



Where the Land, Food, and People Come Together!

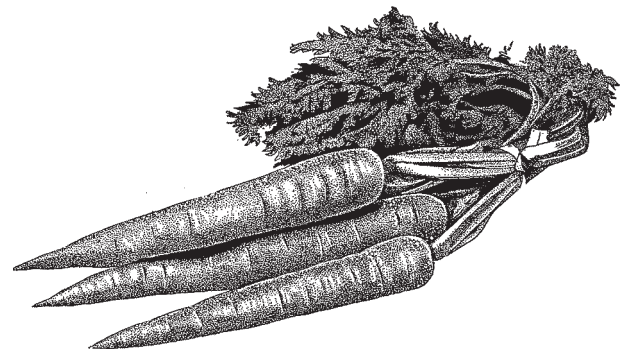
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Where we've Been, Where we're Going....

Welcome to Three Rivers Community Farm. Let me share with you where we've been, how we got here, and where we're headed. From 2003-2005, I was the head grower at La Vista CSG, an organic vegetable farm located at the Oblates in Godfrey, IL. I had three delicious years growing vegetables and growing the farm. I decided, however, not to continue at La Vista, because my husband and I wanted to start a farm together. We decided to take a year off, explore our options, save a little money, and work and learn on two East Coast organic farms. Last summer, feeling home sick for the hot, dry summers (yeah right), the Cards (definitely) and our many friends, we decided to move back to Illinois for good. The idea for our own farm started with a proposal to two of Principia's professors, Gary Fleener and Chrissy McCallister. They were both intrigued by the idea of starting a farm on Prin land. Our dream took root last June when the college approved our lease of 12 acres. At the time we were living in Massachusetts--no problem! We can start a farm from 800 miles away! I came back in the Fall to see the property for the first time and after one sleepless night and a big pep talk from many of our friends we decided to go for it! We moved back to Elsah in December and have spent the winter months learning the ins and outs of starting a small farm business and digging and uncovering the many layers involved in starting a farm from just a field. It has been both thrilling and challenging. Obviously, the thrill is creating the farm that we lay awake at night dreaming about. And the challenge has been waking up from our dreams to the reality of Quickbooks, marketing, paying bills, water and electricity.... (see page 3)

Three Rivers is going SUSTAINABLE!!!

"Necessity is the mother of invention," and innovation, I would argue. As our vision for the farm began to take a realistic shape, we started thinking about the basic necessities for running a small vegetable farm. A tractor--check! We bought a wonderful cultivating tractor, a Kubota 245, with thirty horse power, specialized enough to cultivate, strong enough to work the soil with a rotovator, and it is diesel, so we hope to run it on biodiesel. Are we going to build a barn? Of course! We have been so fortunate to work with Mike Rechlin of Principia College who teaches a sustainable logging class in April to a few lucky students (why didn't my college have a forestry class?) With these students, Mike has offered to harvest wood from stands surrounding our fields, mill the wood, and then help us build a barn in early May. Talk about locally grown! Finally, what about electricity? There is no electricity on the property right now. This gave us the opportunity to think about using solar power right from the start. In early December, Bob Solger of the Energy Store in St. Louis, met with Segue and I to see what our solar options were for the farm. He did a site survey, we shared with him what our electrical needs were, and he told us about the newest in solar technology. A realistic plan was hatched to keep the farm off-grid. With the use of Solar Laminate sheets stuck right to the roof of the barn (no panels needed) we will generate enough electricity to power our cooler, a few lights, and a few other miscellaneous tools! The overall project will cost about \$18,000. We are currently applying for a loan to cover this upfront cost.... (continued on page 3)



Farm and People Come Together !

Visit our new website:
www.threeriverscommunityfarm.com



Three Rivers Highlights: This Farm is Different!

