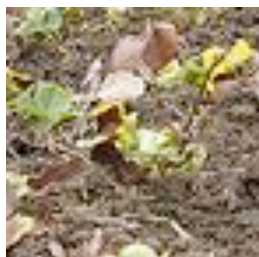
As we have explained to you in our weekly newsletter, we will not be able to provide vegetables for the month of March. The winter crop has finished and the spring crop harvesting will begin hopefully in April. We predict that baby leaf lettuce and snow peas will begin to be

ready in mid-April.

If you have any comments and suggestions, feel free to email or call us.

Thank you!

Masa, Eiko and the farm staff.
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Farm News: Main Entrance to the Farm

When we think of February it reminds most of us of cold winter days trying to keep warm by the fireplace. Fortunately, we have an outdoor woodstove that keeps us toasty while we are washing our vegetables for our CSA members. Currently, we are constructing a “natural looking” fence and gate for the main entrance to our farm. An artist from the Rodale Institute, Yasushi Fujimoto is collaborating with a local carpenter, Bill Kugler in constructing a unique “natural” design which

utilizes the wood that was collected around the forested area of the farm. Take a look at it’s progress when you pick up your vegetables.

We finished replanting 30 rows of strawberry plants, that we had dug up in December, and stored in the cooler for hibernation. The recent rains have helped them off to a great start in the growing process.

Profile of Farm Member

Masaharu Noda Farm Manager



The start of Masa’s day is bright and early, around 7:00 a.m., and you will be sure to find him tending to his crops and checking things out on the beautiful 8 acres that he has managed since 2003. The winter season brings icy, frosty, and rainy weather conditions to work in. But, being a farmer, which comes easily and naturally to Masa, he is not at all affected by the weather. Wearing a heavy raincoat, with a smile on his face, he is out there right next to his farm employees harvesting winter vegetables for

the CSA members and local Farmer’s Market. What moves Masa to enjoy farming so much? He states that farming in the Natural Agriculture way fulfills his heart and spirit, because it brings vegetables to people that are natural, and are not contaminated by pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers of any kind. He feels he is contributing to the health of the local community with fresh vegetables on their tables every week. What a great way to start a day!



Born in Kyoto, Japan on May 22nd, where he was raised and enjoyed his childhood there until he turned 18. At that time he left his beloved hometown to attend Nihon University, in Tokyo, Japan. Nihon means "Japan" in Japanese. He studied Agriculture and Fishery for 4 years and obtained a B/A degree. After graduation, he started working for Konica in Osaka, for 5 years, in their Development and Research Department. Masa was not fulfilled by this, so when he was 28 years old, he decided to attend the Kyoto Institute of Technology. While attending night classes there on Agriculture, he practiced Natural Agriculture at a local farm. Another 4 years had passed, and Masa earned his second B/A degree in Agriculture, in 1997. A man of his own style, his friends were in wonderment why he would obtain two B/A degrees. In Japan, you see, it is unusual to obtain two degrees. Being a very spiritual person by nature, and a Shumei Member since the age of 13, he decided to become a "Hoshi" (a volunteer worker in the spiritual organization of Shumei) in Misono. While there, he became more inspired in Natural Agriculture as he listened to Shumei's President at the time, give detailed speeches on N/A (as taught by Shumei's founder and spiritual leader, Mokichi Okada). He worked at Shumei's headquarters for 1 year. Masa still practiced N/A as it fulfilled his love of farming and the spiritual connection it provided to nature

He failed many times, as the soil he farmed was very bad, but, with determination and perseverance, he began to improve and perfect the N/A method, and let nature be his guide. The soil gradually became

fertile, with leaves, twigs, and weeds that he used when tilling the soil. Three years had passed and he had accomplished his goals, he was known for growing the greatest tasting vegetables around, the natural way!

