



St. Mary Organic Farm

News

April 14, 2010

The fields are tilled

Your garden areas are marked and ready to go! And the garden spaces have all been filled.

Eager gardeners can get an early start to the growing season. Come out and enjoy meeting some of your new garden neighbors. The drip system will be installed in May.

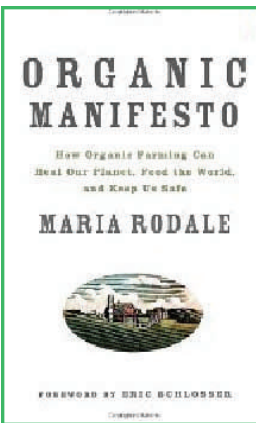


Will schools serve healthier lunches?

The Senate Agriculture Committee unanimously approved its bill to update child nutrition programs, the [Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act](#).

The farm-to-school support was upped to \$40 million over five years and the bill was reported out of committee. The full Senate should pick it up in mid- to late-April, and the House will start working on it soon.

Latest book from Marie Rodale



Granddaughter to Rodale's founder and its current CEO, Marie examines the overall wisdom—economical and ecological—for farming organic in her new book, [Organic Manifesto: How Organic Farming Can Heal Our Planet, Feed the World, and Keep Us Safe](#).

She is the author of three books and has won numerous awards, including the National Audubon Society's "Rachel Carson Award" in 2004 and the United Nations

Population Fund's "Award for the Health and Dignity of Women in 2007.

British invasion

Kudos to Jamie Oliver for leading the American food revolution

Jamie Oliver is on a mission to change America's diet. After airing a four-hour TV series aimed at improving school lunches, he got the British gov't to allocate \$1 billion to revitalize their school lunches.



Chef and educator Jamie Oliver is still on the march to change the American school system. Check out his progress in West Virginia on Friday nights at 9 p.m. on ABC.

Do you think these efforts will succeed? Write in and I will post your comments.

Support for Paula's House

Paula's House is a safe haven for many homeless women in Monroe. Please consider supporting them through their fundraising event. <http://paulashouse.org/2010/04/paulas-house-fundraiser-april-24th/>

Full of beans

There is no legitimate excuse to be bored by dry beans and peas. Just a few of the myriad varieties include adzuki, black, dark red kidney, light red kidney, garbanzo, great northern, navy, pink, red and pinto, as well as lentils and soybeans.

- Beans are a welcome addition in many dishes. Add them to salads, soups, casseroles, chili, taco fillings and stews.
- Beans make great dips. For a delicious bean dip that's fast and easy, combine black beans, diced tomato, a sprinkle of cumin, a few sprigs of cilantro and chopped red onion in the bowl of a food processor; process until smooth (or just mash with a fork for a chunkier dip), and serve with baked tortilla chips or raw fresh vegetables. Or mash some white beans with garlic and a drizzle of olive oil and serve with pieces of crusty whole-grain bread.
- Beans pair beautifully with rice. For a nutritious side dish, toss kidney beans with hot brown rice; mix in canned diced tomatoes, chili powder, chopped scallions and a squirt of fresh lime juice. Or serve beans and rice as a cold salad dressed with olive oil, cider vinegar and fresh herbs."

The secret to delicious beans is soaking them before cooking, and you have several ways to do this:

- **Overnight soaking.** Place beans in a pot or bowl of cold water. (Use 10 cups of water for each pound of dry-packaged beans.) Cover and let sit overnight. The next day, drain the beans, rinse them, add fresh water (6 cups per pound of beans) and cook.
- **Quick soaking.** Place beans in 10 cups of hot tap water per pound of beans. Heat to boiling and let boil for two or three minutes. Remove pot from heat, cover, and let sit for one hour. Drain, rinse, add fresh water (6 cups per pound of beans) and cook.
- **Hot soaking.** Follow the directions for quick soaking but allow covered beans to sit for four hours instead of one. Hot soaking breaks down substances in beans that cause flatulence and makes them easier to digest. After beans have finished soaking, they need to simmer for 30 minutes to two hours, depending on the type of bean.

See this article at: www.johnshopkinshealthalerts.com

*Awake, thou wintry earth -
Fling off thy sadness!
Fair vernal flowers, laugh forth
Your ancient gladness!
~Thomas Blackburn, "An Easter Hymn"*

Can food liners

The FDA now recognizes that the chemical BPA, used in the lining of canned foods, baby bottles and other containers, is a potential health hazard. For more information, go to the [FDA Web site](#).

Crops to grow now

Early April—beets, cabbage, carrots, celery, collards, endive, kale, lettuce, mustard, onions, parsley, parsnips, peas, potatoes, radishes, Swiss chard, spinach, turnips

April 20—snap beans, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and potatoes.

Easy-to-grow Vegetables

Basil, beans, beets, broccoli, kale, lettuce, potatoes, peppers, parsley, tomatoes and winter squash.

What are "cole" crops?

The word "cole" is where the shredded cabbage salad got its name, cole slaw. This family includes cabbage, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, collards, kale and kohlrabi. It is time to grow these vegetables or in the fall for the best flavor. They can withstand frost and tend to be sweeter in the fall.

Burlap bags available

With help from garden members and donations from Paramount Coffee in Lansing, we will be able to furnish burlap bags as mulch for your garden paths. Burlap bags makes a great cover to smother weeds and grass. You will find them available at the garden.

Gardener's keepsake guide

This Michigan State University [Web site](#) is a great tool for planning, planting and harvesting your garden.

Recipes galore

Here is an unusual site sent to us from my sister-in-law. You can browse through photos of food, click on them to see the recipe. Warning - this site will make you hungry! Tastespotting.com

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