



# The Weekly (Com)Post

A newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

11<sup>th</sup> Harvest Week

May 24<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, 2004

Season 9

## What's in the standard share:

### Fruit:

Strawberries

### Veggies:

Beets

Carrots

Cauliflower or Broccoli

Chard

Green garlic

Kale

Kohlrabi

Lettuce

Spring onions

Italian parsley

Purslane

Radishes

Summer squash

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

More strawberries!

(over for more)

Since the beginning of April, most Mondays and Thursdays we've been hosting weekly field trips for local school children. Although picking strawberries, visiting the goats and riding bareback on Peanut are some of the main attractions, much of what children experience walking around the farm is by touching, smelling, tasting, or at times silently listening to what surrounds them. The starting point of experiencing the farm is always food. I am convinced that a child with a basketful of freshly picked strawberries, a stained shirt and mouth, will have no problem understanding that food doesn't appear magically on store shelves, as compared to some "hard to digest" rational explanation from a teacher or book. Walking through the raspberry patch last week a boy takes my hand and shows me a handful of juicy orange raspberries and looking up to me he says, "I like to do this when I am older." This spontaneous, almost innocent expression of a child's desire is a constant reminder that through the actual experience of nature, whether we are nurturing a plant in a tiny clay pot or on an acre of land, we can maintain a healthy relationship with our environment. Tending a garden or a small farm may seem like a pitifully small step towards making a shift in global behavior, but it is these changes in the heart and our consciousness that add up to make a difference.

This morning a group of local birdwatchers walked the farm and I was amazed by the diversity of bird species that hang out here. Although I didn't get to see many of the birds, Bonnie (who led the group) identified them by their song and explained their nesting and feeding habits. I realize that I am so caught up in the economics of food production that I forget about the importance of the wilderness spots here on the farm. Watching the birds, I am aware of the little wild sanctuaries we have: a small grove of coastal oak and eucalyptus, the hedges surrounding the fields. And our ponds are the home of many birds, insects, frogs, and larger animals such as coyotes, deer, rabbits, snakes, as well as many native plants, perennial shrubs, grasses and flowering plants. Although creating wilderness habitat never fits into a financial equation, I know it feels nourishing and strengthening when we are surrounded by it, and we feel removed, starved, and cut off when it's lacking. I know these wilder areas play an important role in reducing pest and disease problems among the crops we grow, and one could theoretically measure that, to justify them economically. But shouldn't these areas exist anyway, since they were here before us, forming the basis of this rich and fertile environment that we now farm? To farm sustainably we need to learn to farm with the wild by including and conserving native landscapes among the crops we grow. Maybe one day food will not just be organically grown, but "wildly organically grown." – Tom

## Crop of the Week

Ready for some "wild" vegetables? Believe it or not, many of the weeds growing in your garden are edible. In fact, there are over one hundred species

*"To see a World in a Grain of Sand  
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,  
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand  
And Eternity in an hour."*

- William Blake

## Live Earth Farm 2004 Calendar

(see calendar on website for more detailed info)

Sat. June 19	<u>Summer Solstice Celebration</u> field tours 2 – 5 pm celebration 5 – 9 pm <i>Kuzanga Marimba returns!</i>
July 30, 31, Aug 1	<u>Children's Mini Camp</u> Friday evening to noon Sunday
Sat. Sept. 25	<u>Fall Equinox Celebration</u> 3 – 9 pm <i>with The Banana Slug String Band!</i>
Sat. Oct 23	<u>Halloween Pumpkin Palooza</u>

of edible weeds in the United States. You can see what I am getting at. Live Earth Farm is turning into an edible weed farm! We could call them "wild vegetables." I am convinced some kids who won't eat their spinach might show some signs of interest. Ready-mixed baby lettuce in fact features a line of "wild vegetables" such as arugula and dandelion greens. Some other ones you might have heard of occasionally are "vegetable amaranth," purslane, lamb's quarters, curly dock, and plantain. Many of our common vegetables used to be weeds at one time. They were simply improved with breeding to make them larger, more succulent, and more palatable. As in years past I would like to introduce you to a "wild vegetable" which has been eaten for centuries in Europe, called purslane, and which grows readily among our other planted vegetables. Studies have shown that purslane is rich in omega-3 fatty acids and among vegetables, purslane has more omega-3 acids than any other vegetable, and six times the vitamin E content of spinach. Purslane leaves have a mild nutty flavor and are a popular salad ingredient in Europe. They are eaten extensively in soups and salads throughout the Mediterranean. In Mexico and among our workers, purslane is eaten in omelets, as a side dish, or in soups and stews. Enjoy and don't be shy to try!!! – Tom 🌱

## Notes from Debbie's Kitchen

Have a recipe you'd like to share? Contact me at [deb@writerguy.com](mailto:deb@writerguy.com) or 408.288.6469.

