



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

7th Harvest Week

May 9th – 15th, 2005

Season 10

What's in the box this week:

Family Share:

Beets
Bok choy
Broccoli or cauliflower
Carrots
Cooking greens (chard, kale or collards), 2 bunches
Fava beans
Green garlic
Lettuce
Radishes
Spinach
Strawberries (hopefully; see field notes!)

Small Share:

Beets
Bok choy
Broccoli
Cooking greens (see above), 1 bunch
Green garlic
Lettuce
Radishes
Spinach
Strawberries (maybe, see field notes!)

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

Extra Fruit:

2-3 more baskets of strawberries!

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)... it's so much more than a weekly box of vegetables. Twelve years ago when I decided to follow the "road less traveled" and take up farming, Community Supported Agriculture was a newly emerging and very inspiring concept at UCSC's Farm and Garden Apprenticeship program. What inspired me most was the Community aspect, where farms and families form a network of mutual support. As a beginning farmer at the time, this was very encouraging. Although organic farming practices were really catching on as a true alternative to industrial and chemical farming, I was afraid that even as an organic farmer I'd fall victim to the relentless forces of the marketplace. Our focus to build a CSA farm served as the catalyst for our now 10-years-old farming endeavor. In 1995 (our first year), on less than 2 acres of mostly hand-dug beds, we supplied 15 share-holders and a couple of farmers markets with our seasonal harvest. After that first season I was convinced we were on the right track. CSA was not just another new and clever approach to marketing, and felt like much more than growing food. A decade later, both wiser and humbler, we've grown into a CSA farm more than 400 members strong, and continue to be inspired to grow nourishing food and meaningful relationships between people and their connection with the earth.

When you first sign up to join a CSA farm like ours you probably can't quite grasp what you are getting yourself into. For most it's an adjustment to have your weekly meal plan monopolized by a box of vegetables demanding to be prepared, cooked and eaten before they pass their prime. You may find yourself experimenting with more "exotic" vegetables than you've bargained for, such as rutabaga, dandelion greens, arugula, or fava beans. You probably wouldn't be tempted to pick these up at the store, where produce from every location and season around the world is readily available and unimpacted by local conditions. You may find yourself swapping recipes with other shareholders, and some of the more obscure vegetables may actually make it on your list of favorites. Your children may discover new tastes and textures on their plates and develop stronger opinions about what constitutes "yucky" and yummy in the vegetable kingdom. You may find yourself coming out to the farm to volunteer for a day or participate in the seasonal educational activities and celebrations, or just simply wander the fields to pick berries with your children on a nice Saturday afternoon. Choosing to belong to a CSA farm, when you stop to think about it, is not just buying a commodity but choosing an alternative to the reckless and unsustainable food system to which we have grown accustomed. As the late Robyn Van En, a pioneer in the CSA movement, said, "CSA farms strive to be socially and ecologically responsible, to educate and empower, while providing good food, one of the basic necessities of life. It is a participatory means to securing your food supply for today and for future generations." At Live Earth Farm we like to give you the option to take your membership further: it is not only what you take out of the box every week, but also what you choose to put into your CSA. – Tom

"It's all here... the seasons will show you how nothing is ever really gone but keeps turning out and over again and again and again. We set the seeds, speak to the sky, nurture the plants, drink the rain, give back to the soil, curse the cold, dance to the sun, sing with the wind, weep at the passing, dream with the moon."

