



# The Weekly (Com)Post

A newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

8<sup>th</sup> Harvest Week

May 3<sup>rd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2004

Season 9

## What's in the standard share:

### Fruit:

Strawberries

### Veggies:

Carrots

Cauliflower

Chard

Cilantro

Escarole

Fennel

Kale

Kohlrabi (red or white)

Leeks

Lettuce

Radishes

Mystery item(s)

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

More strawberries!

(over for more)

### ***Open Farm Day - final reminder!***

Spread the word and encourage people to visit the farm this Saturday May 15, between 2 and 6pm. It is **totally free**, and a perfect opportunity for members who haven't seen the farm to visit, as well as for those who are curious about us and our CSA program to learn more. As usual, there will be farm tours and children's activities, *but there is a last minute addition: **Kuzanga Marimba will make a special appearance and play for us!*** Our address is below, and directions to the farm are on our website.

Signs of a renaissance in rural America. When I first set foot on this farm 10 years ago, the Pajaro Valley, with its coastal mountains stretching along the eastern edge, reminded me of Ecuador where I grew up. The landscape is like a quilt: patches of green and brown fields, some forests (mostly on the slopes of Mt. Madonna), creeks and rivers snaking through the valley to the ocean, and houses dotting the landscape in varying densities. But a closer look at this almost pastoral landscape reveals fields of mostly large scale, chemical intensive farming operations. Watsonville, situated in what is probably the most fertile and ideal climate for berry production in the country, is dominated by strawberry, blackberry and raspberry fields, handpicked annually by thousands of migrant workers. Over the last 50 years, the trend in farming has been away from small-scale family farms towards large scale, high investment food factories, ten thousand or more acres each, focused on growing a few monocrops.

Today, small-scale farms that once fed the nation are almost extinct. 50 to 60 years ago an estimated 40 percent of the population was involved in farming. Today it is only about

1-2 percent. Now, WAIT A MINUTE! Why another story of bad news showing how we as a society have screwed up once again? Don't we get enough alarming information like this every day?? Yes, but there is hope: although there are plenty of gloomy statistics, there are positive, exciting signs indicating a possible end to the trend. Little attention seems to be paid, but more homesteads and garden farms are popping up all the time. Just in our circle of friends alone, a surprising number are planning to make (or have already made) the move back to a rural lifestyle. Farms for sale are often bought up by individuals or families that have urban jobs. My friends express a deep desire to regain more physical control over their lives. They are rebelling against the economics of power (i.e. corporate consolidation and globalization), and are planning to make an income from the land as well as non-farm sources. The values honored by these "new countrysiders" (myself included) are the same that our parents, grandparents and great grandparents. We want a different educational environment for our children, where nature plays an important role, and there is a balance between fast-paced urban lifestyles and schooling systems. We want an alternative to chemicalized, hormone-ized, vaccinated, antibiotic-treated, irradiated factory food. We want home-based businesses when possible, so that we do not have to put our children in day care. More and more, small-scale food production systems are showing up to take advantage of changes in consumer demands. A surprising number of people are pursuing new and promising ideas of food production, taking advantage of changes in consumer demand. These new (or sometimes old, small-scale) farms, like Billy Bob's apples, Lynn's goat milk and cheeses, or Joe Morris' grassfed beef, are just a few examples where traditional and untraditional ideas merge, and new/old practices are being perfected. Perhaps I'm overly optimistic in seeing the agribusiness oligarchy, in cahoots with a suppliant government, stopping its bonanza of farm consolidation any time soon. But the cracks in this system are widening and some very resilient new "pioneering weeds" are emerging, showing new possibilities for the future. Community Supported Agriculture is one good example, and is popping up all over the country! So thank you all for being part of this small but important movement, and help us continue to spread the word... we can turn the tide together! - Tom

*"The great challenge is bringing life back into the wasteland, where people live inauthentically."* - Joseph Campbell

## Billy Bob's Apple Juice UPDATE

Looks like we can accommodate orders for apple juice *after* May 5<sup>th</sup> as well (see last week's newsletter). Just send a check made out to Live Earth Farm for \$35 (our mailing address is at the bottom of this newsletter) and receive one 48oz. bottle of juice a week for 10 weeks (delivered with your share), beginning the week after we receive your payment. Be sure your member name is on the check somewhere, so we know who and which pick-up location to deliver it to. 🌱

## Crop of the Week

Last week I snuck into your shares a leafy, lettuce-looking green which was not listed in the newsletter. This somewhat bitter green is not a lettuce but is ESCAROLE, a broadleaf endive which belongs to the chicory family, same as radicchio. With the heat waves we've been having, escarole will quickly bolt, therefore you will have them in your share again this week. The chicories are zesty-favored and are more popular in Europe than America. You will often find them cut-up in salad mixes and mescluns to give that delicious sharp bite.

