



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

28th Harvest Week

November 6th –12th, 2002

Season 7

It's November already, and only three weeks remain to the CSA season... hard to believe! Survey results are now all in, and we'll be compiling them to report back to you in next week's newsletter. As I've said before, we use this information to help us identify changes we need to make to continue improving Live Earth Farm's CSA. Thanks again everyone for your time and valuable feedback! - Tom

What's in the box this week:

Pears
Pineapple guavas
Asian stir-fry mix
Red beets
Carrots
Collards or Red Russian kale
Sweet corn
Garlic
Mei quing choi (long-stemmed bok choi)
Peppers
Potatoes (Yukon Gold or Yellow Finn)
Butternut squash
Tomatoes

and if you have an extra-fruit share:

Strawberries and pears

What's Up on the Farm

This must be the first year we haven't received rain in October. This means we can extend our harvest and hope for a few more tomatoes, peppers, sweet corn and green beans, however my mind is on covercropping the tilled fields without having to irrigate. The soil is dry, and a little rain would give the earth a much deserved relief. We're ready to plant next year's strawberry crop on a beautiful new piece of ground we just started leasing this year. It's a small 3-acre piece of land with a rich, deep, well drained, loamy soil, located in the foothills of Mt. Madonna about 10 minutes from the farm. Since our plan for next year is to not increase our CSA membership beyond what we have this year (which is currently around 320 families), the addition of this land will allow us to grow both more quantity and a larger diversity of crops next season. Staple crops which require more land such as onions, broccoli, cauliflower, summer squash, sugar snap peas and herbs (basil, cilantro, thyme, chives and oregano) won't compete for space with our other crops, and so will be available more regularly throughout the season. 🌱

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead

Crop Notes

In the box this week you will find some strange looking green oval fruits. These are pineapple guavas, also known as "Feijoas." They grow as dense shrubs or small trees next to our fields and are brothers to the round, yellow tropical guavas we find in Hawaii. Their aromatic flowers and fruit are both edible and taste a little like pineapple. Keep them at room temperature, and don't peel, since the rind is also edible and contains high levels of vitamin C (but if you decide the rind is too tough for your taste, just cut it in half and spoon out and eat the juicier flesh inside). 🌱

Member to Member Forum

An essay on "Share," submitted by fellow member Miriam Goldberg:

This spring I signed up for my seasonal CSA share again. Delicious food, dear friends and a general good feeling of participating in community prompted me to renew my membership. I enjoy sharing the investment and faith in community, encountering the seasons of planting, growing, and harvesting, and 'sharing' the uncertainty, the joys, and the bounty. When farmer Tom shares a few of the challenges of farming, it's an eye-opener for me. Even more wide eyed, I face the personal challenges of how to fit all of my share into my refrigerator, and how to cook certain unfamiliar items. Finally I explore what freezes well so that I can honestly assess how much my family can use and how much to 'share' immediately so others can enjoy the share as well.

This summer, the word 'share' expanded. It snuck up on me the day Tom and I walked through his apricot orchard, surrounded by pinky-gold and yellow-gold fruit, some red tinged, some mottled, a few still with pale green highlights. He talked about how short the apricot season was... only about 2 weeks. The following week I returned to the farm and the trees were green – almost no fruit! No Chilean apricots here all summer hanging in cold storage on thin limbs for months. They'd just come and gone! I was so grateful to have been there the week before, enjoying the ephemeral beauty of the fruit on the trees. And because I love apricots, I took the experience as a personal gift. The trees and the Earth had shared

themselves with me, and I'd been there to receive. While I knew that the Earth's sharing was not personal to me, I realized that to deeply receive her gifts, I needed to let myself *take* it personally. In the personal act of receiving, one opens, and one gets to know the giver. I met the Earth in a new way.

Earth has her own style of seasonal dance, with quick steps and/or slow rhythms... a sudden flourish, repetitive moves. In spring I tasted wintered-over beets which had been held in the dark moist earth long enough to sweeten and mellow – a well-held gift, a hidden treasure. And that brief profusion of apricots was a luscious gift, if one can meet her fully in her moment of sharing. The tomatoes came later than I expected, and corn much later (but it's still here!). And there was lots of intermittent basil, and baskets of strawberries that varied in taste and texture, one to the next. I could no longer predict what would be available, as I could from the grocery store. This wasn't computerized consumption, this was *surprises*.