In the year 2000, Shumei decided to send Masa to the U.S. The organization sent him to Pomona to work under the direction of Dr. Diana Jerkins (Ph.d in Agriculture), who was the director of the John Lyle Sustainable Research Project. Masa was important to Dr. Jerkins, as he gave her valuable information on Natural Agriculture, while she was comparing conventional, organic, and natural agriculture methods, and their effects on the environment.

In his spare time, Masa looks forward to someday riding a motorcycle again. He owned one in the past. He is interested in wood structures (redwood), building a log cabin, or even making furniture for his future endeavors. He is studying wind power, and solar power when he gets the chance. An accomplished cook, he also holds a Kendo License in martial arts, and he is a 3rd degree licensed Kendo.

Masa has big plans for the farm's future and the community. He wants to grow fruit trees such as ; apples, citrus, peaches and plums. Also, raspberries, and blueberries.

He also wants to share more N/A produce with more consumers, especially with people who have health problems, and hopefully change their eating habits to help promote a healthier lifestyle, the Natural Agriculture way!



How to Cook Soybeans

By Rie



Soybeans are the only plant food that contains complete protein, as well as vitamins and minerals, calcium, folic acid and iron.

Step 1: Wash and pick over

Rinse the dried soybeans, rubbing them together gently to remove any surface powdery residue, and pick out any dark or discolored beans. These will not cook properly. If any of the hulls work themselves loose while you're washing, pick those out too.

Step 2: Soak overnight

Soak the beans in water to cover for at least 8 hours or overnight.

Step 3: Use a big pot

Soybean cooking liquid will bubble up quite enthusiastically, all over your stovetop if you don't watch out. So the dried soybeans should not come up to more than 1/4th of the height of your cooking pot, and the cooking water should only come up to about 1/3rd of the height maximum.

Step 4: Bring to a boil, then skim off the grey stuff

Whether you are using a pressure cooker or a regular pot, you should first bring the soybeans to a boil, then skim off the grayish stuff that will rise to the surface of the water.

Step 5a: Using a pressure cooker

Once it's reached pressure, lower the heat and cook for 20-25 minutes. Turn off and let cool naturally until de-pressurized.

Step 5b: Using a regular pot

Cooking time is about 3 hours, but don't worry, you don't have to watch it continuously for that time. Top up with additional water from time to time if it seems to be cooking off, and skim off any grey stuff. A slow cooker would work too. The beans are done if you press one between your finger and thumb and it's soft, not crunchy. (Or just eat one!)

Storing and freezing

I store un-dried soybeans in freezer bags with a little bit of the cooking liquid. These are used in stewed dishes, soups and such. The dried beans are stored on their own in freezer bags. The cooking liquid can be frozen too.

So there you have it. It may seem complicated, but it really isn't once you've done it once. And the results are worth it especially if you are a vegan/vegetarian. And it's wonderfully cheap too. You could use cooked soy beans for soups, salads, pasta sauces, and a lot more! Enjoy!

Swiss Chard Quesadillas

By Rie



Swiss chard is a winter seasonal vegetable that is highly nutritious. It contains many vitamins and minerals and a good source of fiber. It is moderately anti-inflammatory.

Ingredients (serves two):

- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 small onion, chopped (3/4 cup)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (about 2 tsp.)
- 1 jalapeño or serrano chile, minced
- 1/4 tsp. cumin seeds
- 12 oz. Swiss chard, trimmed
- 8 6-inch corn or wheat tortillas
- 1 cup grated Monterey Jack cheese

1. Heat oil in pot over medium heat. Add onion, and sauté 5 minutes, or until golden. Stir in garlic, chile, cumin and and sauté 2 minutes. Then simmer 1 minute.
2. Stir in chard. Cover, reduce heat to medium low, and steam 5 minutes, or until chard wilts. Uncover, and cook 3 minutes, or until liquid has evaporated.
3. Place 1 tortilla in skillet over medium heat. Sprinkle with 1/4 cup cheese. Top with 1/4 chard mixture and second tortilla. Cook 2 minutes per side, or until browned. Repeat with remaining ingredients. Slice into wedges; serve.

