



The Weekly (Com)Post

A newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

2nd Harvest Week

March 22nd – 28th, 2004

Season 9

What's in the box this week:

Fruit:

Strawberries

Veggies:

Baby red beets

Broccoli

Green cabbage

Carrots

Rainbow chard

Fennel

Kale

Baby leeks

Lettuce

Young onions

(Remember, "Extra
Fruit option" doesn't
start until May!)

(over for more!)

Spring - A season to be inspired! Although the spring equinox marks the beginning of the season, spring fever already struck the farm during the extended spell of warm weather we've been having. It always amazes me how plants burst into life, the acceleration in growth is overwhelming. Our pear orchard exploded into bloom in less than a week, the turnips which over-wintered and were still good two weeks ago started to bolt, so while looking for a replacement I was surprised to see strawberries ripening almost overnight. Harvesting strawberries for your shares last Wednesday morning and Friday afternoon broke the record in earliness! The beauty of farming is that the cycles of each season hold their own special inspirations and unique teachings. I pay attention to the moisture in the soil in order to plow and plant at the right time. Shifts in temperature and wind affect the pollination of our pears and the germination and growth of our seedlings. The birds are hungry right now and a flock will clean out a stand of tender sugar snap peas in a couple of hours. The jumpy, shiny, little black flea beetles are especially abundant right now, poking holes into arugula and other seedlings in

the mustard family. A farm is a wonderful place to observe and experience the constant state of change, where nature is always ready to teach us new lessons and to confront us with unexpected challenges. So, predicting the future or fretting about the past seems useless, but learning how to live in the moment of continuous change is an opportunity nature offers all the time. Maybe more importantly, she always offers the possibility of starting over again. – Tom

*"I can scarcely wait 'til tomorrow
when a new life begins for me,
as it does each day,
as it does each day."*

*- Connie Goldman & Richard Mahler, from
Tending the Earth, Mending the Spirit*

Veggie Overload?

Feeling overwhelmed by the bounty of veggies every week? One of the main reasons for linking up with a farm is the attraction of fresh vegetables, and how their flavor, color, texture, and nutrition enriches our diet. Joining a CSA also means exploring new foods and learning to cook greens and exotics like kohlrabi and mizuna. Sometimes you may scratch your head wondering what do with vegetables you've never eaten before. At first it may seem overwhelming to consume an entire share in a week, however planning your meals and prepping the vegetables to reduce their rate of deterioration can go a long way towards avoiding frustration. This is where our recipes come in. Handy, both through the weekly newsletter and the recipe database on our website, they include tips on handling, storing, and cooking. The recipe database now also features pictures of most of the vegetables you get in your box, in case you can't recognize some of the exotics! We encourage all of you, especially seasoned members, to share your knowledge and

Live Earth Farm 2004 Calendar

(see calendar on website for more detailed info)

Sat. May 15	<u>Open Farm Day</u>
Sat. June 19	<u>Summer Solstice Celebration</u> field tours 2 – 5 pm celebration 5 – 9 pm
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
Sat. Oct 23	<u>Halloween Pumpkin Palooza</u>

tips on ways you have come up with to handle your vegetables - how to clean, store and prepare them. We will note your advice in future newsletters. Hopefully this will help you decide what to do when you arrive home with your week's bounty of produce, and provide options for when you have no plans for dinner.

Addendum from Debbie: Another useful tool is the 'exchange box' at your pick-up site. If you get something in your box that you don't like, consider putting it in the exchange box. Trade it out for something in there that you do like. I've talked with members of other CSAs as well as our own, and it is remarkable how varied people's tastes are. An item which one member doesn't care for invariably turns out to be something that another member just loves, and visa-versa. Since the farm can never hope to keep everyone happy, we try to offer a wide variety and let our members do the minor swapping. An added bonus of the exchange box is the conversation which evolves around it. "You eat that vegetable? Huh... how do you prepare it? Hmmm, that sounds good, maybe I'll keep mine after all and give it a try..." Oh, and one last thing. If we don't remember to put out an exchange box, feel free to use one of the produce boxes as one. So if you see an open brown wax box with a couple veggies in there... that would be the exchange box! 🌱

Crop Notes

Fennel: The ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans believed fennel to be an excellent aid for digestion, bronchial troubles, poor eyesight, and nervous conditions. Still today, in India, fennel seed is used for seasoning as well as chewed after meals as a breath freshener and digestive aid. Nutritionally, fennel is low in calories, but offers significant vitamin A and minerals such as calcium, potassium and iron. Belonging to the Umbel family, it is related to carrots, celery, parsley, dill (which it resembles in looks) and anise (which it resembles in flavor). Fennel grows well year round along the coast, and we'll introduce it regularly in your share. I like to braise fennel in the oven, and it is great in soups with other root vegetables, in salads, or mixed in with pasta. Check out our recipes and enjoy! 🌱

Notes from Debbie's Kitchen

Have a recipe you'd like to share? Contact me at 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.)

