



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

17th Harvest Week

August 21st – 27th, 2002

Season 7

What's in the box this week:

Strawberries
Asian stir-fry mix
Basil (a small quantity)
Beets
Carrots
Chard
Garlic
Green beans
Leeks
Lettuce
Potatoes (Yellow Finn)
Radishes
Sungold cherry tomatoes
Regular red tomatoes

and if you have an extra-fruit share:

Strawberries, more
Sungold cherry tomatoes, and cantaloupe

Don't miss this year's Equinox Celebration! Mark your calendar and plan on joining us for our 7th annual Equinox Celebration, Saturday September 21st, from 3 to 9pm. For the second time "Kuzanga," a local 8-member marimba band will play their incredible music for everyone to enjoy. Kuzanga plays a rich and varied repertoire of traditional Zimbabwean rhythms on 7 to 8 different size marimbas. They are fun to listen and dance to, and kids (of all ages!) will have a chance to check out the instruments as well. Also, this year we will have a local storyteller in attendance who will read to the kids from 4-5pm. Kuzanga will play from 5-6pm, then we'll have our potluck, and then more marimba music from 7-8pm. As usual we will make freshly pressed apple cider, have games and pony rides for the kids, host field walks, and of course light up our traditional bonfire around dusk to welcome our Fall season. - Tom

"The law of love will work, just as the law of gravitation will work, whether we accept it or not... a man who applies the law of love with scientific precision can work great wonders."

- Mahatma Gandhi

What's Up on the Farm

Never a dull moment: On Friday, after harvesting and packing Saturday's CSA shares and preparing for the weekend farmer's market, we still had to finish harvesting the pears (a process which started on Wednesday), and load them (approximately 15,000 lbs.) into the walk-in cooler. Trying to juggle too many things at once, I burned one batch of bread and forgot to pack the weighing scale (first time in 7 years) for Saturday's farmer's market. Luckily a fellow vendor loaned me one of his two scales, saving what could have been a miserable market day. This incident merely accentuated what for many of us here on the farm feels like the mid-season blues. With the pear harvest behind us we've reached an important seasonal milestone, yet everyone also feels a higher level of exhaustion, especially knowing that we are only halfway through the season. As days grow shorter though, we are reminded that the period of the year when things slow down is approaching, and that eventually the winter season will arrive and let us rest. But let's not get ahead of ourselves here! Instead of dreaming and counting the weeks until the season of rest, we really should be celebrating (what has been the longest wait for!) the arrival of our favorite of summer vegetables... tomatoes! Cherry tomatoes are in great abundance right now, and their larger brothers and sisters are becoming more abundant by the week. 🍅

Crop(s) of the Week

Last week I mentioned the antioxidant properties of tomatoes. Here now is a little history about this "pomme d'amour" or "love apple," as the French sometimes call it. The tomato, which is native to Ecuador and Peru, was cultivated in Central and South America as early as the fifth century. However, it only arrived to the United States a little over 200 years ago with European explorers. The Spanish explorers brought the tomato to Europe in the 1500's and only the Italians showed any interest in this berry from South America. The rest of Europe considered the tomato as a poisonous plant, probably because of its relation to the deadly nightshade weed. Many of the nightshade species contain a chemical alkaloid, both medicinal and toxic. Many plants that are important to us -- including eggplant, peppers, potatoes, flowering nicotiana, and petunias -- belong to this family. Luckily for us, however, the fruits of tomato, peppers, eggplant are completely safe to eat, even when they are green. Only potato tubers can make you sick if you expose them to enough sunlight, which makes their skin turn green. So here is an important storage tip if you don't consume all the potatoes you receive weekly. Place them in a paper bag (not plastic) in a cool and dark place to prevent them from turning green. This way you can enjoy them for many months to come. 🍅

Of Interest

U.C. Santa Cruz is studying Community Supported Agriculture on the Central Coast. At the end of last year some of you may remember receiving a lengthy survey in the mail inquiring about your experience as a CSA member. A few of our members also participated in focus groups to further support this study. Jan Perez from the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems led this study, and recently published the findings. What I found most interesting were the descriptions of what participants learned from their experience with a CSA farm, and how their lives changed. The most frequent response by members was that they ate more and a greater variety of vegetables. Also, some members felt they were eating at home more and out less, as well as eating healthier and higher quality food. Many people also noted that they cook differently, by planning their meals around the vegetables (instead of the other way around), cook more creatively, and enjoy using new and different recipes. Jan Perez mentioned, coincidentally, that the best response to her survey came from Live Earth Farm members! Which immediately gave me the idea to use our newsletter as a forum to share your experiences (good, bad, or funny, doesn't matter) with the rest of us. This will also help us here on the farm to understand how we are doing, and in what ways we can change things... or not!! If you have the slightest inclination to contribute, please do so! Call or email our editor, Debbie (contact info is at the bottom of this newsletter), and we'll print your stories in future newsletters. 🌱

