



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

4th Harvest Week

April 30th – May 6th, 2003

Season 8

What's in the standard share:

Fruit:

Strawberries (quantity is weather dependent)

Veggies:

Arugula (small bunch)

Italian Forono beets

Carrots

Cauliflower

Chard

Chives (small bunch)

Cilantro

Green garlic

Red Russian kale

Lettuce (four types)

Mustard greens (small bunch)

Young onions

Radishes

Spinach

and if you have an extra-fruit option:

More strawberries!

(2 to 3 baskets –

weather dependent)

(over for more!)

With the arrival of May, we now enter into our full season. Those of you who started with us in April will see a jump in participation at your pick-up site. We are so happy to see many new as well as returning members added to our program – welcome to another season full of the nourishing abundance and diversity which this land shares with us every year! Over the past eight years, it has been your commitment to Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) which has given us the confidence and support to mature as a farm. Your participation continues to strengthen our relationships with the land as well as with you, the community, which is connected to it. Your participation in CSA engages you in these relationships as well. As a farmer, I find it deeply satisfying getting to know the people who are nourished by the food we grow and care for. Likewise we hope the food you receive from us allows you to get to know us, your 'farmer,' as well, and to understand better how and where your food is grown. We welcome you to visit the farm at any time throughout the season. Or if you are interested in volunteering for many of our ongoing activities, don't hesitate to let us know. – Tom

"Those who contemplate the beauty of the Earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts."

- Rachel Carson, from "Silent Spring"

What's Up on the Farm

It's raining again... and again... and again! Like in a delayed El Niño year, we are getting more rain now than we did in February and March combined. Rain is a blessing in that it replenishes soil moisture, reduces our irrigation needs and invigorates the growth of all our cool weather, water-loving plants. Farmers of course only want rain in the right amount and at the right time, and for me this is true as well. David, my son, remarked that the strawberries don't seem as sweet as in years past and when I blamed the rain, this triggered his deductive thought process to find out how his other favorite fruits will be affected, namely raspberries, peaches, apricots, and pears. His concerns were laid to rest the moment he found a dark red sweet strawberry in the basket in front of him, and I also assured him that by the time the other fruit starts to ripen, the weather will (hopefully) have changed into a more 'predictable' spring pattern. The best weather for tasty strawberries is when it's dry, with cool nights and warm days. With so much rain the berries tend to ripen slower, and many are water damaged and prone to rot much faster. So if you don't see a lot of berries this week, please be patient until we have a few more days of sunshine. Once the sun comes out consistently, we will have lots! 🌈

On Spring and Greens

At the farmers market it is a challenge to get people excited about a beautiful bunch of kale, broccoli raab, mustard greens, or arugula. With their peppery and sometimes bitter taste, these greens have a hard time finding an entry into the American diet. In a conversation about how some CSA members feel overwhelmed by the more unusual, sometimes strong-tasting greens in their early spring shares, fellow CSA farmer Andi Griffin of Mariquita Farms opined that "America is a young culture with an infant's taste for the sugary sweetness of breast milk." Most of us don't quite fall into that extreme, but he makes a point about the predominantly sweet and bland flavors which dominate the cuisine in this country. Look at the more ancient nations, where the bitter is dished out with pleasure – the favorite bitter melon of the Chinese, the cardoon of the French, and the harsh retsina of the Greek for example. It seems that not only do we have the opportunity to experience more interesting and complex flavors than most Americans, but lately I have noticed that I have actually developed small cravings for these more bitter and very nutritious greens over time. So don't give up on them too soon. You may be surprised to find a growing appreciation for these 'new' ancient flavors. 🌈

