Welcome to the Towne’s Harvest Garden Newsletter. At the beginning of the summer, a group of MSU students started an internship. Over 20 of us, all with different backgrounds, work ethics, and worldviews, have decided to dedicate our summers to working and learning on a small scale, market vegetable farm. My name is John Thiebes. I am a junior working on completing a B.S. in Sustainable Crop Production. What I am interested in is learning how to craft a business that allows for a farm and a farmer to provide a service for individuals interested in preserving the well being of both themselves and the place they live in. In order to design something like this, I decided to write a weekly newsletter for you all. I hope to be one of the many channels you have for experiencing what the garden has to offer and in doing so, come to a better understanding of what we all have to offer one another.

As you have all experienced, the weather has been wet and cold for the better part of the summer. Hailstorms rained destruction upon our cantaloupe crop and flea beetles have eaten a lion’s share of the bok choi, turnips, radishes, and arugula. Unfavorable conditions have allowed for only modest plant growth so far, which equates to a very limited early season harvest...

No need to worry though. The summer solstice has passed, most of the field is planted, the irrigation system is installed, the weeds have been hoed, the soil is full of moisture, and the forecast is hot and sunny. Barring the untold consequences of having twenty plus college students running around with but one experienced farmer holding the reins, I would say that we are on track with the promise of providing you with freshly picked, locally grown vegetables.

The cycles of up and coming crops, allowing you to see the bigger picture on the farm.
Cilantro Vinegarette

1/3 cup(s) white-wine vinegar
2 tablespoon(s) cilantro, chopped
1/2 teaspoon(s) fresh thyme, chopped
1/2 teaspoon(s) ground red pepper
1/4 teaspoon(s) salt
1/4 teaspoon(s) pepper
3/4 cup(s) light olive oil

Whisk vinegar, cilantro, thyme, red pepper, salt, and pepper together in a medium bowl. While whisking, add the oil in a slow, continuous stream until fully incorporated. Serve immediately.

Chive Vinegarette

1 tablespoon cider vinegar
½ teaspoon Dijon-style mustard
¼ teaspoon salt, or to taste
A few grindings of black pepper
3-4 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons freshly snipped chives

Whisk together the vinegar, mustard, salt, pepper and 1 tablespoon oil until well blended. Slowly whisk in 2 more tablespoons oil until well-blended and slightly thickened. Taste and add more salt if needed. Stir in the chives.

Throw these dressings on any garden variety salad and complement with a locally brewed summer ale!

Kale sauteed with Bacon (Complements of Marcy)

4-5 servings
1 1/2 pounds kale, trimmed, chopped
3 slices bacon, diced
½ white onion, diced
1 garlic clove, minced
½ cup chicken stock
salt and pepper to taste

Bring a pot of water to a boil. Add 1 teaspoon salt. Add the kale and cook for 2 minutes. Drain well and set aside. In a large sauté pan, render the bacon until almost crispy. Add the onions and garlic. Sauté for 2-3 minutes until soft. Add the kale, stock, and salt and pepper (about 1/2 teaspoon each). Cook uncovered for 20-30 minutes.

Cabbage Rolls

12 large cabbage leaves
1 1/2 pounds lean ground beef
1/4 cup minced onion
1 teaspoon ground sage
1 1/2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese
2/3 cup fine dry bread crumbs
1 cup milk
2 teaspoons salt
1 cup water, broth, or tomato juice
6 strips bacon

Cook cabbage leaves in boiling, salted water until tender and flexible, about 5 minutes. Combine ground beef, onion, sage, cheese, bread crumbs, milk, and salt. Place a large spoonful of meat mixture on each cabbage leaf; roll up, tucking ends inside to seal meat in. Secure with toothpicks. Place in baking dish and add 1 cup water, broth or tomato juice. Cover rolls with bacon strips and bake at 350° for 45 to 55 minutes. Serves 6.