



## Spring Greens CSA: Week 1

It's our absolute favorite time of the year - spring is in the air, and Towne's Harvest Garden is pulsing with life and enthusiasm. We have 18 Sustainable Foods & Bioenergy Systems practicum students joining us this summer, and we can already tell that this is going to be one of our biggest years yet!

If you're a new member, we sincerely thank you for your support and interest in our program, and if you're a returning member we wholeheartedly appreciate your continued allegiance and belief in what we do.

Our newsletter format is a little different this year. We've switched away from using PDF files and are instead using MailChimp as our email service of choice - this is new to us, so please let us know if you encounter any issues along the way. With all of that being said, let's get on to the good stuff!



Our farm director and practicum teacher, Mac Burgess, explains some of the tractor implements to a group of the practicum students.

## "So, what's in the CSA for this week?"

spring greens: week 1

We could not be more thrilled to provide you with a bountiful share of hand harvested, hand washed, passion borne fresh vegetables

Lettuce Mix  
Spinach  
Spicy Greens Mix  
Lacinato (Dinosaur) Kale  
Victoria Butterhead Lettuce  
Shiro Pac Choi  
Rhubarb  
Haukerai Turnips  
Green Onions  
Chives  
Oregano

We took a gamble this past week and transplanted an early planting of zucchini squash hoping they'd



make it through the cold nights and snow - and they did!

## "Where do I pick up my share?"

If you're a returning customer, we haven't changed the location of our CSA pick-up. If you're a new customer, we distribute in the Barn at Towne's Harvest Garden. THG is located off of Lincoln street. The easiest way to get there is to head south on 19th street from main street, take a right on Garfield street, and then a left on Lincoln. There should be a sign on the corner that says "MSU Hort Farm", if you see that, you're in the right place! After turning on to Lincoln, you take your first left and you'll see open barn doors - head in there for your fresh vegetables!



## Other things to remember

- CSA pickup is from 4pm-6pm at the location described above
- We do not distribute our CSA's in boxes, so please bring a reusable produce

## Meet our Staff!

### Towne's Harvest Garden Director and Practicum Instructor

Mac Burgess, Ph.D.



This is my fourth year as instructor for the SFBS 296 course “Towne’s Harvest Practicum”, and I am excited to welcome you to the 2017 CSA program. Your support allows us to offer a unique and valuable practical experience for our students. I am excited to introduce our 2017 staff and students and welcome you to our CSA program.

### Towne's Harvest Production Manager

Elisa Boyd



Originally from Colorado, Elisa is an MSU graduate with a BS in Environmental Horticulture in 2013 and an MS in Plant Pathology in 2016. Elisa joins us as the interim production manager for 2017. Elisa worked here at the Horticulture Farm in 2013-2014 as a farm technician and was the teaching assistant for the Market Gardening Class in 2014. She is serving as an interim manager for 2017, and will resume the search for a permanent production manager this summer.

## Assistant Manager - Marketing

Dylan Fishman



Originally from Illinois, Dylan is a Senior in the Sustainable Food and Bioenergy Systems Program and Sustainable Crop Production Option. Dylan

has several years of experience as an assistant manager at Three Hearts farm here in Bozeman and at Prairie Farm Corp. learning farm near Chicago. Dylan is taking the lead in the packing shed this year, updating our Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) and Good Handling Practice (GHP) plans, developing a new and improved record keeping system, and editing our weekly newsletters. He's no stranger to field work either, Dylan has been known to set the pace on transplanting and offers valuable advice based on practical experience.

## Assistant Manager - Mechanical

Wes Cawood



Originally from Pennsylvania, Wes is a Junior at MSU majoring in Conservation Biology. Wes grew up working on dairy farms and ranches and really knows his way around farm equipment. If you've driven by the farm and noticed straighter rows, improved weed management (with less time spent doing it), more cover cropping, and that all our old machines are purring along nicely, thank Wes.

## Crop of the Week



Rhubarb (*Rheum rhabarbarum*) is a perennial plant in the family polygonaceae, and a spring favorite. Consistent with our educational goal of learning the plant families for our crops, I'll note that rhubarb is in the same family as buckwheat, which we grow as a cover crop. Our offering this first week comes from 8-year-old plants cared for by the Gallatin Gardener's Club and harvested by our SFBS 296 Practicum Students. While the rhubarb is not certified organic, head gardener Don Mathre tells us the plants have never been sprayed with any pesticide.

Fans of NPR's "A Prairie Home Companion" will note that a slice of rhubarb pie can revive a guy (or gal) like nothing else. Or can it? Perhaps rhubarb is the source of natural mellowing agents? At any rate, the natural astringency is best balanced with some sugar and goes well fruit to make a pie or dessert sauce. Whether you choose strawberries (now in season from CA), or apples (grown regionally and stored), or both, or maybe some frozen blueberries too, we hope you enjoy this little slice of spring.

## Tool of the Week

By Mac Burgess

**This is the first in a series of weekly articles about tools and technology in use at Towne's Harvest Garden. Future articles will be written by the students in the Summer 2017 Towne's Harvest Practicum course (SFBS 296).**

**High Tunnel**



Also known as cold frames or hoop houses, high tunnels are simple metal-framed structures covered with a thin polyethylene film. High tunnels allow us to grow more, higher quality food both earlier and later in the season and to grow crops we couldn't otherwise economically grow here in Montana (like tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants). All the vegetables in this week's CSA share except the perennials (Rhubarb, Chives, and Oregano) came from high tunnels, and you wouldn't have these crops this early any other way. Towne's Harvest has two stationary high tunnels, which grow both spring and summer crops. For example, the space where today's Bok Choi and Lettuce was grown will have pepper plants in by the end of the week, and your early carrots will likely be followed by basil. We also use a more sophisticated tunnel with a double layer of plastic inflated by an electric fan and thermostatically controlled ventilation fans. Spinach, lettuce, and your first carrots, as well as your first tomatoes will come from this tunnel. A student project this year will be to perform an energy audit on this system and report back to you on this topic.

Finally, the Season Extension Research Project (SERP), funded by the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station and the Montana Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant Program consists of three mobile high tunnels. Horticulture Farm Manager and Ph.D Candidate David Baumbauer grew your salad turnips in these tunnels, as well as many hundreds of lbs of spinach, kale, turnips, and lettuce already donated to the Gallatin Valley Food Bank. This week we'll be planting your cucumbers, tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, and yet more basil in the SERP Tunnels. Being able to move these tunnels means that we can grow three crops per year. This also provides the opportunity for cover cropping and improved pest control and soil quality maintenance.

One of my first jobs on an Organic vegetable farm was to haul a big piece of plastic to the landfill. That wasn't easy for me then, and I reflect upon the experience frequently. Twenty years later, both my research and teaching

programs focus on season extension for vegetable production here in Montana. I am passionate about making the most efficient use of the valuable space in these structures, and choosing the crops that will provide the most variety and nutrition to your diet with the least environmental impact compared to the alternatives. I'll spare you the details for now, as I hope to inspire a student to explain them, but be assured I'm confident that the amount of energy used and plastic landfilled is less for the vegetables we grow than for similar products purchased from the store and grown in other parts of the country. I am proud to offer our students the opportunity to develop practical skills growing these vegetables and critical thinking skills analyzing their sustainability, and I thank you for making it all possible.



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