

what's "cropping" up!

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Farmer puts the Family in Geauga Family Farms

Lester Hershberger is a third-generation farmer. And he's not going it alone. His wife, Martha, and their nine children – from ages 3 to 18 – work together on the 15-acre farm at 17570 Tavern Road in Parkman Township.

Like many Geauga Family Farms farmers, Lester does construction work in the months when he isn't quite as busy on the farm. He says he likes farming "better than anything else."

"I love the land so much," he said, speaking fondly of the gently rolling hills and a wooded area where he makes maple syrup in a small sugar house each spring.

He says his favorite thing about farming is that it allows him to be with his family.

"I love the idea of having the kids at home on the farm, and working together with them," he said. "When we're doing construction, we have long days and I don't get home until dark. It's not really my cup of tea."

Lester got into farming when construction work became hard to come by. It was only natural that he become a farmer; his dad and grandpa before him were farmers as well. The farm was handed down from generation to generation.

"We have a little property here, so everything just fell into place," he said. "It's just a thing we like to do."

Hershberger Farms specializes in organic snap peas and green and yellow beans. A wet spring made for a weak crop of peas and beans early in the season, but Lester says a later planting is looking really good.

A sign of being a natural-born farmer could be the ability to laugh at inclement weather.



A field of haystacks.

"Maybe we can live up to our specialty yet," he said, laughing. "I guess the wet weather early was kind of against it."

Lester is busy from the moment he wakes up till the time he goes to bed. The first thing he does each morning is turn on the water for irrigating the six acres of planted fields. When he's not tending the crops, there are animals that need his attention.

"We have all kinds of poultry – chickens, ducks, geese, guinea pheasants, turkeys and bobwhite quail," he said. "We don't have fryers, just mainly laying chickens."

In addition to the poultry, there are the family pets, Jack and Sparkle. Jack is a donkey, and Sparkle a pony.

"The kids ride both," Lester said. "The pony is the main means of transportation to deliver this produce we're growing. We just hitch him to the wagon. The donkey is good with the kids. The smaller kids just love him."

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Lester's happiness with life in general shows through. He always has a smile for everyone and a joke as well. When asked how many kids he has, he answers, "Just nine." He leaves it to Martha to remember the birthdays of the six boys and three girls. He says he couldn't do it all without Martha.

"She likes it just as well," Lester said. "She's right in there along with me. She does a lot of the

cleaning of the produce and packing it. She helps pick too, but it's mainly me and the kids."

Visit Lester's farm Tuesday, July 27, from 6:30-8 p.m. From Burton, follow Route 168 (Tavern Road) south for 2 miles. Lester's farm is on the right. He says you can't miss it because his big produce field is right out by the road. 

This week's picks

Coming this week to your CSA box could be some or all of the following: Cucumbers, zucchini, patty pan squash, yellow squash, potatoes, dill, cherry tomatoes, tomatoes, green/yellow beans, broccoli, beets, green peppers, fingerling potatoes, pickling cucumbers, celery, onions and Swiss chard.

Remember, farming isn't an exact science.

Family and Single shares won't necessarily include the same items so if you don't have one or more of these items, it's either because we didn't have enough, or because you have a Single share and the item in question was included in the Family share only.

Below are a few recipes using this week's vegetables. 

Zucchini Gratin

½ stick, plus one tbsp butter
2-3 yellow onions, sliced
2 lbs zucchini, sliced ¼ inch thick
1 tsp kosher salt
½ tsp fresh ground pepper
Dash nutmeg
2 tbsp flour
1 cup hot milk
¾ cup panko
¾ cup grated Gruyere cheese

Melt ½ stick butter in large skillet over low heat. Add onions and sauté over low heat 10 minutes. Add zucchini and continue to cook

another 5-10 minutes. Add salt, pepper, nutmeg and flour and cook two minutes. Add hot milk and continue to cook, stirring often, until sauce thickens.

Transfer zucchini mixture to 9 by 13 glass baking dish, coated with cooking spray. Mix panko and Gruyere and sprinkle evenly over zucchini mixture. Dot with remaining tablespoon of butter, cut into small pieces.

Bake in preheated 400 degree oven 20 minutes, or until bubbly and browned.

Recipe from Jackie Weller, Eagle Creek

Curry Vegetable Dip

Here is a recipe shared by one of the members at St. Paul's. He uses it for a range of raw vegetables, including turnips and zucchini.

1 c mayonnaise
1/2 T Worcestershire sauce
1 T lemon juice
1/2 T Tabasco sauce
1 T curry powder

1/4 T chili sauce
1/2 T finely minced onion
Salt and pepper to taste
Mix well. Keep in refrigerator until ready to serve. Also can be used with seafood.

