



# Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

11<sup>th</sup> Harvest Week

June 18<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Season 8

## What's in the standard share:

Fruit:

Strawberries

Veggies and herbs:

Arugula

Beets

Carrots

Collard greens

Fennel

Garlic

Lettuce

Parsley or chives

Potatoes (Yellow Finn and Peruvian Purple)

Radicchio

Radishes

Spinach

Mystery item

Tom says, "sorry about no onions last Saturday.

We'll give Saturday members leeks this week to make up for it!"

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

Strawberries and raspberries!!

(over for more!)

WE ARE READY TO CELEBRATE the Summer Solstice. With the Farm Fiesta behind us, we can now relax and enjoy the official arrival of summer. Our **Solstice Celebration** is coming up this Saturday, June 21st, 4 to 10pm. Our seasonal celebrations are intended, among other things, to honor the connection between the food on our table and the land that gave rise to it. The soil we work is a fertile source not just for agriculture but also for celebration. Just as crops and methods of cultivation differ greatly from place to place around the globe, so too do the celebrations associated with nature and its bounty. Every crop has its season, and by celebrating the solstice we acknowledge that our lives and our nourishment are connected to the rhythm of these seasonal cycles. We ask everyone to bring a dish to share for the potluck, blankets to sit on, and a sweater as the evening can get a bit chilly once the bonfire dies down.

It was a big push to get the farm ready to welcome what turned out to be our biggest public event yet. Last Saturday's "Farm Fiesta," organized

*"To live is not enough, we must take part and celebrate."*

*- Pablo Casals*

by the Community Alliance with Family Farmers drew more than 200, maybe close to 300 people to the farm. U-pick strawberries, chocolate covered strawberries, and my mom's strawberry jam sweetened the event, as people enjoyed a beautiful sunny day, making their own tortillas with fresh grilled vegetables, listening to a local Mariachi Band. The animals now in their new shelter had lots of company, and I enjoyed interacting with many of the visitors during the farm tours, surprised at how much people were interested in the farm's operation and issues related to water use, farm economics and marketing. The concept of community agriculture is still new to most people but the interest in it is increasing as many feel a desire to participate and understand local food and farm issues. It was inspiring to share the farm as a venue to bring together local CSAs and organizations doing outreach and education on issues related to food, farming and the environment. – Tom

## Crop of the Week

Potatoes, oh what a glorious crop!!! Farmer Tom's Potato Quiz: Potatoes are considered to be a root, True or False? (You'll find the answer in the newsletter.)

We are starting to harvest our potatoes (this week it is Yellow Finns and Peruvian Purples), and since I find them to be one of the most fascinating crops with an even more fascinating history, I want to share with you what I wrote last year about them.

Potatoes are fun to grow and if you ask me which crop I enjoy growing the most, potatoes are right up there on top of the list. The sight of a lush, green, potato field dotted with white and purple flowers is one of the highlights of the season. Slipping your hand under the loose soil and pulling up the first new potatoes is like finding a buried treasure. Do you know that the so-called "Irish" potato actually comes from the highlands of Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador, where it has been cultivated for over 5000 years? Potatoes were the staple of the Incas, who grew and ate hundreds of varieties. They even made a potato liqueur in some of the earliest known stills. Like its relatives the tomato and pepper, the potato arrived in Europe with the Spanish explorers. Within a few decades it replaced the parsnip as the vegetable staple of Europe. The Irish were the first to grow the potato extensively since it yielded 4 to 5 times more calories per acre than any of the traditionally grown cereal grains. By changing their diet, it allowed the Irish to survive without having to depend on the English grown grains. In war-torn Europe peasants planted potatoes as a kind of insurance since potatoes could be left in the ground through the winter and dug only as needed for daily consumption. This would allow peasants to survive the raids of soldiers during wartime: soldiers usually could not take the time to dig the field to get their food, and certainly they would not do so if grains were stored in neighboring barns. However in 1845-46, the year of the devastating "Irish Potato Famine," Late Blight (*Phytophthora Infestans*), a common fungal

disease that thrives under cool and wet conditions (i.e. Irish weather) wiped out most of the Irish potato crop. Hundreds of thousands died before public relief could be organized, and scores of thousands who survived emigrated to America. The harsh lesson of this famine was the importance of maintaining a diversified farming system, i.e. don't rely solely on one type of crop (mono-cropping).

