



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

8th Harvest Week

May 28th – June 3rd, 2003

Season 8

I hope everyone enjoyed their "bonus" bouquet of Peruvian lilies with their Standard Share last week. It was just a little 'taste' of what our Flower Option is like. Speaking of which, *next week* is the first delivery week of June, and so those of you who signed up for flowers will start receiving them! – Tom

What's in the standard share:

Fruit:

Strawberries

Veggies and herbs:

Arugula

Basil or Chives

Chiogga beets*

Broccoli

Broccoli raab

Carrots

Chard

Green garlic

Dinosaur kale

Lettuce

Radicchio

Mystery item

*see picture in recipe database (pink and white candy-stripe concentric rings when sliced crosswise)

and if you have an extra-fruit option:

More strawberries!

(over for more!)

Kids' Corner

A few weeks ago Larry from the Banana Slug String Band asked me half-jokingly if I talk to my plants, and I half-jokingly replied that I do! I talk to them before I go to bed. In the back of my mind though, I was thinking about how all the work on the farm right now was not leaving me enough time to chat with my plants. Larry's question served as a small reminder that since the season started I haven't slowed to pay attention to that. Plants have lots to tell us, especially by where they grow, their appearance, color, smell, and taste. But how do plants talk? You must think, now farmer Tom has really lost it – he is hearing plants talk and is not even embarrassed to admit it! Perhaps too much sun, not enough sleep, dehydration... is he delirious? Well let me tell you

"Everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow circles of nature, is a help. Gardening is an instrument of grace."

- May Sarton, from "Gardening by Heart"

how I talk to plants and then you try it and let me know if it works for you. Here is what you do: Choose a plant, any plant, one that caught your attention for whatever reason and sit in front of it. It can be a tree, a flower or an herb like rosemary, basil, or sage. Or it can be a plant you don't know but you are attracted to. Once you have sat down, take three, slow, deep breaths and greet the plant by introducing yourself to it, "Hi I am here, I am Tom." Then be as quiet as you can and look at your plant with care, like a friend that you want to get to know more. Now close your eyes and ask any question that pops in your mind. You can ask out loud, or silently with your mind. My favorite questions are "How are you growing? Do you like it here? What makes you happy? Do you need anything?" I typically don't ask too many questions, but just stay quiet and wait for the plant to answer. The plant won't talk out loud, of course – duh! like my son David says when I point out the obvious – but you will hear words in your mind like "yes," "no," or "I need ...". The answer that pops into your mind is the one. Don't brush it aside, disbelieving it. Sometimes it doesn't make sense right away. That's okay too – I don't always understand what my plant friends tell me. If you wish, you can ask more questions. When you are done, make sure to say "bye" and "thanks" or "see you soon." I always express special thanks when I pick something off a plant, be it a flower, leaf, or fruit. That's it, there is no more to it than that! Try it and just enjoy yourself. Let me know how it went next time you see me. Here on the farm we can do it together and I'll introduce you to all my special friends!!! 🌱

Crop Info

Why are some strawberries so huge and others so small? Here on the central coast, strawberries are typically planted new every year, which is different from other more temperate climates where strawberry plants are kept in the same place for 2 to 4 years. I like to rotate our berries every year, however, last year our plants looked so healthy that I decided to keep some for a second season, in addition to planting new ones. This explains the difference in size. The small ones are from two-year-old plants and the big ones are from this year's newly planted field. This year's plants are on newly leased ground which has never had berries grown there before. The soil is rested, rich and beautiful, and so the plants are lush and very strong. The second-year berries are smaller but not necessarily better tasting. During

our wet April weather we were sure lucky to have them, as they helped us squeak by with just enough berries for the CSA. Later in the season we hope to dry our extra strawberries in our solar dryer, as in the winter they are a popular market item.

Another good reason to have extra strawberries is for kids who visit the farm. Last week we received sixty 4th and 5th graders. One of the high points of their day, besides planting, picking flowers, and visiting the animals, was to pick strawberries. That reminds me – we will offer U-pick strawberries again this year during our Solstice Celebration on June 21st. Mark your calendar!!!