Chicories can be eaten raw or cooked. The outer leaves can be cooked like chard in soups, pastas and casseroles. The inner leaves are a bit more tender and make a vivid seasonal salad. Dress with a vinaigrette of olive oil, mustard, garlic and balsamic vinegar. Additions include toasted nuts, roasted red pepper, or goat cheese. All chicories are high in vitamin A and have a good supply of vitamin C and calcium, but escarole is higher in most nutrients than either radicchio or endive. 🌱

## 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.)

*If you've been with us before you know the 'sputnik veggie' (kohlrabi) stories and recipes. If it is new to you, please visit the recipe database. Meanwhile, escarole is definitely new, so here are a few escarole recipes, plus what I can fit in the space remaining. – Debbie*

### Escarole miscellaneous

No matter what recipe you are making with escarole, wash the greens carefully, giving special attention to the bases of the leaves which often hold a lot of silt. Spin them dry, and if they are not to be used right away, then wrap them in a cotton (or paper) towel and store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

I like to use escarole in salads (raw). It is especially good with citrus (orange and grapefruit slices, and sherry-vinegar-citrus juice-olive oil dressing), but also with strawberries! Just today I mixed escarole with other salad greens, scattered in sliced strawberries, toasted pecans, crumbled feta, and some fresh mint (minced). For color and added sweetness I tossed in some corn kernels (frozen, lightly nuked). Dressed all with a fruity vinaigrette made from raspberry vinegar, a dab each of honey and dijon mustard, pinch of salt, a few turns of black pepper and some canola oil. Whisk together, toss together, and eat!

### Escarole and Beans, plus...

There are LOTS of recipes out there with

varying combinations of escarole and beans, some with sausage and pasta, some with garlic and pepper. Here's a kind of overview I compiled. Use this as a guide, and come up with your own variations!

1 – 2 heads escarole, washed carefully  
1 – 2 cloves garlic, crushed  
1 can white, cannelli, kidney, or other beans  
salt and pepper  
optional pepperoni or Italian sausage, sliced  
optional pasta!  
optional parmesan cheese

Sauté the garlic (and optional sausage or pepperoni) in olive oil. Add escarole, cook until tender. Add beans and heat through. Add salt and pepper to taste. If you'd like it with pasta, boil pasta separately then stir in with rest of ingredients. Top with grated fresh parmesan if you like!

### Escarole Siciliano

serves 3 (got this off the web somewhere!)

3 tbsp. olive oil  
2 med. heads escarole, washed & chopped  
1/2 C lemon juice  
2 tbsp. capers  
1 pinch salt  
10 kalamata olives  
ground black pepper to taste

Heat oil in a wok over high heat. Add escarole; cook and stir until greens begin to wilt. Stir in lemon juice. Add capers, salt, and olives; cook and stir for another 15

seconds. Season with black pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

### Fast Sauté of Fennel & Mushrooms

from the Victory Garden Cookbook Serves 4

1 lg. fennel bulb, with leaves  
1/2 lb. whole mushrooms  
3 tbsp. butter  
1 tbsp. oil  
salt and freshly ground pepper

Wash and trim fennel, then quarter and thinly slice bulb, discarding core; you should have 2 1/2 to 3 C sliced fennel. Mince 1/4 C leaves and set aside. Slice mushrooms the same thickness as fennel. Heat 1 tbsp. butter and the oil, and when foamy, add mushrooms and cook over med-hi heat until browned, about 3 minutes; remove and set aside. Add remaining butter and fennel to pan, and cook over med heat until fennel is softened but still crunchy. Add mushrooms and stir together for a moment. Season w/salt and pep[per and stir in minced fennel leaves.

### Fennel, orange, red onion mint salad

Combine thinly sliced fennel and red onion, orange segments (peel and pith removed as much as possible), torn fresh mint leaves and kalamata olives. Dress with olive oil and optional coarse salt. The olive oil blends with the juice from the oranges to create a refreshing vinaigrette! This is good!

## 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 <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>