Recipe from Dennis Coughlin, St. Paul's

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Letters from our members

We receive numerous e-mails each week from our members and want to share their comments, both good and bad. We love hearing from you. Feel free to share your comments, recipes and suggestions anytime. E-mail them to me at LMFree99@yahoo.com.

Photos of each week's share are being posted by

GFF member Lyn Trier on Facebook. Anyone on Facebook can look at the photos Lyn is posting and identify your veggies there. Just "Like" Geauga Family Farms and click on "Links" in the bottom left-hand portion of the page. It will bring up a list of postings from each week, with labeled photos of all the veggies. 

First, I would like to tell you I'm very pleased with the quality, quantity and variety of the produce I receive each week. This is my first time being involved with a CSA and the experience has been positive.

Second, I make my pick-up on Thursdays at the warehouse on Tavern Road, and, unfortunately, I will be unable to make the pick-up the next three Thursdays. If possible, could you please donate my share to a charity or family that can use the produce? I would appreciate it very much.

Thanks and keep up the good work!

~Alan Wojciechowicz, Warehouse

This thank you is long overdue. Thank you for giving me the directions to the Hershberger farm last week over the phone and adjusting the email so I can continue to get the newsletters. I am enjoying being a part of the CSA so much. The farm tour was outstanding. It will be a summer highlight for me and my family.

Thank you for all the work you do to enhance

the experience for us. The newsletters/recipes etc are super.

If you have a way of passing on this info to one of the Amish farmers (I don't know his name, but we talked at length last week on the tour) according to your newsletter, kholrabi tops are edible. I asked him about it, he was wondering, too, and I found the answer in the newsletter!!!

We are so happy to be involved in this group. Thanks again.

Sincerely,

~Mary Haas, St. Noel

I've been meaning to e-mail to say how much we enjoy getting our produce each week. It's such a treat. We were disappointed last week though that our raspberries were moldy and inedible. Bummer!

Cheers,

~Brenda Modliszewski, St. Paul's

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Creamy Mashed Cauliflower

Serves 4

This savory cauliflower puree makes a perfect low-carb stand-in for mashed potatoes. It gets its fabulous flavor from garlic, buttermilk and a touch of butter and, best of all, it has about one-quarter of the calories of typical mashed potatoes. If you like, vary it by adding shredded low-fat cheese or chopped fresh herbs.

8 cups bite-size cauliflower florets (about 1 head)

4 cloves garlic, crushed and peeled

1/3 cup nonfat buttermilk (see Tip)

4 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided

1 teaspoon butter

1/2 teaspoon salt

Freshly ground pepper to taste

Snipped fresh chives for garnish

Place cauliflower florets and garlic in a steamer basket

over boiling water, cover and steam until very tender, 12 to 15 minutes.

Place the cooked cauliflower and garlic in a food processor. Add buttermilk, 2 teaspoons oil, butter, salt and pepper; pulse several times, then process until smooth and creamy. Transfer to a serving bowl. Drizzle with the remaining 2 teaspoons oil and garnish with chives, if desired. Serve hot.

Recipe from Eatingwell.com



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Aloo Gobi

Serves 8

Great Indian recipe from the film Bend It Like Beckham.
 1/4 cup vegetable oil
 1 large onion, peeled and cut into small pieces
 1 bunch fresh coriander, separated into stalks and leaves and roughly chopped
 1 small green chile, chopped (or tsp. chili powder)
 1 large cauliflower, leaves removed and cut into eighths
 3 large potatoes, peeled and cut into even pieces
 2 cans diced tomatoes
 fresh ginger, peeled and grated
 fresh garlic, chopped
 1 teaspoon cumin seed
 2 teaspoons turmeric
 1 teaspoon salt
 2 teaspoons garam masala
 Heat vegetable oil in a large saucepan. Add the chopped onion and 1 tsp. of cumin seeds to the oil. Stir together

and cook until onions become creamy, golden, and translucent. Add chopped coriander stalks, 2 tsps. of turmeric, and 1 tsp. of salt.

Add chopped chiles (according to taste). Stir tomatoes into onion

mixture. Add ginger and garlic; mix thoroughly.

Add potatoes and cauliflower to the sauce plus a few tablespoons of water (ensuring that the mixture doesn't stick to the saucepan).

Ensure that the potatoes and cauliflower are coated with the curry sauce. Cover and allow to simmer for twenty minutes (or until potatoes are cooked).

Add two teaspoons of Garam Masala and stir.

Recipe from RecipeZaar.com



Salad Nicoise

Serves 4

1/2 pound new potatoes, quartered
 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
 1/4 cup pitted nicoise olives
 1/2 onion, thinly sliced
 1 (6 ounce) can tuna
 1/3 pound fresh green beans - rinsed, trimmed and blanched
 1/2 pound mixed salad greens
 1 cup lemon vinaigrette
 3 hard-cooked eggs, quartered
 3 roma (plum) tomatoes, thinly sliced
 1 tablespoon capers
 4 anchovy filets
 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add potatoes, and cook until tender but still firm, about 15 minutes. Drain and cool.

