



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

24th Harvest Week

Sept. 17th – 23rd, 2003

Season 8

Equinox Celebration this Saturday, September 20th from 4 to 8 pm

Music with the Banana Slug String Band, potluck (so bring a dish to share!), games and farm tours, apple pressing, bonfire, fire dance and more!

What's in the standard share:

Fruit:

Apples!

Veggies and herbs:

Red beets

Bok choy

Green beans

Kale or chard

Lettuce

Onions

Parsley

Potatoes

Radicchio

Scallions

Spinach

Tomatoes

Mystery item

The Heat was On. For a surfer last week's heat wave was wonderful even if there weren't any waves. But when temperatures soar over 90F here on the farm we instinctively enter survivalist mode. I'm reminded how all life on this planet hangs on an incredibly fine but well tuned thread of environmental conditions. Our fog-loving plants such as strawberries, blackberries, lettuce, spinach and the like went through a serious baking cycle. Water is our lifeline, and we rely on irrigation during the long and dry months of summer and early fall to grow the diversity of crops we offer. On the farm, hot days like we had means irrigating at night and getting all field work done by noon. I thought of all the farmers in Europe this summer, and last year's East Coast farmers, who suffered substantial losses due to prolonged drought conditions and extreme heat. We live on borrowed time as we pump water from our rivers and underground aquifers

to grow crops that wouldn't survive here otherwise. Water conservation is essential if we want to preserve agriculture in the Pajaro Valley. Currently we are running a water deficit,

causing saltwater intrusion to contaminate the local drinking water for communities along Monterey Bay. Since farming uses more than 70% of California's water, it's imperative to develop and implement better conservation practices. Here on the farm we only have a limited supply, which forces us to test different cropping systems and irrigation methods. Knowing when and how much water to apply to a particular crop is both an art and a science. There are many variables to consider, such as soil type, specific crop requirements, delivery systems and weather patterns. The farm is a living organism; like a child it changes every year, and we learn about its character, and what it needs to grow into a more sustainable being.

"To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven."

- Ecclesiastes 3:1

Winter Shares. I am still working out the logistics. If you are interested in a winter share and did *not* already put your name on the survey cover sheet (front page of your checklist a few weeks ago), please call the farm at 831.763.2448 and leave your name and your interest in a winter share. Thanks! – Tom

and if you have an extra-fruit option:

Strawberries, pears and/or apples, and melons

Of Interest

"Organically Grown" is not just a label. At last Saturday's Willow Glen Farmer's market a new member took me aside to express her appreciation for the food we grow and how it has made a difference in her husband's health. To his surprise, he received a "normal" blood analysis during a recent testing, and she believed that this change was partly due to the produce she receives weekly from us, which has changed their diet, both regarding the ingredients they use and how they are prepared. It was nice to have such a personal and positive reinforcement, as it makes every moment on the farm worthwhile. With all the "hype" we are seeing recently about organic foods, it is good to be reminded that the advantages of organic farming are not only good for the earth (reduced soil erosion, improved soil health, less contribution to global warming, and reduced water pollution) but also good for our bodies. According to a study published in the Journal of Applied Nutrition, organically grown apples, pears, potatoes, wheat and sweet corn showed substantially higher mineral content than the same items grown under conventionally grown methods: Calcium 63% higher; Chromium 78% higher; Iodine 73% higher; Iron 59% higher; Magnesium 138% higher; Potassium 125% higher; Selenium 390% higher and Zinc 60% higher. 🌱

(over for more!)

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Crop Notes

Melons. We are growing a mixed melon patch, and last week I forgot to let you know that the yellow, oblong fruits in your share were not oversized lemon cucumbers or spaghetti squash but a type of Asian melon called Sun Jewel. These melons are white fleshed, crisp and sweet. Other melons you may have in your share are more recognizable and round. Some will be orange-fleshed cantaloupes with their distinctive corky "net" on the skin, others may have a smooth greenish white rind and flesh that ripens to a swirl of orange and green. These melons are known as butterscotch melons; sweet, fragrant and edible to the rind. A third type looks like a cantaloupe, without the ribbing and a green/yellow skin. The flesh is green, smooth and sweet. 🍌

Live Earth Farm Calendar

(see calendar on website for more detailed info)

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|-------------|--|
| Sat. Sep 20 | <u>Fall Equinox Celebration</u>
4pm - 8pm with the <i>Banana Slug String Band!</i> |
| Sat. Oct 25 | <u>Halloween Pumpkin Palooza</u>
all day the <i>Banana Slug String Band will play here too!</i> |