Segue and I wanted to create a farm that focused on life's generousities and meeting people wherever they might be. There are no rules here (okay, just a few safety guidelines), no meetings, no volunteer requirements (but we love volunteers!) When you come to the farm, we want you to feel welcomed and enjoy your time here. Come and experience all the good things that happen when we take care of a little piece of the Earth. Here's just a sample of what makes Three Rivers Community Farm unique:

- The farm is open from dawn to dusk seven days a week. You can come anytime to do PYO, walk the fields, have a picnic, visit the pigs.
- Those who come to the farm for pick-up do not need to commit to either Tuesday or Friday. You can come either day, depending on your schedule.
- We want to encourage community in a subtle way. To that end, we will have picnic tables and chairs, a sand box, U-Pick crops, volunteer opportunities, and a few gatherings where we can get to know each other and celebrate good farm food.
- Our website and weekly newsletter is a great resource for our St. Louis members who can't visit often, but still want to connect with the farm.

--For our on-farm members, pick-up is layed out in a "Mix-Match" system. Your share is determined by a volume limit rather than piecemeal. This means that when you come to pick-up, you will get one to two bags (depending on the time of year) that we provide, and you will fill them with what you need. Maybe your kids refuse to eat broccoli. No problem, take what they love, more carrots, maybe. After seeing all the tempting possibilites, we expect most folks will want to try a little of everything!



Where we've been continued....)

We have been incredibly busy speaking with all sorts of organizations about the farm--from wholistic mother's groups to the Environmental Science department at Washington University. We also did the essential seed ordering and field planning. Using a computer spreadsheet, we can tell you the life story of the cherry tomatoes you will be munching on in August, what variety they are, how many feet we are growing, when they were started in the green house, and when they were transplanted into the field. Imagine having this intimate knowledge for sixty other crops eventually covering six acres. WE DO! And it is this great master plan that gives us all the confidence in the world to promise to you that we are going to have a great season. Finally, the winter is when we do as much equipment purchases as possible. We have bought a seeder, two pieces of cultivating equipment, a mower and a rotovator. There is still so much to do! But we started in the Principia greenhouse last Tuesday and with over 200 flats of onions, leeks, cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower, there is no turning back now! If you are a member, then welcome to this exciting adventure called farming. Its a wild ride of weather, luck, wrenches, seeds, and the best tasting watermelon, carrots, lettuce, tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, potatoes, bok choy, spinach, onions, kale, cauliflower, and (insert your favorite vegetable)....

(Sustainable continued...)

But it is a great time in the state of Illinois to be pursuing alternative energies. Three Rivers is applying for a grant from the USDA and a rebate from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Finally, a tax credit offered by the federal government should help us pay off the bank loan quickly. More than operating and financial freedom, we consider these opportunities part of our larger mission of respecting and nurturing our environment. We will be farming sustainably, why not expand this idea into as many areas of the farm as we can!

About the FOOD!

Unique Varieties=Unique Taste!

Deciding on varieties is a little like writing out a Christmas wish list. We try to grow a mix of productive hybrids and traditional heirloom varieties. Here is just a sampling of the interesting, quirky, downright bizarre vegetables that we will be trying out this season:

- deep purple scallions
- fatalii hot peppers
- indigo radicchio
- jelly bean cherry tomatoes
- orange banana plum tomatoes
- new red fire lettuce
- amazing cauliflower
- marathon broccoli
- diablo brussel sprouts
- costata romanesco zucchini
- sunshine watermelon
- JTO-99197 tomato
- hillbilly potato leaf tomato
- winner kohlrabi
- dragon tongue beans

Have you sent in your payment yet?

Farm memberships are sold on a first come first serve basis. Please consider sending in at least half to reserve your spot. The farm asks for money up front in order to cover growing expenses such as potting soil, equipment and seed purchases, the internet bill (you get the gist). Unlike other farmers who may take out loans at the beginning of the season and then rely on a risky market to make a profit, CSA's guarantee farmers a fair wage for their hardwork and crops!

Farm Events

see you there....

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

May 5th, Saturday, 8-2 PM: Old-fashioned Barn Raising! Come help us build our barn. A lunch potluck will be from 1-2PM to celebrate the morning's hard work!

May 15th, 17th, 18th: The first week of pick-up. Tuesday and Friday from 2-7 PM for on-farm; Thursday from 2-7 PM for St. Louis members at your assigned site.

June 9th, Saturday 5PM: The Best Salad Bar in the World !! Potluck at the farm. Please bring your favorite salad (or any other favorite dish) to share, chairs, and utensils.



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