

Johnson's Backyard Garden, April 28th

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We'd like your input for the newsletter! Please send us brief personal stories about your CSA experience to include in a new 'Member Spotlight' column. Related news articles, book reviews, recipes, etc are also welcome. carolyn@johnsonsbayardgarden.com

1) In Your Box this Week

Spinach
Arugula
Chard
Collards or Cabbage
Garlic
Mustard Greens
Leeks
Tomatoes
Strawberries

As the unexpected never fails to happen, keep in mind that this list is subject to change depending on availability and quality of crops on harvest day. You'll find the most accurate packing list on the homepage of our [website](#). The website list also features links to online recipes, pictures (for the more mysterious veggies) and other interesting tidbits.

2) Farm News

- As we till in winter crops to make room for more summer ones, we are also attempting to straighten out the beds, making them form true right angles with the road and irrigation lines. Last Sunday we had a number of volunteers that helped Brenton with the transit and survey rod to mark out the rows. It's amazing how hard it is to drive a tractor in a straight line!



- This past week saw a lot of tree trimming and poison ivy removal (and itching and scratching) as we expanded the field that lies next to the new greenhouse.
- Brenton's stereo, left over from his bachelor days, has found a new home in the farm office. When sitting at the computer there are now two five-foot tall speakers on either side, a central speaker overhead, a subwoofer at your feet and two more speakers behind your head, all within a space not much larger than your average cubicle. Now if we could only get speakers in the packing shed, we'd surely see marked increases in productivity!
- We're on MySpace! Be our friend: www.myspace.com/johnsonbackyardgarden

3) Spring Open House – THIS Sunday!

Our Spring Open House and Potluck is **Sunday May 4**. We have 3 bands booked: [Dear Henry](#), [The Flatcar Rattlers](#) and [La Tampiquena](#). Music will start at 5pm with the potluck and go until dark. Should be lots of fun, we hope to see you there!

For those who are new to this list, here's more potluck info:

Potluck Dinner from **5 – 7pm**, feel free to come early to see the farm, or stay late just to hang out! Held in the pecan grove at the farm, this is a great chance to meet the faces behind your CSA box as well as other CSA members. Please bring a dish to share, as well as place settings for you and yours. To RSVP, send us an email and we'll send you our Evite invitation.

4) Thank You for the Donations!

Over the past few months we've had a lot of donations of furniture and office supplies from CSA

members and friends of the farm. We wanted to take a chance to publicize our gratitude to all the kind people who have contributed:

Julie and Laurent Fouillet
Jon Marler
Janice Ray
Dena and John Garcia
Katherine Reece
Marian Schwartz
Michael Klug and Michelle Grubin
Joyce Ghosh
Chalon Hensarling
Donna Troy
Michele and the Sunflower Coop
Joy Kohl
M'Lynda Owens

5) Farm Wish List

- Fans (to prevent interns from wilting!)
- Washing Machine (we'll use it to spin dry salad greens!)
- Bunk Beds (we have 4 more interns on the way...)
- Vacuum Cleaner (and they are dirty)