I used to look for my favorite foods, curiosity fueled by hopes and expectations. I would focus on the human factor: *my* wants and wishes, and what Tom had planted. I'd think about how he and his crew were handling the changes in weather, the picking, the packing. Now I am much more open to receiving what the Earth spontaneously shares. I now open my box and think about what she was able to give to us: how lettuce comes and goes and returns in my box, and how potatoes appear in different shapes and colors over the season. No longer judging the farmer by what he does and doesn't plant, I am instead getting to know the Earth's unpredictable gifts. It isn't the farmer who controls the share, it is the Earth. And she shares in her own time, according to her own relationships – with the sun, the wind, the water, the fog, the temperature – and she shares with me as she shares and receives from the worms, the bugs, the birds, the compost, and the farmer and his crew. She is a vast being with many relationships, much bigger than the farmer, and she dances with him.

What does it mean that *he* dances with *her*? What kind of surrender, encouragement, direction, curiosity? At a minimum, it requires a lot of relaxation and trust. Trust that one can go with the flow if one dances along in step. Something begins to harmonize in me as I consider how much variety and unpredictability the Earth offers. As I have let myself eat more in the rhythms of Earth's sharing, I feel closer to the uncertainty and also to the bounty, the miracle. One week I eat lots of potatoes. I love them, and when I consider that they get to snuggle into the earth for such a long time, nestling in and absorbing her riches, I get to know her better and love her more. When I eat huge portions of greens one week, and not the next, I marvel at my versatility as well as hers. Control is less important than receiving her share. To dance with the Earth is to dance with uncertainty, faith, and the miracle of creation/creativity.

Peppers in November? This month's bouquet – green, yellow, orange, red – reminded me of Earth's summertime gifts: basil, apricots, peaches, raspberries. Their almost startling sweetness this late in the season showed me yet again her unpredictable generosity, and her unique style of sharing. I look forward to the surprises in my last 'share' box, the end of the CSA season of sharing. I will prepare as many of Earth's spontaneous sharings for this year's Thanksgiving celebration, and will remember her unpredictable and generous dance, which we all have the good fortune to participate in with such richness. And I'll offer a wish that we all deepen our abilities to give, to receive... and to share in the mystery of life. 🌿

Notes from Debbie's Kitchen

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

Just a few interesting recipes from my own files this week - Debbie

Spicy Roasted Squash

from "the Naked Chef," by Jamie Oliver

- 1 medium/large butternut squash (2-3 lbs.)
- 2 tsp. coriander seeds
- 2 tsp. dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp. fennel seeds
- 2 small dried red chiles (or to taste)
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. freshly ground pepper
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 tbsp. olive oil

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Wash squash, then cut in half lengthwise. Scoop out seeds. Cut squash lengthwise into quarters, then cut quarters in half – you should have approximately 1-inch, boat-shaped wedges of squash. Put them in a bowl. Put all dried herbs and spices in a mortar and pestle and pound them up with the salt and pepper to make a fine powder. Once you've done this, add garlic clove and

pound it into the spices. Scrape out contents into the bowl and add oil. Toss squash thoroughly in herb and spice mixture, making sure all pieces are well coated. Place squash pieces in a row, skin side down, on baking tray. Roast 30 minutes, or until tender. The spicy flavor will cook into the squash, and it will crisp slightly. Serve hot, as a side dish.

Cornmeal and Kale Spoon Bread with Red Peppers

serves 4

(modified from a Bon Appetit clipping)

- 1 bunch kale, washed, leaves stripped from stems (discard stems)
- 1/2 tbsp. olive oil
- 3/4 C sliced green onions
- 1/2 C corn kernels (fresh, or frozen/thawed)
- 1/4 C chopped roasted red peppers (make your own*, or use the kind from a jar)
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- 1 C water
- 3/4 C yellow cornmeal
- 1 1/4 C milk, or half milk, half water

- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 C grated cheddar cheese
- 1/2 tsp. hot pepper sauce

Cook kale in a large pot of salted water until tender, 8-10 minutes. Drain, cool, squeeze dry and finely chop. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions, corn, red peppers and garlic; stir 2-3 minutes. Mix in kale. Remove from heat. Whisk water and cornmeal in a bowl to blend. Bring milk and salt to a simmer in a heavy large saucepan over medium heat. Gradually whisk in cornmeal mixture. Stir until mixture boils and thickens, about 5 minutes. Cool slightly. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a baking dish. Whisk eggs in a large bowl to blend; gradually whisk in warm cornmeal mixture. Stir in kale mixture, cheese and hot pepper sauce. Transfer to prepared dish; smooth top. Bake until set and golden, 30-35 minutes. Serve warm.

*see "How to roast peppers" on the recipe database if you want to try it yourself!