



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

14th Harvest Week June 27th – July 3rd, 2005

Season 10

What's in the box this week:

Family Share:

Arugula
Beets or carrots
Broccoli
Celery
Cucumbers
Dill
Cooking greens (chard, kale or collards)
Lettuce
Red mustard greens
Green onions
Potatoes
Radishes
Strawberries (1 basket)

Small Share:

Basil
Beets or carrots
Broccoli
Lettuce
Green onions
Potatoes
Radishes
Summer squash
No fruit (Fruit will be added to Small Share once we have enough berries again.)

(items in the small share will be less in quantity than in the family share)

Extra Fruit:

2 baskets of strawberries plus plums, peaches or blackberries

Almost every year we've had apprentices on the farm, and we've had a great diversity of them join us over the years. I am writing about apprentices this week since the topic is fresh in my mind. Not only is Eric Seifert, a New Yorker and former civil rights attorney who apprenticed 5 years ago, visiting us (together with his partner Georgina), but there's also Amy Kaplan, this year's new apprentice, who moved in last week after returning from a backpacking trip through Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. Every year apprentices enliven the farm in their own unique way and fill an important niche by helping us with the farm's heavy workload. Last week, for example, both Amy and Eric jumped right in, taking over three farmer's markets while two of our employees were out of town. Although there are many reasons why someone might choose to work long hours for less than minimum wage, there are generally three types of people who look for farm apprenticeships. The first are those who know they want to farm and are looking for a serious training opportunity. The second are those who think they might want to farm and want to see what farming is really like. The third are those who are facing a transition in their life, searching their inner world, not sure what they are doing but have some time to kill and (always!) "like to work outside" or "want to get their hands dirty."

It's interesting how the farm has served all three types over the years, from all ages, genders, and countries around the world. I like to credit the farm's diversity for providing this rich and welcoming experience to everyone. This diversity is represented not only by its community of people, but also biologically – by the crops, animals, and native environs, and by the multiple tasks required to care, maintain, and continue the evolution of the farm. The farm has its own dynamic, and is more complex and diverse than the sum of its parts. It is more than just a business; for me the farm is a place where land and people are attracted to each other by the beauty, productivity and work resulting in the opportunity to contemplate new relationships and choices. – Tom

"The Gardener does not create the Garden. The Garden creates the Gardener." - Alan Chadwick

CSA Member Stories

Occasionally members send us letters or comments about their experience with the CSA, and when the opportunity arises, we like to share them with our membership. I received this wonderful email from member Julie Bouvee of Los Gatos (who came to our Solstice Celebration) and asked her if I could share it with everyone, because I thought it gave an interesting point of view, a perspective quite different, I imagine, than most of the rest of might have. - Debbie

"This is our first year as members and we're loving it. We're both from farm communities back in the Midwest, I am from Michigan and Darius is from Illinois. The farms there are so different from your farm, it's like night and day. Their products are mainly grains. There's no concept of growing food for people who will actually eat it. The farmers are very disconnected in that way and almost more like factory owners. But their farms also drive our economy, so they're a very important part of the community from that respect. Each year (in Michigan) we have a county-wide picnic celebration of the importance of farming to our community (called

Live Earth Farm 2005 Calendar

(see calendar on website for more info)

July 29, 30, and 31 Children's Mini Camp
Friday evening to noon Sunday

Sat Aug 6 Permaculture workshop #2
Design methods; Ecological observation and Site Mapping

Sat. Sept. 24 Fall Equinox Celebration
3 – 9 pm

Sat. Oct 22 Halloween Pumpkin Palooza

Sat. Oct 29 Permaculture workshop #3
Polycultures & Agroforestry; Food Forest Design and Installation

Rural-Urban Day) and name a "Farm Family of the Year" who gets a plaque and a front-page picture in the local newspaper.

"In central Michigan, the land is flat and has a lot of clay content and we have a very short growing season, so the farmers are pretty constrained by those conditions. Mostly they grow feed corn, soybeans, navy beans, winter wheat, and sugar beets. We also have an area of our county that was a swamp eons ago and was drained for farmland. That dirt is rich and very dark black (we call them muck farms, that's the old-fashioned name), and they grow carrots, onions, cucumbers, and so forth there. Even the muck farmers still don't grow organically or have a relationship with the people who may eat their crops. (In fact, I think the majority of the carrots are actually sold to hunters as bait for deer every fall.)

