



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

1st Harvest Week

March 28th – April 3rd, 2005

Season 10

What's in the box this week:

Family Share:

Asian greens (mizuna
and tatsoi)
Red beets
Red cabbage
Carrots
Chard
Baby chard/kale mix
Green garlic
Green leaf lettuce
Young onions
Strawberries
Thyme

Small Share:

Carrots
Red beets
Red cabbage
Chard
Green garlic
Baby chard/kale mix
Green leaf lettuce
(some items in small share
may be less in quantity than in
the family share)

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

(over for more!)

Another season has begun, and spring on the farm brings an irresistible desire to dance with the land once again. Every year she stands ready, in her spring dress decorated with lush green cover crops and flowering fruit trees, like a dancing partner, arms held out, inviting me to join her. Accompanied by the music of hundreds of returning songbirds, no farmer or gardener can resist this fertile embrace. I am committed the moment I plant my first seed. I step into her arms with a promise to follow her lead, allowing her rhythm to guide me, step by step, allowing her intelligence to be revealed and anticipating her flavors and bountiful gifts over the course of this year's seasonal concerto. We are delighted to be welcoming so many returning and new members to our CSA, to join this dance in what is now our 10th season!

As someone once said, to be a CSA member is to take a small but important revolutionary step. By not simply eating what is easiest and most convenient, you are stepping out of the

current food system and supporting locally grown, organic, seasonal food. It may often mean learning to be flexible, to try new things, to eat your greens, to lovingly wash, cut, cook, spice, and savor things which can be grown at the time and in the place you are now. – Tom

*"A good gardener always
plants three seeds - one for the
grubs, one for the weather,
and one for himself."*

- C. Collins, *Zen Gardening*

What's Up on the Farm and in the Fields

As I am writing this newsletter the Saturday before our season begins, I am assessing what crops will be ready to harvest over the next few weeks. Timing is everything, and knowing where the soil will dry out quickly enough to plant the earliest crops is always a gamble. During the wet winter months we always hope for a few dry periods in order to get an early start. Although we had some nice spells of warm and dry weather to till and plant, it mostly rained with enough regularity throughout the season for the ground to stay wet – too wet – to sow and plant early. Your first share will be filled with crops planted in December and early January, such as the strawberries, which may still be a bit tart given the lack of sunshine these last few days, and the green garlic, which was planted in November. Crystal-balling the future content of your shares I see... more green things, including fava beans, broccoli raab, broccoli, lettuce, radishes, some red cabbage, and lots more strawberries. To spice things up, thyme and chives will be included soon and, uh... the crystal ball is getting blurry – more next week. I am happy to say, though, that plums, peaches and pears all bloomed nicely and set abundant little fruit, the ground is ready to plant potatoes, and the greenhouse is filled with melon, cucumber and summer squash seedlings. Spring is here... let it grow, let it grow!!!

Speaking of growing, we sure did! We expanded our production area by leasing 10 additional acres this year, and increased our geographic distribution by adding 15 new drop-off locations. Whew! For the first time we'll deliver our shares all the way to Palo Alto and down to Gilroy on Thursdays, and from

Live Earth Farm 2005 Calendar

(see calendar on website for more info)

Sat. June 18	<u>Summer Solstice Celebration</u> field tours 2 – 5 pm celebration 5 – 9 pm
July 29, 30, and 31	<u>Children's Mini Camp</u> Friday evening to noon Sunday
Sat. Sept. 24	<u>Fall Equinox Celebration</u> 3 – 9 pm
Sat. Oct 22	<u>Halloween Pumpkin Palooza</u>

Ben Lomond in the San Lorenzo Valley all the way down to Carmel on Wednesdays. And we will continue to deliver shares to Los Gatos (East Los Gatos) and Willow Glen on Saturdays, on our way to the farmer's market. Believe it or not, we are starting the season with over 300 members... with more members than we had at our peak last summer! This is a first. But please don't let that stop you from helping to spread the word about Live Earth's Community Supported Agriculture program, especially in locations where we have only a few members. Our goal is 400 members, and I think we can do it! Please call us if you have any ideas how we can better spread the word in your community. If you belong to a group, school or association that has a newsletter or e-list, we'd be happy to provide you with information to share if you think it appropriate. If you'd just like brochures to hand to your neighbors, we'd be happy to mail some to you. Thank you everyone for your help; we wouldn't be ten years strong and counting without the dedication and participation of each and every one of you! 🌱

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.)

Yesssss!!!! No more hurtin' for good veggies! The 'off' season is entirely too long... I'm so glad to be getting veggies from the farm again!