In a large bowl, combine the potatoes, parsley, olives, onion, tuna and green beans. Refrigerate for 2 to 4 hours.

In large bowl, toss greens with vinaigrette and top with chilled potato mixture. Garnish with eggs, tomatoes, capers and anchovies.

For a tasty summer dish, dress it up with other garden vegetables like corn, blanched broccoli, cauliflower or asparagus. This salad is nice because it uses beans, potatoes, tomatoes, lettuce and eggs, all items you regularly see in your share.

Recipe from Allrecipes.com



More on kohlrabi

In case you still have some kohlrabi left that you just don't know what to do with, it is delicious eaten raw. Peel off the outer skin. Slice, dice, or grate and add to salads. Use on raw vegetable platters or serve with a creamy dip. Substitute in recipes calling for radishes.

Grated kohlrabi can be added to slaw, but lightly salt it first and let stand for several minutes. Squeeze to remove any excess water before adding dressing.

Kohlrabi can also be steamed or boiled. For this preparation

don't peel until after it's cooked. Steam or boil until bulbs are tender; peel skin and season with butter, salt, and pepper; a cheese sauce, or just enjoy plain.

If the leaves attached to the kohlrabi bulb are fresh and green, they can be enjoyed as a cooked green. Wash the leaves and remove the ribs. Blanch in boiling water until just wilted, 3 to 5 minutes. Drain and squeeze excess water from leaves. Chop leaves, then saute in a little olive oil or butter. Season with salt and pepper. Add a splash of vinegar or squeeze of fresh lemon juice.

Sen. Sherrod Brown announces more than \$50,000 to promote Ohio agriculture

ODA, Appalachian Center for Economic Networks, to receive funding

WASHINGTON D.C. – U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) announced that \$54,375 has been awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to the Ohio Department of Agriculture and the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks.

The funds, provided under the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP), will be used to develop new local food processing, aggregation and distribution infrastructure in Ohio.

“Agriculture is Ohio’s biggest industry and these funds will enable more fresh, local foods to be available to

Ohioans,” Brown said. “We must continue to look for new ways for Ohio’s farmers to put their food on Ohioans’ tables.”

These grants will explore new and innovative approaches to marketing U.S. food and agricultural products and to improve the efficiency and performance of the marketing system.

FSMIP funds a wide range of applied research projects that address barriers, challenges, and opportunities in marketing, transporting, and distributing U.S. food and agricultural products domestically and internationally.

You can too can, or not

Pickled Yellow Wax Beans with Fresh Dill (from Eating Local)

- 1 pound yellow wax beans, as straight as possible
- 1 cluster fresh dill flower heads
- 1 large clove garlic, halved lengthwise
- 1 small dried red chile
- 1 ½ cups white vinegar
- 1 ½ cups water
- 1 Tablespoon kosher or sea salt

Fill a canning kettle with enough water to cover the top of a widemouthed quart canning jar resting on the preserving rack. Bring to a boil over high heat. Wash the jar with hot, soapy water; rinse well, and keep upside down on a clean dish towel until you are ready to fill it. Put a new lid (never reuse lids) in a heatproof bowl and cover with boiling water.

Remove the tips of the beans and, if necessary, trim the beans so they will fit upright in the jar. Fill the jar with the beans, dill, garlic, and chile, packing the beans tightly, but

neatly.

Put the vinegar, water and salt in a small saucepan and bring just to a boil, stirring to dissolve the salt. Remove from the heat and ladle the hot liquid into the jar, leaving ½ inch of headspace. Wipe the jar rim clean with a damp paper towel. Top with the lid and then a screw band. Close firmly.

Place the jar on the preserving rack and lower the rack into the canning kettle. If the water doesn’t cover the jar, add boiling water from a tea kettle. Cover the canning kettle. After the water returns to a boil, boil for 10 minutes. With a jar lifter, transfer the jar to a rack to cool completely. Do not touch the jar again until you hear the pop that indicates that the lid has sealed. You can confirm that the lid has sealed by pressing the center with your finger. If it gives, it has not sealed and the contents should be refrigerated and used within a week. Store the sealed jar in a cool, dark place for at least one month before using. It will keep for up to one year. Refrigerate after opening.

Refrigerator Pickles

Laurie Albright, a member who picks up at First Unitarian, wasn’t sure quite what to do with the pickling cucumbers, and isn’t into canning yet. In case anyone else is wondering the same thing, here is a recipe I got from my friend Amy Liikala after tasting hers at a recent picnic.