Live Earth Farm Calendar

Sat. Sep 21	<u>Fall Equinox Celebration</u> 3pm - 9pm
Sat. Oct 26	<u>Halloween Pumpkin U-Pick</u> all day
Nov. 20/23	(Weds/Sat) **Last box**

Notes from Debbie's Kitchen

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

I was talking recently to a friend and fellow CSA member, Sue Burnham, and she was positively bursting with favorite recipes to relate. I have included her comments on variations she tried with success! - Debbie

String Beans with Ginger serves 4
from Gardencuisine, by Paul Wenner

1/2 lb. fresh green beans
1 tsp. toasted sesame oil
1 tbsp. finely chopped fresh ginger
1 stalk lemongrass, finely chopped*
1 red chili pepper, seeded and minced**
1/2 C reduced-fat coconut milk
1/4 tsp. salt

Trim ends of green beans and cut into 2-inch pieces. Heat the oil in a large skillet and add the ginger, lemongrass, and chili pepper. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the green beans, coconut milk, 1/2 cup of water, and salt. Cover and cook over medium heat until the green beans are tender, about 10 minutes.

* Sue didn't have lemongrass, but she did have a lemon verbena bush in her yard. So in place of the lemongrass she stripped the leaves from about 4 good-sized sprigs and finely minced them. And since lemon verbena is a more tender leaf than the strong stem of lemongrass, she only added about 1/4 of it at the beginning, but the rest she added only for the last few minutes, so as not to cook away its delicate the flavor.

** Sue says about 1/8 tsp. of crushed red chili flakes is a perfectly good substitute.

And lastly, she says she once added cubed

up potatoes (small cubes, about 1/2"), shelled peas (from the more mature sugar-snap pods), and some green curry paste, and was very pleased with the result! Since the curry paste is quite hot, start with about 1/4 tsp. then taste for heat. You can always add more, but you can't take it away! She says she ended up using about 1/2 to 3/4 tsp. in the end.

Italian Tomato Soup

from The Tomato Cookbook
serves 4 to 6

2 tbsp. olive oil
2 garlic cloves, halved
1 onion, chopped
1 1/2 lbs. tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
4 C beef stock (or the vegetarian equivalent, says Sue)
1 tbsp. tomato paste
2 tbsp. uncooked long-grain rice
1 tbsp. chopped fresh basil
salt and freshly ground black pepper
basil leaves, for garnish

Heat the oil in a large saucepan, add the garlic and sauté until golden brown. Remove and discard the garlic (Sue says she fishes it out and eats it! I would too!! Or at least save it and chop it up into something!) Add the chopped onion and tomatoes to the garlic-flavored oil and sauté for 2-3 minutes, stirring frequently. Add the beef stock, tomato paste, rice and chopped basil. Simmer over a low heat, for about 15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to a warmed soup tureen and garnish with basil leaves. Serve with

freshly grated parmesan cheese and French or garlic bread, if you like.

Summer Beans with Cherry Tomatoes and Tarragon

from Fields of Greens
serves 4 to 6

(Sue's substitutions are in parentheses.)
[also, I edited it slightly to fit here! - Debbie]

2 shallots, thinly sliced (Tom's small pearl onions, or a shallot-sized chunk of regular onion, finely minced)
Champagne vinegar (red wine vinegar)
Salt
1 lb. fresh beans
3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp. coarsely chopped fresh tarragon (or 2 tbsp. coarsely chopped fresh basil - that's what Sue used)
Pepper
2 tbsp. sherry vinegar (Sue substituted a combo of cider vinegar and cooking sherry)
1/2 pt. cherry tomatoes, cut in half if large

In a medium-size bowl, toss shallots with a few splashes of Champagne vinegar to draw out their pink color. Bring a medium-size pot of water to a boil and add 1/2 tsp. salt. Drop in the beans and cook until just tender, 2 to 6 minutes, then scoop them out of the water and immediately toss with the olive oil, shallots, tarragon (basil), 1/2 tsp. salt and 1/8 tsp. pepper. (The beans will soak up the flavors as they cool to room temperature.) Just before serving, add the sherry vinegar and cherry tomatoes. Salt and pepper to taste. (Sue says this is good warm or cold, good the next day, and good mixed with cold leftover rice too!)