



The Weekly (Com)Post

A newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

14th Harvest Week June 14th – June 20th, 2004

Season 9

What's in the standard share:

Fruit:

Strawberries

Veggies:

Arugula

Basil

Red beets

Broccoli

Green cabbage

Carrots

Cucumbers

Lettuce

Green onions

Italian parsley

Radishes

Stir-fry mix

Summer squash

and if you have an extra-fruit option:

1 basket of golden raspberries OR blackberries and 3 baskets of strawberries

(over for more)

COME JOIN US IN CELEBRATING THE BEGINNING OF SUMMER

As we mentioned in last week's newsletter, our 9th Annual Summer Solstice Celebration is this Saturday June 19th. Come a little earlier (around 2pm) if you'd like to walk the farm, harvest and plant with Farmer Tom or participate in bread and cheese-making activities. The goats and the pony are anxious to see the children (of all ages) again, as are the berries in the fields! Come around 5pm to be here in time for our potluck, celebration and music (by Kuzanga Marimba), followed by a bonfire at dusk. Be sure to stick around until dark, as Linnea (our intern from last season) will again grace us with her magical fire dance! And lastly, don't forget to bring a blanket to sit on, a sweater to stay warm in the evening, and a dish to share in the potluck. This year, we are requesting that people label their dishes as to whether they contain wheat, as there are members with gluten allergies. While you're at it, you can indicate whether they are vegetarian or vegan too, for others with diet restrictions. If you forget, we'll try to have cards and a pen so you can label it when you get here.

Seasonal celebrations allow us to dance with the elements and honor the web of life that links us to the well being of all others. No matter how sophisticated our man-made technological advances, let's not artificially remove ourselves from the creative magic of the earth. To reconnect with the natural world does not necessarily mean returning to hunting and gathering. Our challenge now is to turn the technological juggernaut we are now in around, and to find new ways of adapting to the Earth rather than fleeing from her. Humans historically took pride in measuring their independence and advances on this earth in the form of revolutions against nature. Our history classes are filled with descriptions of these conquests: The Agricultural Revolution, the Scientific Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and more recently the Petrochemical and Genetic Engineering Revolutions. By revolting against nature and learning how to "torture her for her secrets" (Francis Bacon) to the point where we can now synthesize what we need and rearrange the genetic alphabet to our liking, we have gained what we think of as autonomy. Still, playing God with via our technological achievements hasn't released us from the gravity of life. We, as well as all life forms, are beholden to the same ecological laws. We are bound to the laws of this wonderful blue-green orb we call Earth, and we, as a species, cannot occupy her and use all her resources without sharing them with the community of life forms that support our existence.

Although our present unsustainable habits seem to drive us towards chaos and an unprecedented ecological crisis, we are fast learners. Today with the aid of technology we can observe nature as never before, from the movement of subatomic particles to the birth of stars in faraway galaxies. We continuously are humbled as we discover that all our inventions have not only already appeared in nature, but are also formed in more elegant and sustainable ways. Here on the farm nature is our classroom and often I feel like a kindergartener who tramples and stumbles while trying to learn from

*"God sleeps in the minerals
Awakens in the plants
Walks in the animals
And thinks in man."*

*- from 'Tending the Earth and
Mending the Spirit' by Connie
Goldman and Richard Mahler*

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>

nature and her wisdom. I have a million questions about how I should grow food so as to be more a part of, and not apart from, the genius that surrounds us. – Tom

Update on the Extra Fruit shares

We are just turning the corner towards getting a more diverse fruit share. The strawberries are slowing down, but our caneberries (blackberries and raspberries) are starting to produce and will start appearing with more consistency over the next 2 months. All the stone fruits are sized up and just need to ripen now. I expect the first plums the beginning of July, together with the first apricots and peaches. 🌱

Nitrates in the soil and in your vegetables

I received an e-mail from a member concerned about high nitrate levels found in vegetables such as spinach, carrots, and beets. His concern stemmed from the fact that high nitrate levels in an infant's or child's diet can cause anemic reactions. I did some research, and found that although nitrate levels are higher in some vegetables than in others (and higher in leaves and stalks than in fruit), the biggest factor affecting levels of nitrate in produce is its concentration in the soil. In non-organic production systems, the use of synthetic fertilizers such as ammonium or sodium nitrate creates a direct infusion of nitrates into the plant's system. Conventional fertilizers, when applied, saturate the soil with highly soluble and available forms of nitrates. Organic farming, by comparison, focuses on building up the soil; fertility is accumulated over years, and nitrates are not readily available except in complex and stable organic structures such as humus. Nitrates are released through a process of biological breakdown and are absorbed gradually, and only to the extent to which the plant needs it. So nitrates in vegetables grown organically are at natural levels, determined by the plant variety, and not the result of over-fertilization as typically found in conventional farming systems. 🌱

