

# TALK *of the* TROWNES

JULY 14, 2010

THE TOWNE'S HARVEST GARDEN WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

As we enter the fourth week of our CSA pickups, I think that we are all starting to feel the routine of things settle in. However, the pickup is but one part of the overall process of getting the vegetables ready. It begins early in the week when Chaz walks the fields and takes stock of the available crops for harvest. Knowing that he must fill 87 boxes by Thursday, he determines what is producing at a rate great enough to fill that demand. On top of that, he must decide if that quantity of whatever vegetable will be enough for both of the shares or only one of the shares. His final calculation is to make sure that the amount of produce is worth the price that you paid for it. Take all of these factors into account and you are ready to begin harvest.

Harvest begins on Wednesday and continues well into Thursday. Each plant has a different harvesting and handling process, but as a rule they are all washed immediately after being picked and then sent straight to the walk in cooler. Right before you arrive, they are taken out of the cooler, arranged, and ready for you to pick up.

---

---

## Intern Biography: Mike Nault

Mike was first attracted to MSU by its agricultural reputation. Born in Floweree, MT, he grew up working on his families wheat farm. At MSU, he discovered his main avenue of interest, which was embodied in Towne's Harvest Garden. The Garden provides him with the freedom to learn in his own way and encounter what he is most passionate about in life, agriculture. He is hoping that he will come away from this internship with the confidence to succeed in his own CSA he plans on starting back in Floweree. I asked Mike to say one thing about himself. He replied that he has been part of agriculture his entire life and respects how, why, and where food is produced. Without people like himself, he finished, the gap between conventional and naturally raised foods will never be gaped and we, as a society, won't get to a more locally driven food system that supports communities.

---

---

## Farm Update:

Our irrigation system is now fully online. It operates in five distinct zones, of which we water two at a time. So now the only things that we really need to worry about are keeping the plants watered and keeping the rows weeded.



### **Basil Pesto**

2 cups fresh basil  
2 garlic cloves  
1/4 cup pine nuts  
2/3 cup virgin olive oil  
salt and pepper  
1/2 cup of grated pecorino cheese

Combine the basil, garlic, and pine nuts in a food processor and pulse until coarsely chopped. Add 1/2 cup of the oil and process until fully incorporated and smooth. Season with salt and pepper. If using immediately, add all the remaining oil and pulse until smooth. Transfer the pesto to a large bowl and mix in the cheese.

### **Broccoli Casserole**

1 can condensed mushroom soup  
1/2 cup milk  
1 tsp soy sauce  
1/4 tsp ground black pepper  
4 cups broccoli florets, lightly steamed  
1 1/3 cups fried onion (optional)  
1/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese  
pinch of nutmeg

Preheat oven to 350. Mix soup, milk, soy sauce, pepper, broccoli, 2/3 cup onions, 1/2 cup cheese, and nutmeg in 1 1/2 quart casserole dish. Bake for 25 minutes. Remove from the oven and sprinkle on remaining onions and cheese. Bake for 5 minutes, or until the cheese has melted. Makes 8 servings.

---

### **Ratatouille**

**Sauce:**  
1 can diced tomatoes  
1 small jar roasted red peppers, drained  
1 garlic clove, chopped  
1 shallot, chopped  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Juice of half a lemon  
1 tablespoon fresh oregano, chopped

**Vegetables:**  
1 zucchini, sliced thin  
1 yellow squash, sliced thin  
1 eggplant, sliced thin (Japanese eggplant is the best choice but it's rather hard to find)  
1 orange or yellow bell pepper, sliced into rings

**Topping:**  
3 garlic cloves, minced  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme or 2 teaspoons fresh thyme  
Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 375°F (191°C).

In a sauce pan, combine the diced tomatoes, roasted bell pepper, garlic, and shallots. Season with salt and pepper. Cook over medium heat for 10-15 minutes. Transfer mixture to a blender and puree. Add lemon juice and oregano. Taste and adjust seasonings if needed. I added a touch of sugar to mine because it was a little too acidic. Cover with foil and bake for 30 minutes. Serve with a simple roast chicken and bread.