"I was very struck by the enormous difference between your farm and the farms I grew up with. I've spent hundreds of hours tromping around on farmland, riding my bike down the tractor wheel tracks at breakneck speed, playing in straw in barns, playing hide-n-seek in the corn fields, and so on, so I thought I knew what farms are like, but yours is truly different and special. Thank you for sharing it with us." 🍀

Solstice Recipes Redux

Only got a few recipes last week for this compilation (see last week's newsletter if you're wondering what I'm talking about)... I'll need more to make it work! As Julie said at the end of her above story, "OK, now on to the *real* reason I'm writing - to give you my recipes so I can get copies of the other delicious recipes from the potluck (yes, you motivated me - the food was amazing and I want those recipes. :-)" So again, please, if you made a dish for the potluck and want to share/get copies of the others... email them to me at deb@writerguy.com. Thanks! 🍀

Field Notes from Farmer Tom

[as reported to Debbie in a phone call] The carrots-or-beets option stems from the fact that a new crop of carrots is just coming in; they're still a little small. There's lots of broccoli though (two types: regular broccoli and broccolini), and Tom says onions are doing really well. Expect onions and potatoes as regular staples for the next several weeks. One planting of fingerlings was lost to late blight, but the beauty of a diverse planting is that something like that is not a devastating loss to the farm. Our other plantings of potatoes are fine, and so we're in good shape. Green beans probably next week! Red radicchio heads are still small and forming, so probably a couple weeks. And that's it for fresh green garlic for the season - all have been pulled and are now out drying in the sun. Later the heads will be trimmed from the stalks and cured/stored. Expect to see garlic in the shares again, but in its more familiar 'dry' form, sometime in August. Snails in the raspberries!! Not to worry though: Tom says it just means it's time for Night Time Snail Patrol! Thanks to a healthy supply of interns, farm workers et al, snails will be collected (and fed to some very happy chickens!) over the next few nights to cut down on the population.

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.)

Dill is definitely a newcomer in the 9 years I've been with this CSA. Celery is too, but few of you, I expect, need celery ideas! So I looked online, around, and got some info for you on fresh dill (I've never cooked with it before myself, but as you know, that won't hold me back). - Debbie

Fresh dill ideas

Lots of recipes pair dill with things like lemon, cucumbers, garlic, potatoes, fish... dressings and dips are made from combining it with mayonnaise and/or sour cream, or strained yogurt and grated cucumber and lemon zest, or juice, a little salt and pepper maybe. Here's what Mary Trewby writes in her book 'A Gourmet's Guide to Herbs & Spices' - "The flavor of the leaves has been variously described as being like fennel or parsley, although it is sweeter and more aromatic than either. The subtleness of dill makes it a perfect partner for fish. Dill is used in the famous Swedish pickled raw salmon dish, Gravlax, and mainly with vegetables and fish, notably salmon. It goes well with yogurt, thick sour cream and eggs, and makes an excellent wine vinegar." Julia Wiley from Mariquita Farm says, "Dill, dill, dill. I love it.

It's good chopped up in a rice salad with cherry tomatoes, a bit of minced bell pepper, some grated or crumbled cheese and your favorite vinaigrette. There is always the chopped dill on salmon routine, and it's excellent with many beet preparations and also other fish and chicken dishes." A recipe by one of my favorite writers/chefs, Jesse Cool, includes snipped fresh dill, capers, chopped celery and fennel in her tuna salad. She makes it fancy by poaching then chilling her own tuna, and creating her own dressing with the above ingredients and some other things, serving it over mesclun with slices of avocado, but I read between the lines and think, 'hey - dill, capers and celery in tuna salad, that sounds good!' and make my own ordinary salad with canned tuna and mayo or yogurt, and... well, you get the picture I think!

Savory Summer Smoothie

This is something I made up this week, and I know this will sound strange, but it tasted really good! Cut broccoli tops into small (think marbles) pieces and drop them in the bottom of the blender, then peel and dice cucumber and drop it in on top of the broccoli. Pour in some chilled yogurt (I'm used

to Lynn's raw goat yogurt which is more fluid; if you use a more commercial gelatinized type, you may want to liquefy it with a fork first so it will go down to the bottom where the broccoli is, OR, put some yogurt in first so it will blend properly.) Anyway, after the yogurt, add a little ground cumin and a little salt, then blend away! You get a beautiful speckly-spring-green concoction that tastes, oddly enough, a little like drinking a falafel. If you're too weirded out by the idea of a savory smoothie, just pour this self-same mixture into a bowl, call it 'cold cucumber-yogurt soup' and eat it with a spoon! It'll taste just as good.

Ruby Radishes

(a recipe by Jane Griffith I, er, borrowed/adapted from Mariquita Farm's website to fit here!)

Melt 1 tbsp. butter in a skillet over medium heat. Slice up one bunch of radishes, toss to coat in butter, then cover pan and cook 3 to 4 minutes, shaking occasionally. Add ½ tsp. sugar and ¼ tsp. red wine vinegar, simmer another minute, sprinkle with ½ tsp. snipped fresh dill and salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately (serves 2).