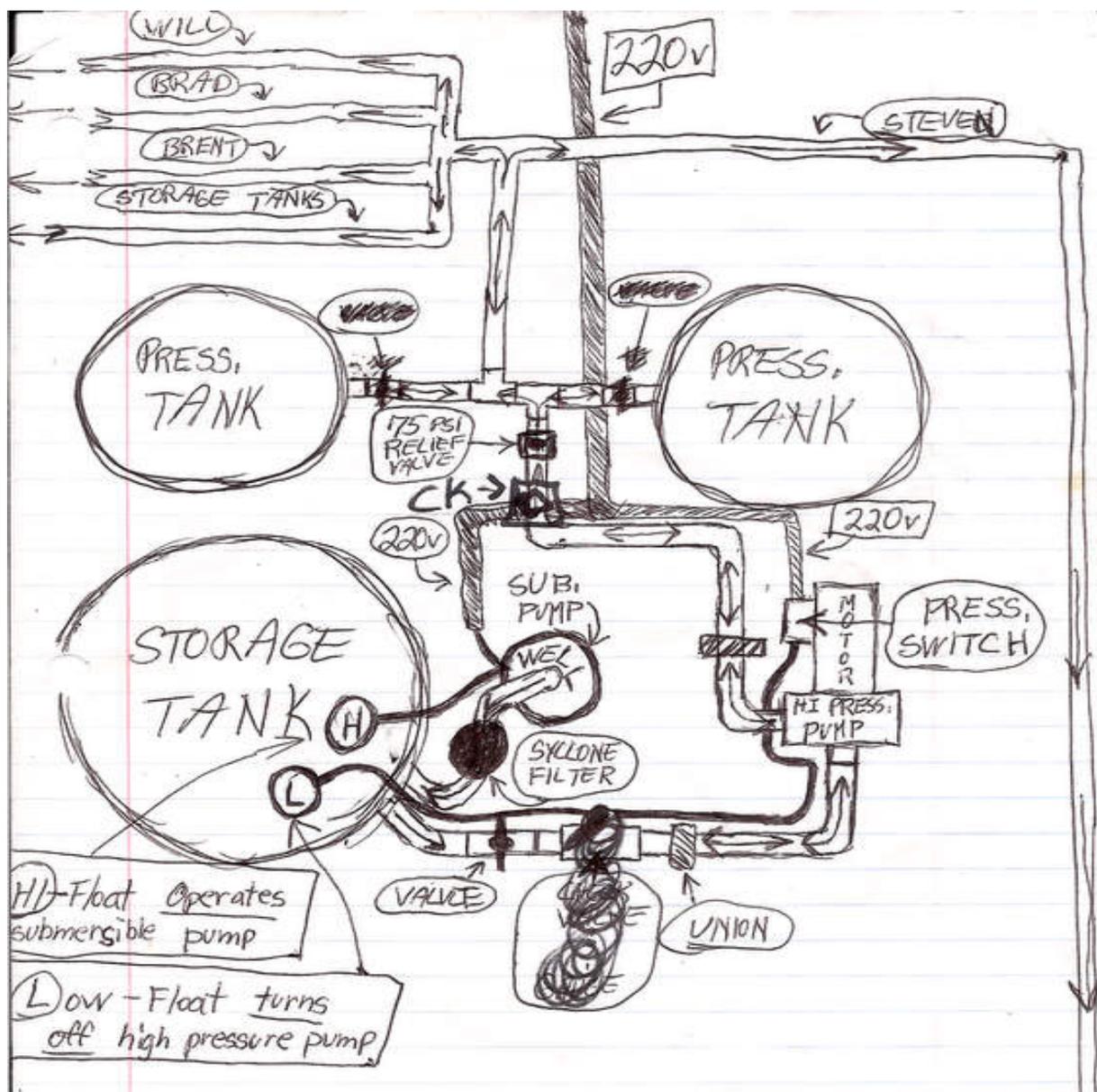
Have something you could donate or give us a good deal on?

Email farm@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com

6) Just Add Water

Carolyn Fryberger, Intern

My day starts – and often middles and ends – with cleaning the irrigation filters. Every morning I walk sleepy-eyed, coffee cup in hand (and sometimes oatmeal too), past our intern garden and then behind Will and Caroline's house to the well. This well is the source of water for all four houses on the farm, and for irrigating the fields. To the untrained eye this maze of intertwining pipes designed by Chalon Hensarling and Brenton looks more like an M.C. Escher drawing than what one typically thinks of as a 'well.'



Well drawing - this was a joint effort between Chalon and Brenton to figure out the control system for the irrigation and residential water supply. A lot of head scratching went into this design, which both Chalon and Brenton agree they couldn't have figured out on their own. The system has worked great so far.

The water that will eventually go to the fields comes up from about thirty feet down in the ground, goes through a series of two filters and then in to two large black holding tanks by the barn. The first filter is a cyclone filter, the water spins around in this chamber and as it does the large sediment particles fall to the bottom where they are held until I flush the filter out. This one is easy to clean, I just open the valve at the bottom and let the water run out for 5 seconds or so, taking care to stand back far enough that I don't soak myself so early in the day from the splash as the water hits the concrete pad.



