



# Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

10<sup>th</sup> Harvest Week

June 11<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Season 8

## What's in the standard share:

Fruit:

Strawberries

Veggies and herbs:

Baby arugula/mustard greens mix

Beets

Carrots

Small cauliflower (ours this week!)

Chard

Chives\*

Lettuce

Onions

Radishes

Summer squash

Mystery item

Coming next week:

new spring potatoes!

\*see "Crop of the Week"

## and if you have an extra-fruit option:

Strawberries and raspberries!!

(over for more!)

A Reflection About Soil: David Suzuki in his book "The Sacred Balance" paints a vivid picture: "Imagine a giant tomato with a diameter of 70 meters (210 feet) but skin no thicker than that of an ordinary tomato. That thin outer layer corresponds to the fine wrapping of soil that covers the surface of our immense planet. The constant renewal of life on Earth occurs in that thin layer; we, like all other terrestrial life forms, depend on it, directly or indirectly, for our food."

Good soil management is key to growing healthy plants and providing food that is rich in nutrients and full of flavor. Today scientists are discovering that soil is filled with life. Every cubic inch teems with billions of microorganisms that play many different parts in the soils' cycle of fertility. Worms, ants and termites, springtails, protozoa, fungi, and bacteria ranging from the visible to the unimaginably minute perform important functions, and as a farmer I sometimes see my focus on growing soil as more important than growing crops. The healthier the life of my soil, the healthier the crops I can grow. It is the soil microorganisms that drive most of the activity in the soil, and that ultimately becomes responsible for nutrient mobility. So as soils become depleted by overuse – sterilized and contaminated by pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, etc. – the soil life is reduced, limiting the microorganisms' activity, which in turn limits the nutrient and mineral availability to the plants... and ultimately to all of us. The Banana Slug String Band wrap it all up in one great song, "Dirt made my lunch" in which they so wonderfully praise dirt, i.e. soil, as the fundamental substance and source of our nourishment. "Thank you dirt, thanks a bunch...!" – Tom

*"Humans – despite their artistic pretensions, their sophistication and their many accomplishments – owe their existence to a six-inch layer of topsoil and the fact that it rains."*

- source unknown

## What's Up on the Farm

Mark your calendars for two big events upcoming at the farm: First, a fiesta to promote Community Supported Agriculture. This Saturday June 14th we are hosting CAFF's (Community Alliance for Family Farmers) **3rd Annual Farm Fiesta**, and this year it will be a celebration of Community Supported Agriculture. Together with seven fellow CSA farms located here on the Central Coast we hope to bring more awareness to the diversity of crops grown locally. CSA farms in particular offer the opportunity for people to receive the freshest of locally grown produce and to connect with the land and the people involved in sustainable agriculture. The celebration will be a fun-filled event with Mariachi music, a barbeque, arts and crafts, farm tours, u-pick strawberries and games for children.

Second, on Saturday June 21st, the longest day of the year, we celebrate the summer solstice, the beginning of summer. Join us on the farm to celebrate with music, food, games, a bonfire and much more for **our 8th Summer Solstice Celebration**. Don't miss it! We will have a lot of surprises – new things to show you and your kids. Everyone can run around, pick berries and flowers, and the little ones get to ride Peanut our pony. Explore this year's new straw castle, check out the baby goats in their new home, and help us plant our pumpkin patch! Kuzanga Marimba will be playing music for us. Bring a dish to share for our traditional potluck, a sweater, stories, instruments... but most importantly bring yourself, family and friends to welcome the beginning of summer. 🌻

## Kid's Corner

Do all berries have the word "berry" in their name? This question was e-mailed to me by Mattea from Willow Glen a couple of weeks ago and to tell you the truth I have been scratching my little farmer's

brain to come up with a good answer. The best people to ask these questions of are called "botanists." They study plants and like to determine what the differences and similarities are between plants so they can study the relationship between them and give them names according to the family they belong to. My parents are currently visiting from Germany so I asked my mom whether she had any insight about the berry name. She says in German the name for "berry" is "beere," and similarly to English is used to name these types of fruit, for example: heidelbeere (raspberry), erdbeere (strawberry), stachelbeere (gooseberry). I am no expert on languages but there seems to be a relationship between the two. Maybe it's just because 'bears' love 'berries' and so they're affectionately named after them! The only berry I know of which does not have 'berry' in its name is 'currants.' Well, there doesn't seem to be a clear answer, so let me know if anyone has another answer to Mattea's question. 🌿

