



# Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

3<sup>rd</sup> Harvest Week

April 11<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>, 2005

Season 10

## What's in the box this week:

### Family Share:

Arugula and red mustards mix  
Broccoli  
Carrots  
Cilantro  
Garlic chives  
Green garlic  
Lettuce  
Radishes  
Rutabaga  
Strawberries

### Small Share:

Arugula and red mustards mix  
Beets  
Broccoli  
Green garlic  
Garlic chives  
Lettuce  
Radishes  
Strawberries

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

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

Hello and a quick logistical reminder from Debbie: over 100 of you are in the third week of your 4-week trial this week, so it is time to let me know if you wish to continue. Expect an email reminder from me as well, but if you miss it for some reason, please don't wait to hear from me before you act. We are approaching full membership, so if you don't respond we will be opening up your 'share slot' to new members eager to participate. Rest assured that as an existing member you have first dibs, but only if you renew before your trial is up. If you don't get around to renewing in time, you may end up on our waiting list. Of course we hope each and every one of you are loving your veggies and that I will be inundated with renewals! Go ahead, put me to work! To continue, simply go to our website and click on the link in the left-hand sidebar called "Continuing after a 4-week trial" and go from there. And of course (I know, I sound like a broken record here) please don't forget to put your checks in the mail! – Debbie

*"The world begins at the kitchen table.  
No matter what, we must eat to live..."*

*- Joy Harjo, from 'In Praise of Fertile Land'*

## What's Up on the Farm and in the Fields

The job of a farmer is a little bit like that of a weatherman, as we are both set up by mother nature to expect the unpredictable – such as last Friday and Saturday's storms, which "blessed" us with more than an inch of rain! The forecast called for only a 10-20% chance of rain, mostly to the north of us. On Friday morning however, we trudged through the mud, pelted by rain, while bunching chard and harvesting for Saturday's shares and the Willow Glen Farmers Market. My cell phone rings, and I drop my harvest knife while trying to pull the phone out from underneath my raincoat. It's the local pastry shop inquiring about the status of our regular strawberry delivery to them. Luckily we harvested late Thursday, and I have enough berries sitting safely in the cooler to satisfy our pastry chef. Strawberries don't have a protective skin to speak of and, when ripe, are easily damaged by rain. Once rained on, the ripe berries must be picked and discarded to avoid mold build up (called botrytis), which can affect the rest of the ripening berries on the plant. So, once again all my harvest predictions are out the window. In situations like this, it feels as if farming is some sort of race to the harvest between myself and nature. The philosophy of working cooperatively with nature is truly tested as we try to predict and satisfy the farm's demands. I am humbled that after 10 years I am only beginning to understand the subtleties of knowledge, skill, and patience it takes to farm with nature.

Much of what I learn about farming comes from walking the fields and orchards as often as I can. Always with a notebook handy, I love to poke, smell, dig and inspect everything that catches my attention. Changes happen every day, sometimes dramatically so, as everything bursts into life. I am constantly digging my hands in the ground picking up handfuls of soil and assessing its moisture content. At this time of year we like to prepare the fields early, since the greenhouse is packed with seedlings waiting to be transplanted. Right now, tomato, eggplant and pepper seedlings are ready to be field transplanted, as well as our regular sowings of lettuce, broccoli, and cauliflower.

The first peach trees need to be thinned, and our newly sown beds of carrots, beets, and chard need cultivating before the weeds choke them out. All our potatoes, except the fingerlings, got planted at the tail end of a waning cycle of the

## 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>

moon last week, together with our first summer squash and cucumbers.

This year with the purchase of a new tractor we are able to work the fields a little faster, which has been a blessing for us as we try to take advantage of the dry weather spells between storms. Ever since we started farming I have been challenged with the "personalities" of used and old farm machinery. Our three used International Tractors get more attention than most entities on the farm. Besides regular maintenance, a constant stream of offerings in the form of spare parts is the only way we can keep the mechanical gods satisfied. Last year though, one of them decided to demand a whole new rebuilt engine... and I just couldn't keep up anymore. It was time to buy a new tractor and retire one of the old ones. I am sure the retiree will not suffer from lack of attention, as children will turn it into one of their favorite climbing structures. In the meantime the newcomer is showing off its skills, such as being capable of performing the functions of all the other three combined. I hope the mechanical gods are now happy. □

## Notes from Debbie's Kitchen

Have a recipe you'd like to share? Contact me at [deb@writerguy.com](mailto:deb@writerguy.com) or 408.288.9469. (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.)