The second filter is a screen filter for the very fine sediment, and I swear it clogs just from looking at it. This one requires more attention, I actually have to set my coffee cup down on the spare cinder block before I set to cleaning it. Empty-handed, I then take a look at the pressure gauges on either side of the filter to get an idea of just how clogged it is – if the one reading the incoming water is high and the one on the outgoing water is low then I know the filter is clogged. If it's the other way around then that means the holding tanks are full, and if they're equal that means the filter is clear and the tanks are filling. After checking the pressure I turn down the incoming water to a trickle, I unscrew the filter chamber which holds the cylindrical screen inside and scrub out the screen with a brush. Once the filter is back together, I turn on the water again and watch with satisfaction as the pressure gauges equalize.



After the water has passed through these filters there are two different directions it can take – either it will go to the houses or it will go to the fields. Water that goes to the houses goes through a booster pump and a pressure tank located at the well. Water for the fields is directed to the barn where there is another booster pump and two large black storage tanks totaling 5,500 gallons.

To irrigate the fields at the height of the season we need 1.5 inches of water per acre (that's a total of 41,000 gallons/acre), per week – for us that means about 283,500 gallons of water per week. The well produces 20 – 25 gallons per minute or 28,800 – 36,000 gallons per day, at least so long as the filters are clear. At this rate, we can irrigate one acre with one inch of water every day; with seven acres in production it's crucial that the filters stay clean and the tanks full. We are planning to add another well towards the end of the summer – I'm going to need two cups of coffee to get through cleaning all those filters...

8) Vegetable Storage Tips

We aim to grow and package our vegetables to maintain the highest taste and nutritional quality possible. However, once they've left the farm it's up to you to keep them fresh and nutritious. There's no

refrigeration at the CSA drop points so it's good to pick up your box as early as possible, especially as the weather heats up. Here are some additional tips for storing this week's share:

- **Arugula** should be washed immediately then spin dried. Rebag and place in the refrigerator.
- **Cabbage** has a fridge life of up to two weeks.
- **Greens** should be kept in plastic bags. Any bunch greens can be freshened by cutting an inch of the bottom stalks and soaking the entire bunch in cold water for 10 minutes. Place in a plastic bag in the fridge for a few hours to revive.
- **Leeks** wrap in plastic and use within a week.
- **Strawberries** are best covered in the fridge. Don't wash them until you use them - too much moisture in the package speeds spoilage.
- **Tomatoes** should be kept uncovered at room temp, but can be refrigerated if very ripe. All other fresh vegetables belong in the refrigerator.

Checkout our [storage tips](#) on our website for a more complete guide, and of course feel free to contact us with any questions.

9) Recipes

We would love to share your recipes too! Please email your favorites to carolyn@johnsonsbakyardgarden.com

This week's recipes form a nice menu featuring veggies from this week's box:

- Salad: Arugula Salad with Orange Vinaigrette or Warm Greens Salad
- Pasta: Fettuccine with Chevre, Spinach and Herbs
- Side: Baked Leeks
- Dessert: Strawberries with Balsamic Vinegar in Mascarpone-Mousse

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### **Arugula Salad with Orange Vinaigrette**

From Mollie Katzen's *Vegetable Heaven*

Salad:

1 medium-sized head butter (Boston) lettuce  
1 – 2 bunches arugula, coarsely chopped  
10 radishes, thinly sliced  
3 T minced chives  
Fresh ground black pepper

Vinaigrette:

2 t orange zest  
½ c orange juice  
4 T red wine vinegar or sherry vinegar

2 cloves garlic, finely minced  
2 T minced fresh parsley  
1 t salt  
½ c olive oil

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Warm Greens Salad

From Mollie Katzen's *Moosewood Cookbook*

3 T olive oil
3 bunches of greens (choose any three: escarole, chard, mustard greens, kale, collards, or dandelion greens)
about 8 large leaves Napa or Savoy cabbage, chopped

1 – 2 t salt
2 large cloves garlic, minced
2 medium leeks, chopped
2 cups red onion, chopped
¾ lb mushrooms, sliced
1 stalk celery, sliced
½ small cauliflower, chopped
3 T balsamic or wine vinegar
6 T (or more!) parmesan
Lots of fresh black pepper

Sautee greens in olive oil, salting lightly. Use a fairly intense level of heat and stir as you cook. When all greens are wilted and tender, stir in the garlic. Cook just a minute or two more, then transfer to a platter.