Goat's Milk Items and Almonds – miscellaneous info

- It's harvest time at Anderson Almonds (see their website www.andersonalmonds.com for *wonderful* pictures and explanations), so our arrangement with them is temporarily on hold. You can still purchase from them, only delivery will not happen through us.
- Always concocting new ways to use her bounty of goat's milk, Lynn Selness is now making yogurt! This yogurt is extremely tasty and full of acidophilus (good bacteria for your gut). It has the consistency of kefir, creamy and soft, not thick like commercial yogurts that add gelatins and other thickening agents. Lynn will add yogurt to her list of cheeses and milk, and you can get 1 qt. for \$4.
- Clarification: the rennet Lynn uses in her queso blanco is vegetable rennet and is not an animal product – good news for vegans!

Ordering Almonds or Goat Cheese

Almonds from *Anderson Almonds* are currently not available through the CSA as they are busy with the fall harvest. See their website www.andersonalmonds.com for the latest info.

From *Summer Meadows Farm*, just across the Pajaro Valley from Live Earth Farm, you can get *raw goat milk* cheeses, milk and now yogurt! Cheeses are chevre, ricotta, and a queso blanco (made with vegetable rennet). Milk and yogurt are by the quart. Your cheese, milk and/or yogurt orders are left in a

cooler under an ice pack at your pick-up location (chevre is sometimes delivered frozen but this does not affect quality). Prices: Chevre and ricotta are \$6 per half-pound. Queso blanco is available in 5" round 'bricks' about a pound each for \$12 (or get a 'half brick' for \$6). A quart of milk is \$3, and a quart of yogurt is \$4 (please remember to return empty jars to the cooler at your pick-up site the following week! Lynn re-uses them). Supply is somewhat limited. Contact Lynn Selness at (831) 345-8033 to place an order, then mail a check to Summer Meadows Farm, 405 Webb Road, Watsonville, CA 95076.

Notes from Debbie's Kitchen

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

*Having trouble using your radicchio?
What about those scallions?* - Debbie

Pan seared radicchio-veggie pasta

from Debbie's own kitchen serves 4 or so

Although I love radicchio grilled, I also like variety, and so recently experimented with applying the heat with a skillet instead of a grill. My husband gave this two thumbs up, so I think I was successful!

1 head radicchio
olive oil
1 large clove garlic, peeled
a couple small tomatoes
a big handful of green beans
salt
pinch or two of dried thyme (optional)
pasta of your choice
fresh parmesan to grate (optional)

Cut the radicchio into wedges then chop into bite-size chunks (cut out stem end). Chop tomatoes, set aside. Wash, top and tail green beans and cut into pieces (or leave whole if desired). Boil beans in salted

water 5 to 8 minutes, drain and set aside. Heat a pot of water for your pasta (pasta can boil while you're cooking sauce). Heat a large skillet over high heat (careful!) add some olive oil and radicchio, stir briefly to coat then cover. You want the radicchio to sear, but be mindful: keep a close eye on it. Reduce the temperature some if it makes you nervous. Check on it every minute or two, poke/stir it around a bit, and when it looks browned and nicely limp, crush and add the garlic (and optional thyme), allowing to sizzle for half a minute or so, then add the tomatoes and prepared beans. Stir and cook a minute or two more, just until tomatoes start to soften and flavors mix. Serve hot over pasta like linguini (or alternatively you can mix with penne or fusilli-type pasta) and pass the parmesan!

Scallion, Potato and Herb Puree

from "Local Flavors" by Deborah Madison

"Scallions come in many shapes and sizes, from tiny and red to thick, green and very long. Potatoes are, of course, delicious

with leeks, so you can expect they'd be good with scallions, and they're a perfect vehicle for whatever herbs you love."

1 lb. potatoes
salt and pepper
4 tbsp. unsalted butter
2 to 3 C chopped scallions, including some of the greens
1/3 C chopped parsley, chervil or other favorite herb
1/2 C crumbled goat cheese, optional

Cut up potatoes (I don't peel 'em but you can if you prefer – Debbie) and boil in salted water 20 – 25 minutes, until soft. Set aside 1C of cooking water, then drain. Melt 1 tbsp. butter in a skillet, add scallions and toss to coat. Season w/1/2 tsp. salt, add 1/2C water and cook gently until softened, about 15 minutes. Combine scallions and potatoes in a bowl and mash with remaining butter, parsley, and enough of the reserved potato water to make a smooth, light puree. Stir in cheese, if using, and season to taste with salt and pepper.