## Crop of the Week

We grow two types of chives: the more common 'onion chives' and the garlic or 'Chinese chives.' They are both called chives and look similar, but these hardy perennials come from different places. The garlic chive, *Allium tuberosum*, is from China where it has a long tradition of both culinary and medicinal use. In this country, garlic chives are best known as an ornamental herb. The common chive, *Allium schoenoprasum*, is native to North Africa and southwest Asia. It is the smallest and most subtle tasting of all the "alliums" or onions. It has round hollow leaves, unlike the garlic chive, which has flat solid leaves, like a blade of grass. Chives can be used in salads or egg dishes, sprinkled in soups, or added to cheese dishes or sauces. 🌿

## Member to Farm Communication

Occasionally we will write notes to members on the checklist, but we humbly request that you do not leave important messages to us there. We certainly appreciate all the thank-yous and great comments, but *if you have anything timely to report to us, please do not leave us a written note, as we will not see it until at least the following week* when we deliver again. It is important that you call or email us in those cases, so that we can respond to you more promptly, take care of anything that may be awry. Thanks! 🌿

## Notes from Debbie's Kitchen

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

*Hmmm, room only for short recipes this week! - Debbie*

### Strawberry storage tips

Different weather conditions will make a huge difference in the storeability of strawberries. In the cooler weather, they can be red, ripe and firm, and store well for a week. But in the summer heat they can become far more fragile, requiring immediate processing or they can go bad on you. I highly recommend processing them in some way as soon as you get them home. Your best options for fragile-berry-syndrome (I made that up!) are to freeze them, make jam or pie, or cut them up, sprinkle with sugar, stir, cover and refrigerate. They will still need to be consumed within a few days though.

Here is how I 'process' my berries: I empty them out onto paper towels and then carefully re-pack my baskets. I look over the berries and pack the least-ripe ones first, working my way up to the more ripe ones (do not wash them at this stage – only wash them when you're ready to use them). This technique allows you to weed out any

blemished berries which are perfectly fine if you cut them up and eat them right away, but which will take down adjacent berries in a basket if left unchecked. Cover each basket with a piece of waxed paper big enough to cover the sides and secure with a rubber band (don't use plastic wrap – the berries need to breathe). Set these on a paper towel on a shelf in your fridge (the towel is more important if you have wire shelves than glass shelves), and order them so that you will use up the ripest berries first. This way, you have sorted out the less ripe berries which will last longer. And I'd swear that they continue to ripen, even in the fridge, so this is an added bonus for the 'less ripe ones!' PS – remember to return empty baskets to the farm; we definitely re-use them! You can leave them at your pick-up location and we'll get 'em.

To freeze berries: remove strawberry tops and lay whole berries on a sheet of waxed paper on a cookie sheet. Freeze solid, then remove berries to a ziploc bag and return to the freezer. They will last months this way. I don't generally wash them before I do this

(one of the 'bennies' of eating organic!), but if you prefer to, be sure to blot them dry before you freeze them.

### Another Radish Sandwich

A fellow CSA member suggested this recently and I tried it and it is a winner! (See newsletter of week 12, 2002 for the original 'radish sandwich' story and recipe.) Instead of sliced radishes on buttered sweet French bread, try them on bagels with cream cheese, and sprinkle with a little salt. The cream cheese nicely offsets the peppery bite of the radish, and the play of textures is delightful! And yes, this is excellent for breakfast... or any meal of the day, really. We had friends over for dinner, and they brought a loaf of bread which was an 'herb slab' – we sliced this up and passed the cream cheese, sliced radishes and salt. I even topped 'em with a sprig of fresh parsley and that was tasty too! And last week Tom mentioned radishes on pumpernickel or sourdough bread, so as you can see, there are lots of possibilities for making a 'radish sandwich!'

## Live Earth Farm Calendar

(see calendar on website for more detailed info)

Sat. Jun 14	<u>CAFF 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Farm Fiesta</u> Noon – 5pm
Sat. Jun 21	<u>Summer Solstice Celebration</u> 4pm - 10pm <i>with Kuzanga Marimba!</i>
Aug 8, 9, 10	<u>Children's Mini Camp</u> Friday evening to noon Sunday
Sat. Sep 20	<u>Fall Equinox Celebration</u> 3pm - 9pm <i>with the Banana Slug String Band!</i>
Sat. Oct 26	<u>Halloween Pumpkin Palooza</u> all day <i>the Banana Slug String Band will play here too!</i>