Next sauté leeks, onion, mushrooms, celery and cauliflower. Salt lightly, stir-fry quickly over medium heat until just tender (5 to 8 minutes). Add to the platter and mix gently to incorporate the greens. Sprinkle with vinegar and parmesan and black pepper. Serve hot warm or at room temperature with thick slices of toasted bread to mop up the juices (sourdough is especially good).

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**Fettuccine with Chevre, Spinach and Herbs**

From David Hirsch's *The Moosewood Restaurant Kitchen Garden*

2 T vegetable oil  
2/3 c chopped scallions  
1 pound fresh spinach  
1/3 c vegetable stock or water  
1/3 cup chopped fresh parsley  
1/3 c chopped fresh dill, or 1 T dried (or try basil or chervil)

12 oz fettuccine  
4 T butter, cut into small pieces  
12 oz chevre (fresh goat cheese, not aged), crumbled or diced  
½ c chopped toasted hazelnuts  
1 fresh tomato, diced

Boil 1 ½ gallons of salted water in a large pot to cook the pasta.

Heat oil in a pan large enough to hold all the spinach. Sauté the scallions for about 30 seconds, then add the spinach and stock. When the spinach is wilted, add the parsley and dill and remove from heat.

Warm a large, ovenproof serving bowl and individual dishes in a 200F oven or with hot water (this will keep the pasta from cooling down too fast).

Cook the fettuccine, drain, and pour into the large serving bowl. Toss it first with the butter and chevre, then with the spinach-herb mix. Serve immediately garnishing with hazelnuts and diced tomatoes.

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Mama Flora's Baked Leeks

From David Hirsch's *The Moosewood Restaurant Kitchen Garden*

2 good-sized leeks (totaling about 1 pound once upper greens are removed)
2 T oil
8 sprigs fresh dill, or 1 T dried
3 garlic cloves, halved
2 t miso
1 t soy sauce
½ c water
Preheat oven to 350 F.

Cut and split leeks in half, rinse carefully to remove dirt lodged between layers. Place the leeks in two layers in an oiled baking dish, coat the leeks with oil as well. Tuck the dill and garlic in amongst the leeks.

Whisk together the miso, soy sauce and water to make a smooth sauce. Pour over the leeks.

Bake covered for 25 minutes. Uncover, stir to prevent sticking and scorching, the bake uncovered for 20 minutes. Add small quantities of water if leeks are in danger of drying out.

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From Grit:

This is a scrumptious dessert, which is easily prepared and will leave a long lasting impression on your dinner guests or your husband.... Love after all goes through the stomach ;-).

## **Strawberries with Balsamic Vinegar in Mascarpone-Mousse**

Adapted from [simplyrecipes.com](http://simplyrecipes.com)

Makes 4 servings

### Ingredients:

1 lb strawberries

1/2 C heavy cream

1/2 lb whole milk ricotta

4 oz. mascarpone

1/4 C sugar

1/8 C balsamic vinegar or to taste

Lemon juice to taste

### Preparation:

In a medium bowl, beat the cream to soft peaks. In a separate bowl combine the ricotta, mascarpone, half the sugar and lemon juice. Beat until the ingredients are thoroughly combined and smooth. Gradually fold the whipped cream into the mixture. Cover and refrigerate for a couple of hours.

Quarter strawberries and set aside. Half an hour before serving gently mix the remaining sugar and balsamic vinegar together and pour over the strawberries. Make sure, the strawberries are evenly covered by the vinegar. Don't let the strawberries sit in the vinegar for much longer than 30 minutes, otherwise the acidity will "cook" the strawberries.

To serve, first scoop some of the mascarpone-mousse onto your desert vessel and then sprinkle the strawberries and their juices over it.

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11) [Johnson's Backyard Garden Contact Information](#)

Johnson's Backyard Garden

9515 Hergotz Lane, Box E

Austin, Texas 78742

phone: 512-386-5273

e-mail: [farm@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com](mailto:farm@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com)

website: [www.johnsonsbackyardgarden.com](http://www.johnsonsbackyardgarden.com)