- from a poem by Sherrie Mickel

Field Notes from Farmer Tom

Does all this rain remind you of an El Niño year? I am starting to have this sneaky suspicion... Well, for all you strawberry lovers, this week might be slim pickings. I hope you understand, the extra fruit share has first dibs on this week's harvest of strawberries, followed by the family share, then the small share. The outlook seems to call for warmer and sunnier days ahead which means the bounty will re-

turn soon, but this week will be rough. Sweet corn has been planted (do I hear cheering?) and, hopefully as some consolation for the berry shortage, everyone will be getting some fresh leafy spinach. For those who get chard, it is really young and tender, so you might find it bagged instead of bunched. Next week we should have baby greens such as arugula, red and green mustard, and more spinach. Cauliflower is also ready for harvest in two weeks, as well as our spring carrots, which you will recognize as different from the winter crop, since they will be bunched with greens attached, instead of topped and bagged. □

Permaculture workshops at the farm

Just a reminder that we will be offering a 3-part hands on workshop series on permaculture principles and practices (see Calendar at right) First workshop coming right up -- June 4th!). We hope to have our website updated within the week to include the details on this new program. If you're interested in learning more sooner than that, call Brian Barth at 831.566.3336 or you can email him at edenfruits2002@yahoo.com. □

Gumby's Back!

(from the OCA [Organic Consumers Association] newsletter) Gumby and his good pal Pokey aren't riding off into the sunset. In fact, they're riding back right into the thick of organic, and they want to be aggressive spokescreatures for the value and importance of organic. As National Organic Standards Board head Jim Riddle said when he learned of Gumby's desire to stand up for organic, "He's green, he's of the earth, he's made of clay." In fact, Gumby was named for the gumbo clay of his home state, Michigan. Gumby's owner has given us a chance to create a number of 30-second organic spots featuring Gumby and Pokey. All we need now are some good storylines. If you've got some good ideas for what Gumby could say and do in 30 seconds to promote organic, send your ideas our way. Be as creative and wacky as you want. If we like your idea, we'll give you all the recognition you can stand. One last thought: Consider coming up with ideas that focus one aspect of organic – dairy or produce or grains, for example. We look forward to your ideas and will share the best and the funniest with all our readers. Send your ideas to chris.hill@rodaleinst.org. □

Notes from Debbie's Kitchen

(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.)

Have a recipe you'd like to share? Contact me at deb@writerguy.com or 408.288.9469.

Not much space but lots of good ideas. I hope you enjoy these! - Debbie

Egyptian Chili (Fava Bean Stew)

from Randy Robinson, of Vino Locale, Palo Alto

Olive oil

Small yellow onion, diced

2 medium tomatoes, chopped

2 jalapeños

4 C shelled and peeled fava beans

1 tsp. ground cumin

1/2 tsp. ground coriander

1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

8-10 chopped green onions

2 tbsp. chopped parsley

2 tbsp. chopped cilantro

2 cloves fresh garlic, diced

Feta cheese (optional)

In a few teaspoons of oil, brown the onions. After removing/discarding their seeds, sauté jalapeños with the onions. Add fava beans and bring to a gentle boil. Add toma-toes and spices. Cook until stew thickens. Add fresh herbs, turn off heat. Add garlic. (Add water if the stew is too thick.) Top with crumbled feta, and drizzle with olive oil.

Serve over rice, or with pita bread.

Briefly Pickled Beets

by Shawna Macneale, of Santa Cruz

Marinate some raw, sliced beets in vinegar (I used balsamic but others would be good too) with a touch of salt and sugar. A brief pickling. The next day and for the rest of the week, they make an extra tasty addition to salads.

Chorizo and Eggs Florentine!

(I made this one up last year – Debbie)

Cook a bunch of cleaned spinach in boiling salted water for about 2 minutes. Drain, chop, and set aside. Brown up chorizo, scramble in eggs, and when eggs are mostly set, add spinach and scramble until eggs are done. Top with grated jack cheese (optional) and serve with warm tortillas!

Sneaky Greens Stew

a clever idea from the Lauermans of Salinas

Just chop up your greens (kale is particularly good) and add 'em to your favorite beef stew recipe (in which, of course, you are already using lovely farm veggies such as carrots and rutabagas!). Easy!

Live Earth Farm 2005 Calendar

(see calendar on website for more info)

Sat. June 4 Permaculture workshop #1
Water mgmt; Swale design/construction

Sat. June 18 Summer Solstice Celebration
field tours 2 – 5 pm
celebration 5 – 9 pm

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