



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

"April Share" Week 2

April 17th – 23rd, 2002

Season 7

What's in the box this week:

Three baskets of straw-
berries (Seascape,
Diamante, or Aromas)
Red beets
1 bunch rainbow chard
1-2 small heads of red
cabbage
Fennel
1 bunch of green garlic
1 bunch of leeks
2-3 small heads of let-
tuce (romaine, red or
green butterhead or
loose redleaf)
Radishes
Stir-fry mix (chard, kale,
collards, some mustard
greens)

What's Up on the Farm

In addition to all the spring planting some new exciting developments are taking root on our land. We are building a "predator safe" (dogs, cats, coyotes, raccoons, etc) chicken coop which will house the approximately 20 chicks that arrived a few days ago. Our son David has enthusiastically taken on the role of caring for them. We hope he will embrace this new responsibility past their stage of being the cute fluffy feather balls they are now.

A heartfelt thanks goes to Jim Nelson at Camp Joy who donated two of his beehives to the farm. We are looking forward to caring for and developing a closer connection with these wonderful pollinators. Joe Ruben (who has been selling and representing us at the local farmer's markets the last two years) will take the lead as our beekeeper, something that will also complement the educational activities we offer throughout the season. By mid-May we are again expecting the birth of more kids -- goats, that is -- as four of our lady goats are pregnant.

Spring is surely bringing new growth and the farm is stretching a bit to accommodate it. My to-do list for this week is overwhelming, and while I sit here writing this newsletter I find it hard not to be distracted by an impulse to do something else.

My friend Jan (who is helping us remodel the barn) was watching me water the seedlings in the greenhouse and commented that I had a great job, devoid of the hectic and stressful life he seems to have as a contractor. The interesting part about farming is that, although it can be tiring and stressful, it is studded with activities which by their very nature are calming and centering. If you ever walked into a greenhouse on a farm, nursery, or botanical garden you feel like you entered into a space that is calm, peaceful and nurturing. Throughout the day I have the opportunity to seek out these little havens of peacefulness, connect with nature, and forget about the sometimes hectic and more stressful business-like aspects of farming. 🌱

*"The key to a good life is not
having what you want, but
wanting what you have."*

- unknown

Crop of the Week

Since your spring box is overflowing with greens let me introduce you to the "Chenopodiaceae Family." "Say who???" I surely don't eat that stuff!" you might think, however, beets, spinach and chard all share this common family name, sometimes also known as the goosefoot family. This very distinctive family originally came from the seashore. Similar to desert plants, they need to conserve moisture, for their salty environment tends to draw it out of them by osmosis. Consequently their leaves tend to have a somewhat tough cutaneous surface to limit transpiration. Also the roots are strong and fibrous and tend to penetrate deep into the subsoil breaking up the deeper layers to allow water and air to pass through. The roots and/or leaves are edible and come in various colors and shapes. With beets, for example, one can eat both leaves and roots. At Live Earth Farm we grow two varieties of beets: chiogga and red. Chiogga resembles a red and white bull's eye in cross section and is milder in flavor than its sister the red beet, which comes cylindrical or round in shape, and has a much stronger flavor. Beets also come in golden, white or pink. (I am running out of space here, so I'll introduce their leafy cousins, chard and spinach, in future newsletters.) 🌱

Member to Member Forum

From member Vaiva Bichnevicius: I had to go by the farm last week, and it was an amazing experience. Usually at the events, I'm too busy eating, talking, and having a good time to really hear the insects and smell the grass. On this occasion, though, it was just my son (2 years old) and me, so we took time to pick strawberries, pet the goats, run thru the cover crops, count the rows of onions and carrots growing, and pull a few weeds. (I'm sure Thomas will notice the difference that makes!) We also sat on the grass and let ladybugs crawl over our fingers. We thanked them for helping Thomas and Constance keep our food healthy. We watched the tractor plowing the soil, saw a hawk circling, smelled the dry grass, and listened to the swing set creak. It was an exceptionally beautiful morning for us. I encourage you all to take a field trip out there just to enjoy the picture-book scene that Thomas and Constance have created for us.

To contribute to this forum (or the newsletter), please submit your info to the editor (see below) by Monday 9am to get it into the following week's issue.