Although Potatoes grow underground they are not really roots. They are the swollen end of skinny underground stems called rhizomes. To stimulate their growth, about a quarter to a third of the plant has to be covered with soil, or hilled up to stimulate the formation of "tubers". Today heirloom potatoes are making a comeback. There are hundreds of exciting varieties now available. They come in unique shapes and colors, from purple, knobby "fingerlings" to round, red-skinned boilers, to oval, brown-skinned boilers. On the farm this year we have the early red, thin-skinned type with low starch content, perfect for grilling, boiling and roasting. We're also growing the purple Peruvian with its oval shape, dark blue skin, and deep purple mealy flesh. Then we have the sweet and nutty all-purpose yellow potatoes like Yukon Gold and Yellow Finn as well as my favorite "Fingerling," the Russian Banana, which stays firm when cooked, making them great for roasting, potato salads and sautés. 🍄

## 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.

*This week, more member-submitted recipes! First is one I have been saving for when we started getting potatoes in our shares. Member Craig Ramsay of Willow Glen sent it to me, and said his inspiration was his Italian mother-in-law, who always made wonderful soups straight from her garden, out of whatever was ready for the picking. Craig says, "each week when I get my share, I sort through it and pick out the things that I have specific plans for. Everything else (and basically, that's whatever else is in the box) becomes 'Farmer's Market Minestra.' Everyone loves it, from our two-year old to her babysitter from Uruguay." - Debbie*

### Farmers Market Minestra

by Craig Ramsay (and mamma Pasqualina)  
makes 1 gallon of hearty soup

In a 2-gallon pot, start by boiling some potatoes (5 to 8 small to medium sized) in a gallon of diluted vegetable broth for about 10 minutes. While that is cooking, clean any carrots, squash, garlic, onions, leeks, etc. and throw them in. Prep the rest of the leafy veggies (rinse, de-stem, chop, etc.) and add them to the pot. Lower temp and simmer to soften the veggies and infuse the

flavors (about another 10 to 15 minutes). Depending on what you've used, you can season it to taste. Check the taste and add spices sparingly, if at all – you may find that the natural blend of vegetables tastes just great as is. When it is finished cooking, ladle the soup into your food processor and chop it as desired. The potatoes and carrots give the soup a nice texture and color. The blend of flavors is wonderful. Garnish with a sprinkling of Parmesan cheese and olive oil at serving.

Craig doesn't generally prefer the beets in this soup, but says his wife boils them separately and adds them to her soup and loves it.

*This inspiring 'recipe' was emailed to me from members Mark Bedford and Lisa Bautista of Aptos a few weeks ago:*

### Summer beet salad with leafy greens and bleu cheese

"We're new members this year, and we LOVE the great veggies and fruits. The greens have been fabulous, and the recent Chiogga beets were out-of-this-world roasted on an arugula and mixed greens salad with crumbled blue cheese and a

## Live Earth Farm Calendar

(see calendar on website for more detailed info)

Sat. Jun 21	<u>Summer Solstice Celebration</u> 4pm - 10pm with <i>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 with <i>the Banana Slug String Band!</i>
Sat. Oct 26	<u>Halloween Pumpkin Palooza</u> all day with <i>the Banana Slug String Band will play here too!</i>

raspberry dressing. Can't wait to get more of the summer fruits and vegetables!"

*And lastly from member Kristin Schaffer, longtime member from Willow Glen:*

### Swedish Giftas (pronounced "Yiftas")

6 servings

"This is a recipe from my grandmother Lyla Bernson – great-grandmother of 'the other Linnea!' This is a great way to use those wonderful berries. If you have fancy parfait glasses, it dresses up well as a fancy dessert," says Kristin.

1 cup whipping cream  
6 double graham crackers  
1 quart fresh raspberries or strawberries (or a mix of both)

Whip cream and refrigerate (optional: add 1/4 tsp. vanilla when whipping). Sprinkle berries with sugar and set aside. Break graham crackers into small pieces or crush with a rolling pin [you can put them inside a plastic bag when doing this to keep things neat – Debbie]. Just before serving, fold crackers into cream, then layer this mixture with the fruit in individual bowls or stemmed dessert glasses.