Attack of the Killer Spider Mites. Sounds like a Hollywood movie, but actually these little critters are only interested in sucking the juices out of strawberry leaves (not sucking blood). They cause what is probably the most serious damage to our berry plants. As the weather gets warmer, they can thrive. I spied the first two-spotted spider mites a couple of weeks ago, however we were prepared. A month ago we released a "battalion" of 100,000 red mites, better known as Persimillis, which will keep the 'bad guys' in check. The key is to notice them early to prevent an infestation. In farming timing is everything!! 🐞

Membership

Just a friendly reminder that we still have plenty of space for new members in our CSA this year. Please continue to spread the word. Feel free to call or email Debbie at the farm and request flyers to post or extra brochures to distribute. Your help is most appreciated, and word of mouth is still the best way to introduce new people to CSA. Don't forget to mention that we have a '4-week trial' option this year, so if they are hesitant to commit for the season, they can 'try us' for a month first. Thanks! 🐞

Notes from Debbie's Kitchen

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

Tom tells me that we're getting lots of strawberries now that the weather is nice, so I thought I'd indulge this week in a recipe for them. A few weeks ago on the farm we had a group dinner, and Linnea made these wonderful Swedish pancakes with strawberries. It was delicious! Crêpe batter is very similar, so my recipe is for crêpes with strawberry filling. - Debbie

Dessert crêpes with strawberries

information and ingredients for crêpes excerpted from the All New All Purpose Joy of Cooking

Crepe batter

makes about 12 7" crêpes or 8 12" crêpes

1/2 C all-purpose flour

1/2 C milk

1/4 C lukewarm water

2 large eggs

2 tbsp. butter, melted

1 1/2 tbsp. sugar

pinch of salt

Combine all ingredients in a blender or food processor until smooth. Let stand for 30 minutes (or cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days). This allows the flour to thoroughly absorb the liquid and gives the gluten in the flour a chance to relax.

You'll need only 2 to 3 tablespoons of batter

for each crêpe. The easiest way to get this small amount of batter into the pan is to pour it from a small pitcher, measuring cup or ladle. Heat a small or medium skillet (depends on what size crêpes you want) over medium-high heat and grease it lightly (rub the end of a stick of butter over the cooking surface or drop in a dab and tilt pan to coat). Lift the pan off the heat and pour in the batter, tilting and rotating the pan as you do so that the batter covers the entire bottom of the pan in a very thin, even layer. Cook the crêpe on one side until it sets and starts to bubble; you should see the very edges just starting to turn a light brown (the underside should be a golden brown).

Using a thin spatula around the edge of the pan, lift the crêpe up, and turn it over. Cook on the second side just until it is speckled with golden dots; it will never be as brown as the first side. Have a large plate or cookie sheet standing by to accumulate the cooked crêpes on. Invert pan over this and the crêpe should just fall out (that's the way I do it – Debbie). Repeat process (remember to lightly grease pan with butter for each crêpe) until you've used up all the batter. Set crêpes in a warm place while you make the strawberry filling and whipped cream!

Strawberry filling

approx. 1 basket of berries per 4 people

Strawberries, washed, hulled and sliced
2 rounded tbsp. sugar per basket of berries
1 tbsp. water

Combine strawberries, sugar and water in a saucepan and heat, uncovered, over medium heat until they begin to simmer. (If you cover the pan you risk boil over. Trust me, I've done it, I hate to admit, more than once! – Debbie) Turn heat to low and continue to simmer until strawberries have gone soft and translucent and the liquid is syrupy, maybe 10 minutes? Actually, you can start the filling simmering and have it going on one burner while you make the crêpes on the other. Multitask!

To serve, pass the platter of crêpes and a bowl of warm strawberry filling around, and let each person make their own! Lay a crêpe on your plate and spoon a bunch of strawberries into the middle. Fold both sides over the top of the berries (or you can do it burrito-style if you don't like the filling leaking out – fold up the ends first then the sides!). Top with a generous dollop of whipped cream (homemade is best – just pour cold heavy cream into a bowl and add a spoonful of powdered sugar then whip until thick. It's very easy and so much better than the canned/aerosol stuff!) Alternatively you can top with a scoop of vanilla ice cream. Enjoy!

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 <i>the Banana Slug String Band will play here too!</i>