Keep in mind that members don't receive newsletters until the following Wednesday and Saturday (if you're reporting on a timely event!) 🐌

Live Earth Farm Calendar

Sat. May 18	Open Farm Day 1pm - 5pm
Sat. Jun 22	<u>Summer Solstice Celebration</u> 4pm - 10pm with the <i>Banana Slug String Band!</i>
Sat/Sun Aug. 3 - 4	<u>Children's Mini Camp</u> 10am Saturday - noon Sunday (optional Friday night arrival)
Sat. Sep 21	<u>Fall Equinox Celebration</u> 3pm - 9pm
Sat. Oct 26	<u>Halloween Pumpkin U-Pick</u> all day
Nov. 30	Last box !

Notes from Debbie's Kitchen

Have a recipe you'd like to share? Contact the newsletter editor.

A recipe and a meal idea. - Debbie

Braised Fennel with Parmesan

from Moosewood Restaurant New Classics serves 4

"Fresh fennel bulbs, with celery-like stems and feathery tops, retain a mild anise flavor, whether braised, simmered in soups or stews, or sliced raw into salads. Here, fennel simmers in olive oil and garlic, its classic Italian companions. We intensified the anise flavor with the addition of ground fennel seeds. The topping of crunchy bread crumbs and Parmesan cheese makes an elegant and tasty presentation." – the author

for sauté:

2 fennel bulbs
2 tbsp. olive oil
3 garlic cloves, chopped (or a bulb of green garlic, since we have it! – Debbie)
1 tsp. freshly ground fennel seeds (use a mortar & pestle or spice grinder)
1 tsp. salt
3 tbsp. water

for seasoned bread crumbs:

2 tbsp. olive oil
1 garlic clove, chopped (ditto – Deb)
1/2 cup bread crumbs (pulverize stale or lightly toasted whole wheat, sour-dough or French bread in a blender or food processor)

for topping:

1/3 C grated Parmesan cheese

freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 to 2 tbsp. chopped fennel fronds

Slice the tops off the fennel bulbs, reserving several fronds for garnish. Remove the outer layers of the bulbs if bruised or soft. Slice bulbs lengthwise into narrow wedges about 1/8" wide.

In a large skillet, heat the olive oil and sauté the garlic and ground fennel for several seconds. Stir in the salt and sliced fennel and sauté for 1 to 2 minutes. Add the water, cover, and increase the heat slightly. Simmer, stirring occasionally, for 10 to 15 minutes, until tender. Meanwhile, make the seasoned bread crumbs. Warm the olive oil in a small heavy skillet. Add the garlic and sauté for a few seconds. Add the bread crumbs and stir until golden and crunchy, about 5 minutes. When the fennel is tender, transfer it to the serving dish and evenly sprinkle with the bread crumbs. Serve topped with grated Parmesan, pepper, and chopped fennel fronds.

The Meal Idea

I made this for dinner the other night and it used THREE of this week's box ingredients handily, prettily and tastily, so I thought I'd pass it on to you. Here's le menu:

• Mashed potatoes with caramelized green garlic

• Beets in ginger-honey-orange sauce
• Steamed fresh chard

Cook the beets (I use a pressure cooker. Cut stems to 1" from root, scrub, and place in cooker over 2" of water and cook at high pressure 20 min. until tender.) Cut up potatoes and boil (also about 20 min.). Wash and thinly slice green garlic (1 stalk per person), and sauté in butter and olive oil, with a pinch of salt, covered, over low heat, stirring occasionally, also for same 20 min. or so 'til soft and golden. Meanwhile rinse and chop chard (and have steamer standing by; it takes only 3 to 4 min. to steam/wilt the chard so save this 'til all else is almost done). When beets are done, slip off and discard peel and slice 'em. In a skillet, melt some butter, grate in some fresh ginger root, add a goodly sploosh (maybe two) of orange juice, a big spoonful of honey and a pinch or two of salt. Simmer a bit, add sliced beets and continue to simmer until sauce reduces some and gets slightly syrupy. Now drain and mash your potatoes (I like to use buttermilk, but make 'em however you like). Now steam that chard! To serve: on each plate top mashed potatoes with a heap of caramelized garlic, side with some beautiful beets and that chard. I recommend a splash of vinegar and salt on the chard. Yum!