



St. Mary Organic Farm

News

March 24, 2010

We were "Crop Mobbed"! Vertical Gardening



On March 11, seven Loyola University of Chicago students toured the Motherhouse and helped St. Mary Organic Farm with garden clean up. The energetic Loyola students spent their alternative spring break working on an organic farm in Chelsea and helping St. Mary Organic Farm prepare for its 11th growing season.

The students were not actually part of the "crop mob" but they have similarities.

A crop mob is a group of young wannabe farmers or seasoned gardeners who come together to empower communities through helping on sustainable farms and gardens (www.cropmob.org).

We appreciate the Loyola students and all the crop mobbers who make a big difference in small ways.

Black gold

We will have some black gold available in the garden this season consisting of seasoned horse manure and compost.

How to make [compost tea](#).

If you would like more growing space, use poles and trellises in your plot or raised bed. Some crops naturally climb like pole beans and peas. Members of the vining squash family will climb, including cucumbers, gourds, melons and winter squash.

If you want to grow these heavy fruits vertically, use soft ties to fasten the vines to your support and use strips of fabric to make a sling, like a small hammock. This will prevent the heavy fruit from tearing off the vine prematurely or damaging the vines as the weight increases. Tomato plants do well off the ground on poles or cages too.



Special points of interest

- We were "Crop Mobbed"!
- Vertical gardening
- Black gold
- Boost energy
- Chickpeas
- Healthy foods in school
- Free vegetable class

Recipes

- Falafel
- Roasted cauliflower

Three tips to boost energy and manage weight

- 1) Have a meal or small snack every 3 to 4 hours. This fuels your metabolism and helps prevent binges and blood sugar crashes.
- 2) Combine protein (fish, beans, nuts, eggs, dairy, meat) and fiber (whole grains, fruits, vegetables) at every meal. When eaten together, these foods take longer to digest than simpler carbohydrates, so you stay fuller longer.
- 3) Get up, move around and drink water often. This daily meal plan has a wide range of calories (from about 1,550 to 2,100); if you're active you can go toward the higher end of the range.

Source: Lauren Gelman from *Prevention Magazine*

Chickpeas are centuries old

Remnants of the chick pea that are 7,500 years old have been found in the Middle East.

This legume, a staple among Arabs and Jews, has gained popularity in the U.S. as hummus and falafels. Chickpeas are a great protein source and are rich in potassium, magnesium, phosphorus and calcium. In Arabic and Hebrew h.ummus denotes both the chickpea itself and the dip that is made from it.

Have you ever tasted sour hummus? It does not last long and turns sour fairly quickly. The word h.ummus or h.imsta is related to the Arab and Hebrew word for sour.



See Falafel recipe, page three.

Looking for healthy foods in schools

Jamie Oliver, celebrity chef, begins a new show called *Food Revolution* on ABC beginning with a two-hour special Friday, March 26, at 8 p.m. (visit the [Web site](#)).

There is a new film out called *What's on Your Plate?* It is a provocative documentary about kids and food politics. The film follows two 11-year-old multi-racial city kids as they explore their place in the food chain. Sadie and Safiyah talk to food activists, farmers and storekeepers as they address questions regarding the origin of the food they eat, how it's cultivated and how many miles it travels from farm to fork. The girls visit supermarkets, fast food chains, school lunchrooms, sustainable farms and green markets.

Take Action

Congress is about to revisit the Child Nutrition Act. Please tell your legislators to invest in healthier food, strengthen nutrition standards and link schools to local farms. Go to [Time for Lunch](#).

Free vegetable class

March 29, Monday, 6:30 p.m.
IHM Motherhouse, Room B-010

There is still time to sign up for the garden class. Use the front entrance of the Motherhouse

Please sign up for this free hour-long class by sending an e-mail to: smcneil@ihmsisters.org.

Spring makes its own statement, so loud and clear that the gardener seems to be only one of the instruments, not the composer.

~Geoffrey B. Charlesworth

St. Mary Organic Farm

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Falafels

1 cup dried chickpeas (or canned)
1/2 large onion, roughly chopped (about 1 cup)
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh cilantro
1 teaspoon salt
1/2-1 teaspoon dried hot red pepper
4 cloves of garlic
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon baking powder
4-6 tablespoons flour
Soybean or vegetable oil for frying
Chopped tomato for garnish
Diced onion for garnish
Diced green bell pepper for garnish
*Tahini sauce
Pita bread

1. Put the chickpeas in a large bowl and add enough cold water to cover them by at least two inches. Let soak overnight, then drain. Or use canned chickpeas, drained.
2. Place the drained, uncooked chickpeas and the onions in the bowl of a food processor fitted with a steel blade. Add the parsley, cilantro, salt, hot pepper, garlic, and cumin. Process until blended but not pureed.
3. Sprinkle in the baking powder and four tablespoons of the flour and pulse. You want to add enough bulgur or flour so the dough forms a small ball and no longer sticks to your hands. Turn into a bowl and refrigerate, covered, for several hours.
4. Form the chickpea mixture into balls about the size of walnuts.
5. Heat three inches of oil to 375 degrees in a deep pot or wok and fry one ball to test. If it falls apart, add a little flour. Then fry about six balls at once for a few minutes on each side, or until golden brown. Drain on paper towels. Stuff half a pita with falafel balls, chopped tomatoes, onion, green pepper, and pickled turnips. Drizzle with tahini thinned with water.

*Tahini (also called tahina) is an oily paste made from ground sesame seeds.

This recipe was excerpted from Joan Nathan's book [The Foods of Israel](#) and recommended by Epicurious.

Roasted cauliflower

1 head of cauliflower
2-3 cloves of garlic, peeled and coarsely minced
Lemon juice (from half or a whole lemon)
Olive oil
Coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper
Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Cut cauliflower into florets and put in a single layer in an oven-proof baking dish. Toss in the garlic. Squeeze lemon juice over cauliflower and drizzle each piece with olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

If the oven hasn't reached 400°F yet, set aside until it has.

Place casserole in the hot oven, uncovered, for 25-30 minutes, or until the top is lightly brown. Test with a fork for desired doneness. Fork tines should be able to easily pierce the cauliflower.

Remove from oven and sprinkle generously with Parmesan cheese.

Serves 4.

Source: [Simply Recipes](#)

