



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

24th Harvest Week

October 9th – 15th, 2002

Season 7

What's in the box this week:

Strawberries
Apples
Arugula
Asian stirfry mix
Beets
Young Napa cabbage
Carrots
Sweet corn
Garlic
Green beans
Green onions
Dinosaur kale
Lettuce
Peppers
Potatoes
Winter squash
Tomatoes

and if you have an extra-fruit share:

Strawberries, apples
and pears

A few weeks back a new member commented that she is rediscovering the joy of cooking, including preparing meals with vegetables she has never used before or wouldn't otherwise purchase in a store. Another member gave me feedback how she misses getting more broccoli and lettuce like last year. Your comments and impressions are an important part of the CSA. I believe this process strengthens our understanding of the realities of growing and consuming the food. As a farmer, it is heartening to know that the food we grow doesn't disappear in the dark hole of the food distribution system, where the distance between farm and table has grown endlessly and needlessly far. Joining a CSA is one small way to gain a better understanding of where your food comes from and how it was raised. It also significantly reduces the miles your food needs to travel to get to you. Your share of goodies doesn't come with any fancy or clever packaging promising great taste, better health and convenience; it only tells the story of one small, local farm's best effort to make it fun and delicious to eat local, fresh, and in-season produce. While it is difficult to buy nothing but locally grown ingredients, I believe that by having a CSA Farm we are taking one small but significant step towards supporting local, small-scale organic farming. - Tom

"Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now."
- Goethe

New Crops this Week

I don't think I have to introduce the popular and long awaited sweet corn, but our shyer newcomers, kale and winter squash, might need a little more of an introduction.

Kale: Someone asked at the market last week when we'd see kale again. Well, isn't this good timing to reintroduce this nutritious and tasty member of the cabbage family? Kale's ancestors seem to live along the coast of Britain and France. It is probably the earliest of the cultivated brassicas. The type you have in your share this week is known by several different names -- "Lacinato," "Dinosaur" (maybe your kids will try it just because of its name), "palm tree cabbage," "Tuscan cabbage," and "Cavolo Nero," or black cabbage. It is an old variety, known since the nineteenth century -- dark green, with narrow, recurved, savoyed leaves. Many people shy away from this vegetable since it has a(n undeserved) reputation of being tough and bitter. Here is the perfect opportunity to change that perception, since this particular variety of kale is very tender with a mild flavor. We have many recipes on our website if you're at a loss for how to "attack this Dinosaur."

Winter Squash: This year's harvest of winter squash will be large enough to amply supply everyone through the end of the season as well as fill their storage in preparation for the holidays and colder winter months. You may be interested to know that eating squash connects you to a long and interesting history, dating back over 8,000 years, to the ancient cultures of Central and South America. Along with beans and corn, squash was a staple food that nourished the development of the Maya, Inca, and Aztec civilizations. Traditionally beans, corn and squash are known as "the three sisters," since they are always planted together. They make up a very interesting "guild" (plant community), where the corn stalks form a trellis for the bean vines to climb. The beans, in turn, draw nitrogen from the air, and via symbiotic bacteria convert the nitrogen into plant-available form. The nitrogen-fixing bacteria are fed by sugars released from the corn roots, and the rambling squash, with its broad leaves, forms a living mulch that densely covers the ground, inhibiting weeds and keeping the soil moist and cool. What is even more interesting is that studies have shown that together these three crops produce more food, with less water and fertilizer, than a similar area planted with any one of these three crops in isolation. Having seen this same intercropping pattern among indigenous people in the highlands of Ecuador I was happy when Juan Morales, who brings a great deal of farming wisdom from his country to our operation, encouraged me to plant a border of squash, beans and corn around the plot of winter squash

we sowed back in June. His argument was that back home in Mexico the people do this to ensure a better and healthier field crop. For me it is always exciting to see that the wisdom of these traditional practices is not lost, but actually studied with renewed interest. I also feel encouraged to try to integrate and expand this sort of traditional intercropping practice in our own operation for next year.

The winter squash you'll be receiving the most of is the popular 'Waltham Butternut,' with its cream colored skin and sweet orange flesh. We are also growing two other varieties, one called "Delicata" (which we've grown before) and one called "Sweet Dumpling" (which is very tasty and beautiful with white and dark blue, almost black markings). Winter squash is a perfect complement to the clean, sharp flavors of greens and brassicas. 🌱

Live Earth Farm Calendar

Sat. Oct 26 Halloween Pumpkin U-Pick
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.