Evolution of a CSA palate

Hello everyone, Debbie here. Tom is so right about developing a taste for things over time. When I try new vegetables, I think about many things... I *know* they are nutritious, I *know* they are favorites of other cultures; I *know these things*, and so I try not to limit my 'tasting' of them to my own palate experience. I try instead to imagine the pleasure invoked in the palates of people from cultures who appreciate and love these vegetables. Try this: tear off a fresh, tender arugula leaf, or mustard green leaf. Chew it slowly and observe the progression of tastes you experience – first not much... then wow! lovely pepper, and then spice and heat. Try the same thing with a fresh tender piece of red Russian kale. I did this for the first time this winter (yep, I've been a CSA member 7 years and just recently tried it raw) and it was like someone turned on a light. I was amazed at the complexity of subtle sweetness and I-don't-know-what... I was astonished to find that I loved the taste raw, and craved more! I tore off and chewed several more pieces on the spot, and now whenever I get a bunch in my box, I can't help but nibble on it as I prep it for storage. And continue to be amazed. I can't explain it. I can only pass on the experience. So all I'm saying is, don't wait 7 years to try this yourself! Be adventurous!! Another example: before becoming a CSA member, I had never cooked fresh beets before. In the early years, they were new and somewhat alien, but again, I knew they had value, and so sought out ways to prepare them. I learned ways to use them raw (I didn't know you could do this!). I learned over time that there were so many different flavors they paired well with. Now I find I love getting beets in my share! And I can't wait for the new spring crop, with their fresh tender leaves, which are yet more good eating (the beets we're getting now are over-wintered, so their greens are tough). 🍷

Member to Member Forum

A few announcements that may be of interest to CSA members:

- **Yoga at the farm!** Emily Marie Bording will be offering yoga classes 3 days a week at Live Earth Farm. Mondays 10am - 11:15am; Wednesdays and Thursdays 7pm - 8:15pm. \$10/class or donation. Contact Emily at 831.722.8500 for more info.
- **Almonds!** Mele Anderson of Anderson Almonds, a small, local, family-owned, certified organic farm, wants to offer CSA members almonds (available raw, roasted, or roasted and salted) and almond butter through your share. Here are her ideas (but she is flexible): Combination almonds (5 lbs.) + almond butter (15 oz.) – \$32; Almonds only (5 lbs.) – \$25; Almond butter only – \$10. OR, bulk order option (offered once, preferably at the beginning of the season): 6-pack almond butter – \$50, or a 25-lb. case of almonds (raw only) – \$120. If interested, contact Mele directly to place an order (phone 209.667.7494 or see their website at www.andersonalmonds.com). We will deliver your almond/almond butter order the following week with your share.
- **Wine!** Thomas Kruse, a small, longtime vintner in Gilroy with a loyal following, has a sale on at his winery (on Hecker Pass Hwy. at Watsonville Rd.). Although not organic, they are excellent, locally produced wines at incredibly affordable prices (Debbie has been getting his wine for years and vouches for this) – as low as \$3/bottle for a mixed case! For more info call the winery at 408.842.7016.

Notes from Debbie's Kitchen

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

If you're new this week and want some info about veggie prep and storage, see discussions in our last 2 newsletters (available on our website). Meanwhile, here are a few cooking ideas - Debbie

Toaster Oven Young Onions

Peel or wipe off any mushy outer layers of your tender young onions. Cut off root end and any greens that don't look fresh enough to eat, but leave the stalk whole. Coat lightly with olive oil (I use my hands), then sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cook in a preheated toaster oven (or regular oven, or grill!) at 450 or so degrees, turning once, until lightly browned and soft. Depending on how hot your oven is, this could be from 10 to 20 minutes. Serve as a side dish. They're yummy! Make at least one per person!!

North African Roasted Cauliflower

I highly recommend this recipe! I have made it and it is absolutely delicious!! It is in the recipe database on our website under Cauliflower. Although it calls for tomatoes, in this winter season I recommend using organic canned chopped tomatoes over out-of-season fresh ones.

Chard with Onion and Feta

(another 'repeat') I make this recipe often! Wash chard well, shake off excess water, chop greens and stems separately. Chop up some onion (2 or 3 young onions). Sauté onion and chard stems together in some olive oil, 5 – 10 minutes over medium heat. Add greens with moisture still clinging (or add a splash of water if they are dry), stir, then cover and cook a few minutes 'til the

greens wilt. Crumble in a bunch of feta cheese, and stir occasionally, for a few minutes, until melted. This can be eaten as is, as a side dish, OR, I like to boil up some penne pasta and toss the chard/feta mixture with these for a main meal!

Chives

Use 'em while they're fresh! To store, make sure they're dry, and put 'em in a ziploc bag, squeezing all the air out. To use, chop with a knife or snip with scissors into your scrambled eggs for breakfast or onto your quiche for dinner! Snip them over fish that you're going to bake, poach or broil. Marinate some firm tofu slices in soy sauce-garlic-ginger-sesame oil. Pan brown and scatter in some snipped chives while cooking. Make a simple pasta w/butter, chives, parsley, parmesan...

Live Earth Farm Calendar

(see calendar on website for more detailed info)

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