(Visit the recipes link on our website for a comprehensive list of recipes 'by key ingredient' (pictures too!). Includes recipes from newsletters back to 1998.)

*Aaaaah, Tom and his weeds. I'll talk a little on purslane, then throw in a few recipes for other stuff in the space remaining. – Debbie*

### Purslane Notes

Thanks to the farm I've had a lot of fun cooking with purslane (which I'd never had before CSA), and there are several good ways to use it – as well as pictures, if you're not sure what it looks like – in the recipe database on the website. It really is a fun and kind of irreverent veggie, as you can indeed find it growing in your yard amongst the landscaping! Did you ever eat 'sourgrass' as a kid? It has a similar taste. Actually there were some nubbins of purslane in my stir-fry mix last week, and I just chomped 'em raw; they were nice and citrusy-sour. So don't be afraid to break off a bit and taste it raw before cooking with it or tossing it into a salad, just to see what it's like.

When I use it in a salad, I like to pinch off the tender, smaller branch tips, or individual leaves if they are bigger, but when I cook with them, I chop up the leaves and stems together (the 'leaves' are thick, like a succulent, not 'leafy' like a lettuce).

The other bit of purslane advice I can give is that when you DO cook with it, it doesn't require much cooking. It has a lot of moisture in it, and so cooks quickly.

That's it! Have fun experimenting with it in salads and stir fries; it is particularly easy to use in scrambled eggs with a little onion or garlic sautéed along with.

### Jamaican Carrot Soup

I liked the sound of the flavors in this! It's from an undated SJ Merc clipping of mine. - Debbie makes about 5 cups

4 C chicken broth (or your fave substitute)  
4 large carrots, scrubbed and chunked

1 small onion, chopped  
2 tsp. grated fresh ginger  
1 clove garlic, minced  
2 tbsp. peanut butter  
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce  
1 tsp. curry powder, optional  
1/4 tsp. nutmeg  
Dash of Tabasco  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Diced red-skinned apples for garnish [since we don't have apples in our shares right now, obviously this is 'optional']

Place broth, carrots, onion, ginger, garlic, peanut butter, worcestershire sauce and curry powder in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil. Lower heat, cover and simmer about 20 minutes, or until carrots are very tender. Cool slightly. Blend in batches in a blender [careful!! hot stuff in a blender explodes!] or food processor until very smooth. Add nutmeg, Tabasco, salt and pepper. Garnish with diced apple.

### Arriminati (pasta with saffron-cauliflower sauce)

Yet another intriguing flavor combo from an undated SJ Merc clipping. - Debbie serves 4 as a first course

1 lg. head cauliflower, dark leaves and thick stems discarded but head left whole  
Salt  
1 tsp. loosely packed saffron threads  
1/4 C olive oil  
1 med. onion, finely chopped (~3/4C)  
4 to 5 anchovy fillets, roughly chopped  
1 tbsp. tomato paste  
1 lb. buccatini or perciatelli pasta [I don't know what either of these are, so I'd just use penne or fusili, or whatever!]  
1/3 C dried currants  
1/4 C pine nuts  
Freshly ground black pepper

Choose a pot that is large enough to hold cauliflower and enough water in which to cook it. A 4-to 5-quart pot should do. Fill pot

2/3 with water, bring to a boil and add 1 tsp. salt. Cook cauliflower at a simmer until floret stems are tender when pierced by a knife but are not soft and mushy, 12-15 minutes. Pour off 1 C cooking liquid to reserve. Drain cauliflower carefully and set aside to cool. When cool, break head into large pieces. Soak saffron in 1/4 C of the cooking liquid and set remaining 3/4 C aside to finish sauce. Bring an 8-qt. pot of salted water to a boil. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat for 1 minute. Add onion and cook until translucent, 6-7 minutes. Add anchovies and stir to combine. Add cauliflower florets. Stir to combine and cook 5 minutes. Add saffron water, half the remaining cooking water and tomato paste. Bring to a boil; adjust heat so sauce is simmering. Simmer 5 minutes. Meanwhile, stir pasta into boiling water and cook, stirring occasionally, until al dente, about 10 minutes. Add currants and pine nuts to sauce and season with pepper. Continue simmering sauce over low heat until pasta is cooked. When pasta is done, drain and place in a large serving bowl. Add half the sauce and toss until coated (if there is not enough sauce to coat pasta evenly but lightly, add reserved cauliflower cooking liquid little by little until there is). Serve topped with additional sauce.

### Gremolata (Italian parsley topping)

Gourmet Magazine, March 1997

2 tbsp. finely chopped flat-leafed parsley  
1 tsp. minced garlic (about 1 large clove)  
1 tsp. freshly grated lemon zest  
freshly ground pepper to taste

Combine ingredients and season with salt. Makes about 3 tbsp.

The sprightly flavors in gremolata, a traditional garnish for osso buco, liven up lamb chops and bean dishes, but can also add zip to other meats, soups, salads, grains such as rice, or even mashed potatoes.