New pick-up site in Sunnyvale! (a repeat announcement from last week, for share splitters who alternate weeks)

Yes folks, it has finally happened! We are starting a new pick-up site on our Wednesday route, due to the request of many in the Los Altos/Cupertino/Sunnyvale/Santa Clara area. The new location is about halfway between 280 and 101, off Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road from 280 (which is Mathilda if you're coming from 101). The first pick-up at this location will be next Wednesday June 23rd. If you wish to switch pick-up locations, please call or email Debbie at the farm. *Directions and details are now on the website.* 🌱

CSA Cookbooks for sale (a repeat announcement from last week, for share splitters who alternate weeks)

We still have 9 copies of the new CSA cookbook (which came out last year) entitled Recipes from America's Small Farms – Fresh Ideas for the Season's Bounty left. This book is organized well – it starts with 'basic techniques' and 'basic recipes' followed by chapters sorted by families of produce such as 'luscious leaves,' 'seeds and pods,' 'roots and tubers' etc. and has a comprehensive resource list and index at the end. It includes recipes and stories from several CSAs across the country (including ours!), as well as from farmers and chefs dedicated to cooking with organic and locally grown seasonal fruit and vegetables. If you're interested in getting one of these cookbooks, send a check to Live Earth Farm [address in margin, below] for \$12 (it sells for \$17 at the bookstore!). We'll put it in an envelope with your name on it and deliver it to your pick-up location the following week. Be sure to note on your check that it is for the cookbook. 🌱

Notes from Debbie's Kitchen

Have a recipe you'd like to share? Contact me at deb@writerguy.com or 408.288.9469.

(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.)

How 'bout some recipes for our poor, under-appreciated cabbage? – Debbie

Japanese-style Quick Pickled Slaw

from an undated Bon Appetit clipping; serves 6

1/2 C rice vinegar
2 tbsp. oriental sesame oil
2 tbsp. soy sauce
1 tbsp. golden brown sugar
1 tbsp. minced peeled fresh ginger
1 tbsp. Thai fish sauce (nam pla)
1 medium cucumber, peeled, seeded and cut into matchstick-sized strips
1 red bell pepper, cut into matchstick strips
4 C thinly sliced Napa [or regular] cabbage

Whisk first 6 ingredients in a medium saucepan. Bring to boil; pour into large bowl. Add cucumber, carrot and pepper. Cool, then toss with cabbage to blend. Salt to taste.

Haitian Coleslaw

another undated Bon Appetit clipping makes 6 'side dish' servings

1/4 C mayonnaise
1/4 C olive oil
1/4 C fresh lime juice
2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
2 tbsp. Dijon mustard
2 tbsp. chopped fresh dill
1 tbsp. sugar
2 small serrano chilies, seeded and minced (about 2 1/2 teaspoons)
1 garlic clove, minced
1 tsp. celery seeds
8 C (packed) shredded cabbage (1 1/4 lbs.)
2 C shredded (packed) carrots (2 large)

Whisk dressing ingredients together. Toss cabbage and carrots in a large bowl with enough dressing to coat. S&P to taste.

Cabbage Salad with Peanuts

from Still Life with Menu, by Molly Katzen

1/4 C peanut butter
1/2 C hot water
1/2 C plus 1 tbsp. rice or cider vinegar
3 tbsp. brown sugar or honey
1 1/2 tsp. salt
1 tbsp. soy sauce
1 tsp. sesame oil
7 – 8 C shredded green cabbage
crushed red pepper, to taste
garnishes: 1/2 C peanuts, grated carrots, minced fresh cilantro

Mash peanut butter/hot water together 'til uniform; blend with next 5 ingredients. Add cabbage in 2C increments, mixing well after each addition. Add red pepper to taste. Cover and refrigerate at least 4 hrs. Stir occasionally. Garnish when served.