While pickling cucumbers taste great peeled, or not, and sliced and salted, just like any other cukes, they can also be used in this recipe. You can adjust it to smaller amounts, but if you find you like them, the farmers have cucumbers coming out of their ears right now and are looking for ways to get rid of them.

1 gallon sliced pickling cucumbers (Can add thinly sliced onions)

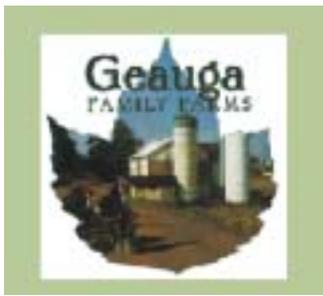
- 3 cups white vinegar
- 2-3 cups sugar

- 1/3 cup salt
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon mustard seed
- 1 teaspoon celery seed

Slice cucumbers into a glass or plastic container. Add sliced onion if desired. Mix all the rest of the ingredients (cold) and pour over cucumbers/onions.

Stir or shake jar a few times to coat all veggies with brine mixture. Cover and store in the refrigerator. Let stand overnight and then enjoy.

Note: Amy keeps the brine in the refrigerator for most of the summer and just keeps slicing veggies into it as needed. Once in a while she adds a bit more of the spices too, but the brine works pretty much indefinitely. You can add a sliced jalapeño too, if you want to add some heat.



Cluck-cluck, quack, quack, moo-oo-oo

Ducks have been added to the selection of poultry available from GFF farmers now. Free-range chickens and ducks are fed organic minerals; most are fed conventional feed. The freshly butchered chickens are \$2.50 a pound. Most weigh in at about 4 pounds or so.

Please call Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris at 216-321-7109 or Laura Dobson at 440-478-9849 to place your order. Chickens and ducks **MUST** be picked up at the farms.

Also available is grass-fed, pastured groundbeef. For CSA members, the cost is \$3.75 per pound delivered with your shares. Contact Kathleen Webb at 216-408-7719 or gfamilyfarms@aol.com. 

Using your veggies in the most unusual ways...

Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris, farm representative and site manager at St. Paul's, contributed this recipe for a refreshing summer drink. Why not get your veggies while relaxing after work or with friends on the weekends?

Michelle writes, "I've been seeing more and more cocktails that include cucumber. One of our favorites for the summer is the drink of choice at the Chelsea Garden Show in London - the Pimm's and Lemonade. I've attached a recipe - it's quite refreshing."

- 1 cup of Pimm's No. 1*
- 2 cups of sparkling lemonade or lemon-lime soda
- 2 limes (cut in wedges)

- 1-2 lemons (cut in wedges)
- 6 sprigs of fresh mint (crushed a bit)
- 1 small to medium cucumber (cut in half, seeded and sliced into 1/8 inch slices)
- Ice



Fill pitcher 1/4 full with ice. Layer fruit, cucumbers and mint. Pour in the Pimm's No. 1 and lemonade, stir gently and serve. Makes 4 drinks.

*Pimm's No. 1, a gin-based drink, was invented in 1823 by James Pimm, who served it at his oyster bar in London. It is widely available at liquor stores. 

Farm Visits

Meet the Farmer Dates 2010

Fourth Tuesdays – 6:30-8 p.m.

Second Saturdays – 1-4 p.m.

Drive out to picturesque Geauga County for a visit with the farmers of Geauga Family Farms. The second Saturday and fourth Tuesday of every month through October, CSA members can come see where their food is grown, and meet the farmers who have nurtured the certified-organic produce shareholders receive each week in their CSA share.

For a map of all the farms, visit our Web site at www.geaugafamilyfarmsllc.org and click on Meet Our Farmers on the left.

Tuesday, July 27

Lester Hershberger

Southern Geauga County farms:

Saturday, Aug. 14

Jonas L. Byler

Thomas C. Byler

Quote of the Week: "The New Economics Foundation, an independent economic think tank based in London, compared what happens when people buy produce at a supermarket vs. a local farmer's market or community supported agriculture (CSA) program and found that twice the money stayed in the community when folks bought locally. "That means those purchases are twice as efficient in terms of keeping the local economy alive," says author and NEF researcher David Boyle."

~Buying Local: How it Boosts the Economy, Time Magazine

Read more at: <http://tinyurl.com/27lcrfe>

www.geaugafamilyfarmsllc.org

Mailing address:

Geauga Family Farms
17050 Nash Road
Middlefield, OH 44062

For more information, call 440-478-9849

Web site: www.geaugafamilyfarmsllc.org

Editor: Laura Dobson, LMFree99@yahoo.com

The Fair Share is a weekly e-newsletter produced by Geauga Family Farms.