Kale and Olive Oil Mashed Potato

By Rie



Kale is a seasonal winter vegetable that is highly nutritious. It contains many vitamins and minerals and a good source of fiber. It is strongly anti-inflammatory.

Ingredients (serves six):

- 3 pounds potatoes, peeled and cut into large chunks
- sea salt
- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 bunch kale, large stems stripped and discarded, leaves chopped
- 1/2+ cup warm milk or cream
- freshly ground black pepper
- 5 scallions, white and tender green parts, chopped
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan, for garnish (opt)
- fried shallots, for garnish (optional)

1. Put the potatoes in a large pot and cover with water. Add a pinch of salt. Bring the water to a boil and continue boiling for 20 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender.
2. Heat two tablespoons of olive oil in a large pan or skillet over medium-high heat. Add the garlic, chopped kale, a big pinch of salt, and saute just until tender - about a minute. Set aside.
3. Mash the potatoes with a potato masher or fork. Slowly stir in the milk a few big splashes at a time. You are after a thick, creamy texture, so if your potatoes are on the dry side keep adding milk until the texture is right. Season with salt and pepper.
4. Dump the kale on top of the potatoes and give a quick stir. Transfer to a serving bowl, make a well in the center of the potatoes and pour the remaining olive oil. Sprinkle with the scallions, Parmesan cheese, and shallots.

Edible Weed Clover

By Masahide



I bet most people have tried to look for clover (which has four leaves) in their childhood. I also tried to look for four leaf clover, and I didn't have any luck finding any four leaf, but I found plenty of three leaf clover.

This month, I would like to introduce clover as an edible weed. You can find clover almost everywhere including our farm. Since clover is a very famous weed, I had not paid much attention to the weed by the time at which I started learning Natural Agriculture. Many people know that clover is beneficial for agriculture because it is a nitrogen fixation plant and good forage. However, I did not know that clover is also edible until I investigated it as an edible weed. According to Wikipedia, "Clovers are a valuable survival food, as they are high in protein, widespread, and abundant. They are not easy to digest

raw, but this can be easily fixed by juicing them or boiling them for 5–10 minutes. Dried flower heads and seedpods can also be ground up into a nutritious flour and mixed with other foods. Dried flower heads can also be steeped in hot water for a healthful, tasty tea."

The website, <http://www.squidoo.com/trifolium>, explains how to eat clover. "The leaves, flowers, seeds, and roots of clovers are all edible.

The young leaves, taken before the plant flowers, can be eaten raw in salads. As the plant matures, cooking the leaves is recommended. In my own experience with clover leaves, I found them to be rather bitter (maybe I picked them at the wrong time). I think I will stay with the flowers.

The roots should be eaten cooked.

The flowers and seeds are the parts of the clover that are of greatest interest to most foragers. The flowers are used raw in salads as well as sauteed, stir-fried, or fried as fritters. They are also popular for making teas and wines.

The flowers and seeds can be dried and ground into a flour."

The Honeybee: A Very Important Insect for Agriculture

By Masahide, Farm Staff Member



Did you know that we practice apiculture, beekeeping? At first, the purpose of our beekeeping was just to provide honey, but now, we have another purpose, which is to protect and increase the number of honeybees.

From 1972 to 2006, the number of feral honeybees in the United States was decreasing; and now, they have almost disappeared. The causes of this disappearance is likely to be influenced by several factors, such as urbanization, pesticide use, contagious disease, and commercial beekeepers retiring and going out of business. In addition to the disappearance of feral honeybees, a new syndrome has been observed, named “colony collapse disorder.” If colony collapse disorder happens to a beehive, the following conditions will be observed at the beehive:

1. There is no adult bee in the colony; however, no or little dead bees are in or around the colony.
2. There are bees’ eggs. Bees do not usually abandon a hive until all larvae are hatched.
3. There are provisions, such as honey and pollen.

