



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

25th Harvest Week

Sept. 12th - 18th, 2005

Season 10

What's in the box this week:

(stuff that's in one size share that's *not* in the other is at the top of its respective list so you can easily see the difference. Remember, small shares will generally have smaller quantities of the duplicate items. – Debbie)

Family Share:

Carrots
Green beans
Parsley
Apples
Arugula
Lettuce
Peppers
Potatoes
Radishes
Spinach
Tomatoes
Mystery item (sweet corn or red cabbage)

Small Share:

Beets
Scallions
Apples
Arugula
Lettuce
Peppers
Potatoes
Radishes
Spinach
Tomatoes
Mystery item (sweet corn or red cabbage)

Extra Fruit Option:

Strawberries, pears... and concord grapes! (see Field Notes)

Although school for our 11-year-old David technically started last week, with a four-day field trip to the Marin Headlands, today is his first day of classes. Armed with a calculator, laptop, new binders and notebooks, he is entering middle school where the academic pace will pick up considerably. I can't help but offer up last minute fatherly advice, to which he impatiently replies, "I know dad, you already told me - don't worry!" I guess I do worry, as we all hope that the schools we send our children to will prepare them to engage successfully with the "real world" when they grow up. The "real world?" I ask myself what that actually is, and why is it something we have to face or confront rather than share and develop a relationship with. There is of course no clear answer to this subjective question, but whether the real world is the high-speed world of business and technology, the abstract world of the intellect, the shallow world depicted in the media, or the world of social pressure and expectation, the real world we mostly ignore is nature itself. At home children have computer games, TVs and CD players, and at school (if they are lucky)

"There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the earth."

Rumi

they can spend their recess on a grassy playground, or if not that, on asphalt and plastic play structures. After school, most kids spend their time doing homework... and the cycle continues the next day. Spending time in nature and learning lessons that only happen through a more intimate relationship with it – be it by climbing trees, laying in a grassy meadow, watching, tasting, touching insects and plants, feeling the soil, listening to birdsongs, the wind, or a gopher digging below ground – is becoming increasingly rare. It seems much easier to "Google" information on the internet about nature rather than to be out there in the "thick of it." We are of course all in the "thick of it." Toddlers like our almost-one-year-old daughter, Elisa, still unconditioned, will intuitively connect with the simplest of things nature has to offer: the grass blade, the pebble, the dried leaves, a dead fly – edible or not, everything gets inspected with all her senses. Growing, planting, harvesting something, and understanding nature's cycles and rhythms are a few easy ways to integrate and teach children math, science, art and critical thinking. Nature's extreme wake-up calls, such as Hurricane Katrina, a tsunami, or an earthquake shouldn't make her something separate from us, an enemy to overcome, or worse yet some sort of cosmic punishment we deserve. I view them as an opportunity to acknowledge how much we've forgotten that we are nature, and to find a way to revive our sense of wonder and care. The aftermath of Katrina, as devastating and terrible as it appears to be, can serve as a "tipping point" for us to recognize that Katrina may not just have been bad luck, but possibly a sign that we indeed need to change our ways. We need to recognize that burning fossil fuels is causing global warming, and that as we rebuild after natural disasters, we also must embark on a new and sustainable energy policy. The power of nature is not only manifested in the destructiveness of storms, but also in the power of human creativity, imagination and resolve to change our ways and develop a deeper consciousness of the part we play in the web of life. – Tom

Equinox Celebration Reminder

The Banana Slug String Band is scheduled to be on the farm all afternoon, playing music, hosting games, and teaching young and old alike about the wonders of Dirt, Plants, Animals, Water, and everything that makes us sing about Life. We'll bake bread (assuming our little Toastie lasts for another firing), press apples into fresh cider, make compost, cheese and other goodies. We'd like

Live Earth Farm 2005 Calendar

(see calendar on website for more info)

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|-------------|--|
| Sat Sept 17 | Permaculture workshop #2
Swale Design and Construction |
| Sat Sept 24 | Fall Equinox Celebration
3 – 9 pm |
| Sat Oct 22 | Halloween Pumpkin Palooza |
| Sat Nov 5 | Permaculture workshop #3
Polycultures & Agroforestry; Food Forest Design and Installation |

everyone who comes to bring a small homemade dish to share in our potluck (and Debbie says, “please bring your recipe along with the dish so I can collect them and then share them back with the membership!”) Don't forget to also bring a sweater and a blanket to sit on, especially if your staying for the lighting of the bonfire. Hope to see you all at the farm in a couple of weeks. Saturday September 24th!! 🍷

Field Notes from Farmer Tom

Thanks for the feedback from all of you about the produce you receive in your shares. We truly welcome your comments, since they help us improve and fine tune our operation. Last week we got praised about the flavor and quality of the pears and cucumbers (for those who got the Armenian type), but then several folks were not happy with the watermelons. I have to admit they ranged in quality. Since the watermelons were only in Wednesday's 'extra fruit' share, I will compensate those folks with more of some other fruit such as pears or apples. I was hoping for warmer weather (to provide more and better tasting watermelons), but this has been one of the coldest summers on record here along the coast. Watermelons thrive in the hot Central Valley climate, and even though some varieties claim to do well in cooler climates, this year was just a bit too cool.