There are several good fennel recipes (ditto for beets!) on the website, and since I didn't find any new ones that caught my eye this week, instead here are some recipes that use other box ingredients. - Debbie

Penne noodles with peanut-coconut sauce, smoked tofu and broccoli

from an undated SJ Merc. clipping. serves 4

For peanut-coconut sauce:

- 1/4 C peanut butter
 - 3/4 C coconut milk, or 3/4 C rice milk plus 1/4 tsp. coconut extract
 - Juice of 3 limes
 - Grated zest of 3 limes
 - 2 tbsp. coarsely chopped cilantro
 - 2 tbsp. coarsely chopped fresh mint
 - 2 tsp. peeled and minced fresh ginger
 - 2 cloves garlic, minced
 - 1 jalapeño chile, seeded and minced (more if you like it hotter)
 - 1 tsp. cumin seeds, toasted
 - 1/4 tsp. coriander, toasted
 - 1/3 C tamari or soy sauce
- For penne noodles:
- 1 tsp. toasted sesame oil
 - 5 to 7 scallions, white and green parts, sliced on long diagonal (I'd use a couple of Tom's young onions, cut in thin ovals)
 - 2 C sm. broccoli florets, blanched
 - 2 carrots, peeled and cut into matchsticks
 - 8 oz. smoked baked tofu, cut into 1/2" dice

- 1 C shredded Chinese cabbage (thinly sliced green cabbage would work fine)
- 1 lb. penne pasta, cooked
- 1/2 C loosely packed Thai basil, for garnish
- 1 tbsp. sesame seeds for garnish

To make sauce, blend all sauce ingredients in a blender until smooth. Place a wok or large skillet over high heat. When extremely hot, add sesame oil. Add scallions and stir-fry 30 seconds, or until browned. Add broccoli, carrots, and tofu, and continue to cook 5 minutes or just until soft. Add cabbage, penne and peanut sauce. Toss to coat, stirring constantly, until heated through. Divide pasta among 4 bowls and (optionally) garnish with basil and sesame seeds.

Kale, Black-eyed Pea & Lentil Soup

from a SF Chron. clipping! serves 6 - 8

- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 yellow onions (or equivalent), chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, minced (or equivalent in green garlic)
- 1 lb. mild Italian sausage
- 1 bunch kale, washed
- 1 qt. water
- 1 qt. chicken broth
- 1 14.5 oz. can chopped tomatoes and juice
- 2 C black-eyed peas fresh, frozen or canned
- 1 C lentils
- 1 lb. waxy potatoes, cut into 3/4" cubes

- 1 tsp. dried thyme (or 1 tbsp. fresh)
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tsp. kosher salt or to taste
- Pinch of black pepper
- 2 tsp. sherry vinegar or to taste

Heat oil in a large stockpot over medium heat; add onions and garlic and sweat until translucent. Meanwhile, remove sausage from their casings and brown in a separate skillet over medium heat, breaking into small pieces. Strip stems from kale and chop into bite-sized pieces, discarding stems. Once onions and garlic are sweated, add water, broth, tomatoes and their juice to stockpot. Bring to a simmer. Add sausage, kale, black-eyed peas, lentils, potatoes, thyme and bay leaves. If using canned black-eyed peas, rinse and drain them, but add them about 30 minutes later. Continue to simmer until the kale is tender and the lentils, peas and potatoes are cooked through, about 45 minutes. Season to taste with salt, pepper and sherry vinegar. If desired, add a touch of cayenne or Tabasco.

"Good with Merlot (if you don't add too much hot pepper!), and cheese toasts: Split baguette or focaccia in half, brush with olive oil, sprinkle w/grated Gruyere or Parmesan and bake at 375 degrees until cheese melts, about 10 minutes."