Thank you Amoreena Lucero, for out-doing yourself with a wonderful selection of ideas! My only two cents is re: the arugula/red mustards mix (added to veggie list after Amoreena got it). Since we're light on lettuce this week, this mix will make a marvelous substitution for salad greens. Definitely add them to Amoreena's salad, below. - Debbie

### What I'd do with this week's box

by Amoreena Lucero of Los Gatos

Cilantro - When cilantro arrives in my share, I usually do one of two things: create some sort of salsa, or make cilantro pesto. Because it is too early for good tomatoes, I'll make the pesto. Here's my basic recipe:

#### Cilantro Pesto

Large bunch of cilantro, washed and leaves removed from stems  
Approx. 1/4 C pine nuts  
2-6 cloves garlic (to your preference)  
extra virgin olive oil, and salt

Combine cilantro, pine nuts, garlic and salt in food processor and process until minced. With the processor running, slowly add the olive oil until a paste forms. You can toss this with pasta and blanched veggies (I usually prefer carrots and broccoli), or use to marinate chicken or fish.

The start of the veggie season usually means we get fantastic lettuce in our shares, as well as weather warm enough for grilling. With both those in mind, I usually prepare large salads for dinner a few times a month, utilizing as many veggies as possible. Here's one idea:

#### Grilled Cilantro Chicken/Halibut Salad

Halibut or chicken breast fillets  
Cilantro pesto (recipe above)

Your favorite salad combo – this week it will be the lettuce, carrots, radishes, and blanched broccoli from our shares (which I will supplement w/tomatoes and avocado).

#### Vinaigrette

Lemon juice or white wine vinegar  
Extra virgin olive oil  
salt & pepper  
1-2 T Cilantro pesto

Coat the chicken or fish with cilantro pesto and allow to marinate 1 hour. Meanwhile, combine your salad ingredients, making enough to fill each person's plate.

Combine all vinaigrette ingredients in a small bowl and whisk well. I find a 1:2 ratio for a lemon vinaigrette, and a 1:1 ratio for the vinegar version works well, but I usually taste test until I find the perfect balance!

Grill chicken or fish until done over medium-high heat, usually 3-4 minutes per side. When the meat is done, toss the salad with the dressing and place a large mound on each plate. Slice the chicken/fish as desired and arrange across the top of each salad. Since we're getting garlic chives, sprinkle them across the top to finish it beautifully!

Rutabaga was a new discovery for me last year, and my favorite preparation is to roast it, either alone or with other veggies.

#### Roasted Carrots, Rutabagas & Potatoes

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Peel the rutabagas, scrub the carrots and potatoes. Cut all the veggies into 1" chunks, place in a large bowl, toss with olive oil to coat and sprinkle with salt. Dump veggies onto a baking sheet and spread evenly. If you have them, add garlic cloves, chunks of onion, and rosemary or thyme (many of us got thyme in our first shares; here's a good place to use it! - Debbie).

Roast veggies, turning once, until golden, about 45 minutes. Serve immediately.

Broccoli is one of my favorite veggies, and I usually steam it 'til just cooked then sprinkle with soy sauce to taste, however, stir-fried and served w/brown rice is quick and easy.

#### Broccoli Stir-Fry

Broccoli florets and peeled stems, both cut into bite sized pieces

1 C chicken or veggie stock  
1 tbsp. sesame oil  
2-3 tbsp. soy sauce  
2 tbsp. dry sherry (optional)  
1-2 tbsp. minced garlic cloves  
1-2 tbsp. minced fresh ginger  
1 tbsp. cornstarch dissolved in 1-2 tbsp. water

Combine the stock, sesame oil and soy sauce, and set aside. Heat a non-stick wok on high for 2 minutes, then add 1 tbsp. oil (canola, peanut, safflower), garlic and ginger and stir-fry for 30 seconds. Add broccoli and stir-fry for 30 seconds. Add sauce and cover, turning heat down to medium-low. Cook for 3 minutes, or until broccoli is tender and bright green. Remove cover and whisk in cornstarch mixture. Return to boil until sauce thickens, 30-60 seconds. Remove from heat, serve w/rice.

Variations: Add chili paste if you like it spicy. Or marinate bite-sized pieces of chicken or beef in soy sauce for 30 minutes and quickly stir-fry them before the broccoli, setting them aside while broccoli cooks (rinse the wok and allow to reheat for 1-2 minutes before starting the broccoli). Return the cooked meat to the wok after sauce has thickened to heat through.

I can't forget the strawberries!

#### Strawberry-Banana Parfait

1-2 bs kts. rinsed, stemmed, quartered berries  
1-2 thickly slice firm, but ripe, bananas  
Vanilla or strawberry yogurt  
Granola or wheat germ, and honey

Gently combine the first three ingredients in a large bowl until the fruit is well coated with the yogurt. Place in individual bowls and sprinkle with the granola or wheat germ. If the berries are tart, drizzle honey over the top and serve. Perfect any time of day!