



The Weekly (Com)Post

A newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

16th Harvest Week

June 28th – July 4th, 2004

Season 9

Mini-Camp is full. This year's Children's Mini-Camp has been filled, so if you were planning to sign up, we are sorry, but we will have to put you on a waiting list and contact you if there is a last minute opening. Thanks for all the interest though. We are looking forward to another fun camp!

What's in the standard share:

Fruit:

1 basket of strawberries

Veggies and herbs:

Basil

Beets

Red cabbage

Carrots (lots!)

Cilantro

Garlic

Lettuce

Onions

English peas or broccoli

Radicchio (red or sugarloaf)

Summer squash

Next week: green beans!

and if you have an extra-fruit option:

1 basket of strawberries, a bag of plums and apricots, and six fresh peaches!!

(over for more)

Soil is alive! When 5 year old Truxton asked his mom whether soil ever sleeps, he must have been wondering how dirt can create such a wonderful, ever-changing playground of living toys, tasty treats, and countless different playmates without getting tired. David Suzuki, in his book 'The Sacred Balance,' gives a vivid description of soil. "Imagine a giant tomato with a diameter of 70 meters (210 feet) but skin no thicker than that of an ordinary tomato. That thin outer layer corresponds to the fine wrapping of soil that covers the surface of our immense planet. The constant renewal of life on Earth occurs in that thin layer; we, like all other terrestrial life forms, depend on it, directly or indirectly, for our food." So, Truxton, it looks like soil never sleeps! Every cubic inch of it teems with billions of microorganisms that play many different parts in the soil's cycle of fertility. Worms, ants, termites, springtails, protozoa, fungi, and bacteria ranging from the visible to the unimaginably minute perform important functions, and as a farmer I sometimes see my focus on growing soil as more important than growing crops. The healthier my soil, the healthier the crops I can grow. It is the microorganisms that drive most of the activity in the soil and the transfer of nutrients to the plants. Many conventional, so-called "modern" methods of farming have depleted productive soils by overuse. Sterilized and contaminated by pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, the soil life is reduced, limiting the microorganisms' activity, which in turn limits the nutrient and mineral availability to the plants... and ultimately to all of us. John Robbins in his latest book "The Food Revolution" quotes a study published in the Journal of Applied Nutrition that analyzed the mineral content of organically and conventionally grown apples, potatoes, pears, wheat and sweet corn over a two year period. Organically grown crops had a 63 to 390 percent higher content of essential minerals such as calcium, zinc, magnesium, iron, potassium, iodine, chromium and selenium. The Banana Slug String Band, also members of our CSA, wrap it all up in one great song, "Dirt Made My Lunch," in which they so wonderfully praise dirt, i.e. soil, as the fundamental substance and source of our nourishment. "Thank you dirt, thanks a bunch...!"

– Tom

"Humans - despite their artistic pretensions, their sophistication and their many accomplishments - owe their existence to a six-inch layer of topsoil and the fact that it rains."

- author unknown

– Tom

Important Pick-up Protocol Announcement!

Now that we have a larger diversity of fruit we ask everyone to *please read the pick-up list and only take the quantity and type of fruit specified beside your name.* Please refrain from taking more (or something different) than has been indicated, since this causes another member to be short of their allotted amount. Your cooperation will keep this wonderfully functioning honor system working for all of us.

– Thank you 🌱

Live Earth Farm 2004 Calendar

(see calendar on website for more detailed info)

July 30, 31,
Aug 1

Children's Mini Camp
Friday evening to noon Sunday

Sat. Sept. 25

Fall Equinox Celebration
3 – 9 pm

with *The Banana Slug String Band!*

Sat. Oct 23

Halloween Pumpkin Palooza

Membership Drive

We can really use your help. CSA shares are still available, and so we would like to increase membership if possible. Please continue to spread the word and let friends, neighbors, co-workers know about our CSA program. We try to always make brochures available in the inside back pocket of your pick-up site binder, so feel free to take a few to give out, or call us and we can send you a flyer to post in your neighborhood's local shop or bulletin board. 🌱

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.)

I'm so excited – Tom's growing English peas this year – a first in our CSA's history. We've always had sugar-snap peas in the past, and although I love those too, there is nothing like freshly shelled green peas! If you don't get peas this week, don't despair, as he will swap it around so that everyone gets them eventually. – Debbie

What Debbie'd do with fresh peas

To be honest, unless we get peas for more than just a few weeks, I will probably never make it beyond simply shelling and eating them raw. There is nothing that compares to eating fresh, tender, raw green peas. They are so sweet and delicious! And if you have children, shelling peas is a great way for getting many hands involved. If we get enough of them over the weeks to sate my eat-'em-raw urge, then I'd use them in recipes where they are cooked minimally. They can be tossed into pasta-and-cheese type dishes near the end of cooking. Put 'em raw into tuna salad, or other cold pasta or rice salad-type dishes. That's probably what I'll do with my peas. Below is a wonderful sounding fresh pea soup recipe from Deborah Madison (famous vegetarian chef and cookbook author, if you haven't heard of her), that utilizes the pods in making the broth. I like the sound of that!