It's a new season, and in honor of this, I'd like to make a request: of the foodies among you, are there any willing and interested in a fun task? If I advanced you the veggie list, would you be willing to email me a little 'what I'd do' blurb for the newsletter? It doesn't have to be just recipes, it can be stream of consciousness ideas. You don't even have to be a good writer; I'll check spelling and edit for you. There are other CSAs out there that do this, and the members love it, because we all benefit when we learn how others use their bounty each week. For now, just email me your name and willingness to participate, and I'll contact you to coordinate. If I don't hear from anyone, I may contact some of you that I know are good at this but who maybe are just shy about speaking up. Okay, maybe I'll do one to start... - Debbie

What I'd do with this week's box

First things first: as soon as I get my produce home I always go through everything and prepare it for storage so that it will last, as fresh as possible, for the week. It's a nice zen exercise, and during the week as you go to cook, you'll be so glad you did this! Key rule: don't stick wet veggies in a bag in the fridge; they'll rot quickly. I start with the things that take the least prep time for storage, and work my way down to any greens that need washing. Everything gets stored in a plastic bag in the fridge, unless otherwise noted. The heads of cabbage? Easy. Just wipe down if they have any moisture on them, and put in a plastic bag and stick in your crisper drawer. The fresh thyme is usually free of moisture and clean, so I just slip the bundle into a small ziploc bag, squeezing out any excess air, then refrigerate. Carrots: do NOT store with

green tops attached or they'll suck the life out of the carrots and leave you with rubbery unpleasant limp things. Trust me. Either twist or snap the green tops off, or cut and leave about an inch of greens above the stalk (that's okay). Again, wipe them down if wet (I keep a supply of cotton flour-sack towels for veggie-moisture-removal tasks), and then bag/fridge. The bunched greens, such as chard and kale (as opposed to bagged greens – we'll get to them in a moment) are usually safe to just thwump gently against a towel or blot a few times to remove excess moisture before bagging (I wash them more thoroughly when I go to use them). Heads of lettuce I do similarly, though since they're more delicate, sometimes I'll just wrap them in a towel and bag them right along with the towel. Beets: I store the leaves and roots separately. Cut off leaves about an inch above the root. Wash the leaves à la bagged greens below, and scrub/wash/wipe dry the roots then bag/fridge. Green garlic, young onions, and leeks, things like that, I'll carefully trim the roots off just at the base, trim the greens down some if they're ratty, and then wipe the stems (this time with paper toweling) to remove any mud or membrane on the outermost layer. Bag/fridge. Strawberries (if they're not consumed before you get home) I actually dump out and carefully repack, removing any berries that have signs of rot (so they don't spoil the rest – this will not be a concern in the spring, but sometimes in the heat and abundance of summer it can happen), placing the less ripe berries on the bottom and topping with the most ripe so they're eaten first. Cover with a piece of waxed paper and secure with a rubberband, then refrigerate. The Asian greens, the baby chard/kale mix, and any other leafies that come in a bag: spinach, arugula, (I also do this with cilantro and parsley): I place in a sink or basin of cold water

and swish around gently but sufficiently to dislodge any dirt or grit which will then sink to the bottom. Then I remove them in small handfuls, separating and tossing any excessively bruised or yellowed leaves (or the occasional weed!) and then place the washed greens in a salad spinner. Spin two or three times, dumping the water after each spin (remember – you want to get rid of that excess moisture!), then spread the greens out on a cotton towel (or paper towels), layering if necessary, and then roll up and store in a bag, gently squeezing the air out before sealing. It is this last preparation step, I promise you, that you will be the happiest you did come mid-week! Fresh, washed, bagged greens? Piece o' cake (and a joy!) to use.

Okay, now what I'd do with all these things: The Asian greens I'm fond of using as salad greens actually. Tear into bite sized pieces as necessary (the stems are tender and tasty too), and use in any salad you'd make. A quick-and-easy is Asian greens tossed with a little seasoned rice vinegar and oil, maybe adding a few drops of sesame oil if you have it. You can build up from there, adding carrot and beet shavings (use a veggie peeler), maybe some very thinly sliced young onion. Chard I love to simply steam and serve with a little vinegar and salt. But it is also wonderful to sauté up some green garlic or onion and then sauté the greens in this (you could also use the baby kale/chard mix here), with a sprinkle of salt. Or sauté some mushrooms with the onions or garlic, or crumble in some feta cheese to melt at the last minute instead of using salt. Beets I would roast in foil, then cut off the tops, slip off the skins (when cool enough to handle!), cut into slices or bite sized pieces, then top with a little butter and salt. Or place in a skillet with a little butter, orange juice, honey, and grated ginger, and cook until syrupy. Serve and enjoy!