My brother and sister-in-law gave me a gift subscription to Cucina Italia last Christmas, and I saved this wonderful Kale recipe specifically for the next time we got dinosaur kale (the Italians call it Tuscan cabbage) in our boxes! - Debbie

on Tuscan Cabbage (Dinosaur Kale)

Excerpts from a Cucina Italia article on the subject: "Reminiscent of a palm leaf, Tuscan cabbage is best when stewed, boiled, or braised. It pairs wonderfully with white or cannellini beans, grilled breads, salty meats such as pancetta, and plum tomatoes. I like to use this green in soups, risottos, stews and more. It is wonderful paired with beans, celery, carrots and bread in a minestra, or with bacon in rice. You can top pork with it, or sauté it and pile it on top of pasta. It's good with shrimp or monkfish too, or any firm white-fleshed fish. I like it in omelettes and gratins, and scrambled egg dishes too. In other words, any way you cook it, it is delicious, one of my favorites for winter months. The vegetable lends itself to so many uses, that I can hardly imagine what life must have been before it was cultivated in America. ... Any recipe can be adapted to Tuscan cabbage. The cooking times are roughly the same, as are cleaning and trimming. Experience the flavors of Tuscan cabbage in any one of your favorite recipes and you will be rewarded."

Tuscan Cabbage Soup

(from the same article, above)
serves 6

1/2 lb. farro*
1 1/2 lbs. Tuscan cabbage (dino. kale)
2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
1 medium onion, minced
2 qts. chicken or vegetable stock
3/4 lb. potatoes, peeled and diced
1 C canned Italian plum tomatoes (or chop up a bunch of Tom's dry-farmed ones!)
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 C bread croutons
1/4 C grated Grana Padano (some Italian cheese – I'd just use a good Parmesan)

Soak the farro for 2 hours. Boil in fresh water for 1 hour. Slice the cabbage into shards. In a heavy-bottomed soup pot, heat the oil and sauté the onion until it becomes translucent. Add the farro, stock, potatoes, cabbage (kale), and tomatoes. Cover and simmer for 45 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serve hot, with bread croutons and grated Grana Padano on the side.

*farro [I looked it up] is a type of hard wheat known as "spelt" in North America. It is "the archtypical cereal of the Mediterranean diet." Spelt berries can be acquired in the bulk bin area of Whole Foods markets, and in their booklet it says, "Spelt has a delicious, light and nutty flavor. It contains 30% more protein than wheat and considerable B vitamins, magnesium and fiber. Easily substituted for wheat in recipes and well tolerated by many wheat sensitive people."

Garlicky Garbanzos and Kale

from Garden Cuisine, by Paul Wenner
serves 6

1 bunch kale
1 tsp. olive oil
4 cloves garlic
1 tbsp. minced fresh ginger
1 sm. red chili pepper, seeded and minced
2 tomatoes, coarsely chopped
1 15-oz. can garbanzo beans, incl. liquid
1 tsp. soy sauce
1 tsp. hoisin sauce
Brown rice, or other favorite whole grain
Wash the kale, remove the stems, and chop the leaves. [My favorite method for destemming kale is to hold the stem in one hand and 'strip' the green leafy part off with the other into a pile and then chop. This is much quicker than cutting the stems out leaf by leaf with a knife! – Debbie] Heat the oil in a large skillet and sauté the garlic, ginger

and 1 tsp. of the chopped chili pepper for 2 minutes (use more chopped chili if you like a spicier dish). Stir in the tomatoes and garbanzo beans with their liquid. Bring to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes. Add the soy sauce, hoisin sauce, and stir to mix. Spread the kale evenly over the top, then cover the pan and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the kale is tender, 5 to 7 minutes. Serve with brown rice or similar.

Stuffed Delicata Squash

from Five Seasons, by Delphino Cornali
serves 2

quote from cookbook: "Veteran squash eaters anticipate the first delicata squash of the season. They are so sweet and flavorful. The skin is tender and delicious when baked. [The author and his wife] often bake a split delicata with nothing more than a pat of butter and a drizzle of maple syrup. This recipe is for showing off."

3 delicata squash
2 tbsp. olive oil
6 shallots
1 golden delicious apple [one of Tom's is fine]
1/2 C finely chopped parsley
1 tbsp. fresh tarragon
2 tbsp shoyu [or soy sauce]
1/2 C chopped walnuts
1 tsp. dark sesame oil

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees F. Split the squash lengthwise almost all the way through, so that the halves of the squash open like a book. Remove the seeds. Rub the skin of the squash with the sesame oil. Mince the shallots, apple, parsley, walnut pieces and fresh tarragon together. In a bowl, mix the minced ingredients with the olive oil and shoyu. Fill the cavities of the squash evenly to the top of the squash. Then, with toothpicks, skewers or a straightened paper clip, fasten the two halves together. Wedge the squashes cheek-to-jowl in the baking sheet. Add 1/4 C of water to the bottom of the baking dish. Bake for 50 minutes.