Elixir of Fresh Peas

serves 4 to 6 as a first course

Chef Deborah Madison says, "This pale green froth of a soup is the essence of fresh peas. Peas can travel in every flavor direction imaginable, but this soup needs nothing, although a few drops of truffle oil are intriguing. Plan to make it just before you serve it, unless you want to serve it chilled. The light, fragrant stock is made while you shuck the peas, and cooking time for the soup is about 4 minutes."

1 bunch scallions or 2 small leeks, incl. 2" of the greens, thinly sliced
5 lg. parsley stems, with leaves
Salt and white pepper
1 1/2 lbs. fresh English pod peas
1 tsp. unsalted butter
1/2 C thinly sliced fresh onions [we got those this week!] or young leeks

1/2 tsp. sugar

Truffle oil, a few drops per bowl [I deduce, based on her quote above, that this would be optional!]

Bring 1 qt. water to a boil. As it's heating, add the scallions, parsley, and 1/2 tsp. salt. Add about 3 C of pea pods as you shell them. Once the water comes to a boil, lower the heat. Simmer for 20 minutes, then strain. [i.e. strain out and toss the veggies; keep the stock!]

Melt butter in a soup pot and add sliced onion. Cook over medium heat about a minute, then add 1/2 C of the stock so that the onions stew without browning. After 4 to 5 minutes, add the peas, 1/2 tsp. salt, and the sugar. Pour in 2 1/2 C of the stock, bring to a boil, and simmer for 3 minutes.

Transfer soup to a blender. Drape a towel over the lid, and give a few short pulses to make sure it won't splatter [remember my past lectures about hot stuff in blenders and heed her warning!]. Then puree at high speed for 1 minute. Pour into small soup bowls and serve immediately, adding a few drops of truffle oil to each bowl [optionally].

Green Peas and Rice Amandine

(modified from orig. recipe found on the web)
serves 4 as a side dish

2 tsp. butter or ghee
1 C freshly shelled green peas
1/4 tsp. ground cardamom
1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 pinch freshly-ground white pepper
1 pinch ground cloves
1 C cooked rice
2 tsp. slivered almonds

Melt butter in medium skillet over medium heat. Add peas, cardamom, cinnamon, pepper and cloves. Cook and stir a few minutes or until peas are tender. Add rice. Cook until heated through, stirring occasionally. Sprinkle almonds evenly over servings.

Grilled Radicchio and Prosciutto

from Debbie's kitchen

Turns out we haven't seen the end of the radicchio after all, so if you want a hands-down easy, guaranteed-to-taste-fabulous

way to cook it, try this:

I used the sugarloaf (oblong, light green) radicchio last time I made this, but would do it with regular red also. All you do is get some slices of good prosciutto from a deli (not quite as thinly sliced as you would for prosciutto and melon... a little thicker). Get one slice per serving if using red radicchio, two per if using the sugarloaf (it's bigger). For sugarloaf, remove outer/loosest leaves and slice head in half lengthwise. Wrap each half in 2 slices of prosciutto and secure with a long wooden skewer (with red radicchio, cut in quarters, wrap each quarter in 1 slice of prosciutto and secure with a toothpick). Grill over a medium/low fire only a minute or two per side; watch it, you don't want it to char, just to get browned and a little crispy! That's it!! I'd grill up some summer squash at the same time (slice in half, coat lightly with olive oil, sprinkle with good salt, and grill about 4 minutes per side), and serve them together with rice. Make a salad to go with and add a glass of wine and you've got yourself a meal!

Basil Beets

(also modified from something I found on the web) serves 4 as a side dish

4 medium beets, including greens
1 C fresh basil leaves, shredded
4 tbsp. butter
1 tbsp. olive oil
1 clove garlic, crushed
salt and pepper to taste

Cut leaves from beets, leaving about 1" of stems at top of beets (save leaves). Steam, boil, pressure cook or roast beets until done, then peel and cube. [If you don't know how to cook beets, check out the recipe database or your favorite cookbook. If time's an issue, pressure cooking only takes about 10 minutes, but best beet flavor comes from roasting.] Sort through leaves, keeping fresh-looking ones; wash well and cut off stems. Steam or boil leaves in salted water until tender, up to 5 minutes or so. Set aside. In a pan add butter and shredded basil. Add olive oil, garlic, salt and black pepper. Simmer gently a minute or two. Arrange beet leaves on a serving platter. Spoon beet cubes onto leaves. Drizzle all with the basil butter oil.