Several causes are considered to affect the colony collapse disorder: for example, poor nutrition by a

monoculture diet, pesticides, contagious disease, bee rentals and migratory beekeeping that contribute to spread viruses or diseases, and electromagnetic radiation. Scientists have not obtained a conclusion that is the cause of colony collapse disorder yet. However, the most important thing is that the number of honeybees is decreasing, and honeybees have a very important role in agriculture, which is pollination.

The total U.S. crop value dependent on honeybee pollination is estimated to exceed \$15 billion. Although honeybees are not native to the U.S, and no native plants require honeybee pollination, one third of the U.S. crop relies on their pollination. These crops are almonds, peaches, soybeans, apples, pears, cherries, raspberries, blackberries, cranberries, watermelons, cantaloupes, cucumbers, and strawberries. Of course, other pollinators can pollinate these crops, however, the other pollinators are not used as easily or as effectively as honeybees.

So, how can we contribute to improve this problem as a consumer? One of the easiest ways is to purchase and grow organic produce and products, because they do not use pesticides. Pesticides might be the most significant factor of honeybee disappearance. In fact, in France, when one of the insecticides in use was suspended, bees seemed to be returning after several years as other pesticides were prohibited to be used.

In our Natural Agriculture field, we do not use pesticides, and there is no cell phone signal meaning less electromagnetic radiation. We grow many varieties of vegetables so that the honeybees diet must be healthy. We hope we will increase the number of honeybees and contribute to keeping biodiversity and providing honey to you in the future.

Reflection and Hope

(The Search for a Connection to Earth Series II)

By Rosann, Farm Staff Member



In the first “search for a connection to earth series” we connected to nature by planting a seed, and because we used the Natural Agriculture method it enabled us to listen to nature instead of trying to control it. In the N/A way you can become spiritually closer to what you are planting, because you are not busy worrying about what to add to the soil to fix it, or what to spray to control pests, or what type of fertilizer to use to best enhance the growth process. It may be hard at first, to overcome your prejudice against re-connecting with nature, as most of you are better equipped at controlling it. Thus, it benefits you to become boundless when relating to the earth. When you do this, the spirituality of nature will transform your destructive ways into constructive new connections that will amaze you. Nature’s grace has restorative powers that enable us to focus and go deep within our subconscious and bring forth to our consciousness the ability to think and feel and not react to actions learned from the past, but rather actively find a difference while relating to nature. We think we might know how nature works, but not until you start listening and seeing and giving nature a chance to do it’s own thing, only then

will you discover the ease and pleasure of growing things naturally on this earth, as nature permits.

When we consciously help our mind walk nature’s path we are open to feel the beauty and power of our environment. Just like when we plant the seed in the Natural Agriculture way, and watch it sprout there is very little that you have to do except water it, give it plenty of sunlight, good air, and unadulterated soil (except the leaves and twigs from the surrounding area). One day it will become a mature plant. When that happens you will be able to harvest what you have sown. When you are harvesting what you have planted, watered and cultivated for at least 3 months, you feel an inexplicable surge of warmth in your heart. When you are preparing the vegetables that you have grown for your meal and when you sit down to eat them, you may feel suddenly overwhelmed with a feeling of warmth for the earth and a reunion with nature. This is a reminder of being human on this planet, Earth.

When you are taking a hike, or a walk in nature, what do you see? How does what you see, make you feel? Everything you see and feel connects you to that object or living thing. Hence, you are making a connection to nature when you are taking a walk or a hike in the woods, the beach, a meadow, a trail near a river, or a kayaking or boating trip, and of course planting and cultivating in the Natural Agriculture way. So, when you make that connection to your experiences, you are getting closer to nature and the earth. Your experiences in nature are hopefully helping you become boundless when trying to make a connection to the earth, and hopefully we can reflect on what we see and feel, and try to open our hearts, and make a difference for the future of ourselves and of our planet, Earth.