If all goes well, the Extra Fruit shares should be receiving a special treat this week. On a tip from Billy Bob (of Billy Bob's [apple] Orchard – remember that great apple juice?) I was put in touch with Harry Price. Harry has lived in Watsonville all his life, upon the land which his father bought and raised concord grapes. (Harry's father used to land his biplane on the ridgeline, right on his own property, and taxi up to the house!) At one time their land had over 10 acres of grapes (peak harvest could reach 10 tons – all of which was sold to Welch's in San Jose). Now all that's left is about ¼ acre of pretty neglected vines, but they seem to do great in marginal conditions. Harry doesn't bother harvesting and selling them any more, so he was happy to make a sale where we'd come in and do all the picking. His land is certified organic, and he grows 3 types of concords: the regular purple ones, the larger “Isabella” and just a few bushes of white concord grapes. Some folks are not fond of concords because of their thick skins and seeds, but flavor-wise they beat out all the others hands down. You will probably be seeing the regulars or Isabellas in the extra fruit shares; there were not enough of the white ones to go around. I may get some to grow at Live Earth Farm however, as they were so flavorful! 🍷

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.)

Some recipes were sent in over the last week, but the box content is changing so I'll save them for when they better match our week's ingredients. So for now, some more recipes from my 'sources.' - Debbie

Japanese Carrot Dressing

from Moosewood Restaurant Low-fat Favorites

The recipe intro says, “Despite or perhaps because of its complex taste, everyone loves this dressing, the “secret sauce” served on salads at so many Japanese restaurants. We like to use this blend of traditional Japanese ingredients both on mixed green salads and as a marinade for cooked vegetable salads.”

1 sm. carrot, peeled and shredded (~½ C)
2 tbsp. mirin
2 tbsp. rice vinegar or cider vinegar
1 tbsp. soy sauce
½ tsp. dark sesame oil
2 tbsp. minced onions
1 tbsp. prepared mustard
1 tbsp. grated fresh ginger root (optional)

Whirl all of the ingredients in a blender until smooth. Well covered, it keeps in the refrigerator for about a week.

Blender Hot Sauce

also from Moosewood Restaurant Low-fat Faves makes 1 ½ cups

(I have halved the recipe. – Debbie)

“When you want a homemade hot sauce and you want it without a lot of fuss, try our

quick blender method. The sauce takes almost no time to prepare, and then it dutifully simmers on your back burner while you move on to create the rest of your meal. ... [This] will add a rich spiciness to bean dishes, chili, enchiladas, burritos, fajitas, frittatas, and casseroles.”

1/2 C chopped onions
1/2 C chopped bell peppers [use any of the farm's sweet peppers]
1 fresh hot chile, seeds removed if you prefer a milder 'hot' (or see note at end about substituting cayenne)
3 cloves garlic, pressed
2 C chopped fresh tomatoes
1/2 tsp. ground cumin
½ tsp. ground coriander
¼ tsp. dried oregano
1 tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro
salt to taste

In a blender or food processor, combine all ingredients but the salt and purée until smooth. Transfer purée to a soup pot and simmer on low heat, uncovered, for about 30 minutes, or until the sauce has thickened and the flavors have mellowed. Stir often as it cooks and use a heat diffuser if needed, to prevent sticking. Add salt to taste. Hot sauce will keep for about 2 weeks refrigerated and tightly covered.

Note: in place of the fresh chile, 1/4 tsp. of cayenne can be used. After adding the cayenne, cook the sauce for 15 minutes, taste it for hotness, and sprinkle in a bit

more if desired. Be careful not to be heavy-handed since the hotness of the sauce will increase somewhat as it cooks. If not cooked sufficiently, cayenne can be harsh so it is not recommended that you add it after cooking.

Japanese Sesame Spinach**

same cookbook again!
serves 4

16 to 20 oz. fresh spinach
2 tbsp. sesame seeds
2 tsp. sugar
1 tbsp. soy sauce

Clean spinach, shake off excess water and place in a covered pot. In a dry skillet on medium heat, roast the sesame seeds, stirring continuously, for a couple minutes, until seeds are fragrant and golden. With a mortar and pestle, grind together sesame seeds and sugar, add soy sauce, and stir to make paste. (If you don't have a mortar and pestle, crush seeds between two sheets of waxed paper with a rolling pin. Stir sugar and soy together until sugar dissolves and then add crushed sesame seeds.) Place pot of spinach on high heat and steam for 2 – 3 minutes, until wilted but still bright green. Drain. Toss spinach with sesame paste to coat evenly.

**This sesame paste is also good on green beans and other lightly steamed greens such as chard or kale.