



# Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

9th Harvest Week

May 23<sup>rd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>, 2005

Season 10

## What's in the box this week:

### Family Share:

Arugula  
Broccoli  
Cabbage  
Bunched carrots  
Green garlic  
Kale or collards  
Mustard greens (red or green)  
Butter lettuce  
Summer squash (zucchini)  
Strawberries

### Small Share:

Arugula  
Bunched carrots  
Cauliflower  
Rainbow chard  
Green garlic  
Butter lettuce  
Strawberries

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

### Extra Fruit:

More strawberries!

At the end of the school year we host lots of school field trips and a frequently asked question is about the size of the farm and how many of us it takes to care for it. Many people over the years have contributed to our operation, so when I came across an old newsletter where I reflect about the evolution of the farm, I thought I'd share it again, bringing it up to date.

It was 10 years ago when Constance and I (and our two-year-old, David), together with the help of two fellow graduates from the UC Santa Cruz Ecological Farming program, took fork and spade and converted one acre of horse pasture into a garden with flowers, strawberries and vegetables. My hands were in the soil all day, and my mind continually sprouted ideas and dreams for the future as we stumbled through the process of creating a farm. Over the years we attracted young people who wanted to learn more, and people from Mexico who wanted to work. From the start, the concept of Community Supported Agriculture was fun-damental in keeping us inspired to gradually grow to our current size. We now farm 40 acres, on 4 different pieces of land, with 12 people anchoring the day-to-day operations.

*"If you tickle the earth with a hoe, she laughs with a harvest."  
- Douglas William Jerrold*

It was 7 years ago – I still remember how nervous and excited I was – when we signed our first lease for some nearby land, adding 10 more acres to the 5 we currently had under cultivation. With 15 acres it felt like we'd graduated from being market gardeners into small-farmhood. That same year, Juan Morales knocked on my door asking if I needed a tractor driver. He was literally a godsend – with only three apprentices, I didn't know how I would manage that much land. I needed help! The CSA program had grown to over 100 members and we were going to 4 weekly farmers markets. Juan was born and raised in Guanajuato, one of the richest agricultural areas of Mexico, where much of the crops grown are the same as here. Juan arrived in the Pajaro Valley in the late '80s with his wife and six children, and got seasonal jobs as a tractor driver. This meant working long hours both day and night, plowing, cultivating, and spraying large tracts of land on both conventional and organic farms in the Pajaro and Salinas Valleys. When he showed up here he was burned out. At first it was a big change for him to work on a small, diversified organic farm where the level of mechanization consisted of mostly hand tools, plus a small cultivating tractor and a push-seeder. Many crops were new to him, but it didn't take long for Juan's deep-rooted understanding of the earth plus skills passed down over generations in his family to emerge. Since then we have made many strides together. We've fine-tuned our practices, with our goal of becoming ever more sustainable, including improving the soil, reducing the amount of outside inputs, and always increasing the diversity and quality of our crops. Most of Juan's family is now working with us, and thanks to them the bulk of the field work runs smoothly.

Then there's Debbie Palmer, who with her many talents has helped us in more ways than I can list in this short newsletter. Most importantly she keeps things humming

## 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

smoothly in the office, taking care of all the complexities that arise with a large, diverse CSA membership and making sure administrative details are not overlooked. Debbie's also been editing this newsletter for 5 years now, and is in her 8th year of inspiring us with weekly recipes. Joe Rubin has helped with our Felton and Santa Cruz farmers markets over the last 4 years, and now lives on the farm with his daughter Sierra and provides a helping hand with on-farm activities. Brian Barth, an avid Permaculturist, is also living on the farm this year, and brings new ideas about landscape design and sustainability into our midst. I'm excited to already see many positive changes, plus the workshops he's offering to the community. I'm sure they'll inspire those interested in this subject (see website for Permaculture workshop details). Shoni returned this year to help us out with farmers markets in Willow Glen and Westside Santa Cruz. And we have Shoni to thank for the new logo and signage on our delivery truck, which she laid out and painted by hand. Check it out the next time you make it to the farm, or keep your eyes open when you are driving for this beautiful looking box truck.

As you can see, many hands and minds work to operate this farm, and I often scratch my head and wonder how a business that earns its annual budget by the pound can provide good wages, quality housing, health benefits, and a sense of ownership. I believe that we will not be able to achieve some of these goals unless we recognize the true value of sustainably grown food. In the meantime it's healthy to keep asking questions and to work towards possible solutions. - Tom

## Mini Camp

This year it starts Friday evening July 29th with a pot-luck and ends Sunday the 31st before lunch. What is Mini Camp? Since 1999, CSA members and their children have come to join us for a weekend "camping" stay at the farm. This once-a-year event is designed so participants can experience the farm and its peacefulness without the concern of having to drive at the end of the day. Equipped with baskets, we spend our days harvesting, tasting and discovering the magnificent diversity of fruits, vegetables and herbs growing on the farm, and then prepare a meal from the bounty we harvested. This process is at the same time ambitious and fun, compelling everyone to explore all corners of the land. It is a time to enjoy being together, to meet other CSA members, and to allow the children to set the pace. Farm games such as finding the 'weirdest' most interesting, bizarre-looking fruit or vegetable are popular, and so is pizza-making (in our wood-fired oven) with freshly harvested crops. Our hide-and-peek by moonlight in the orchard has become a tradition among mini-campers! Visits to the farm animals (chickens, goats and our pony, "Peanut") are also a must, to make sure that no living creature is left out of the party! Families and kids of all ages are welcome!!

- Cost is \$40 per person (adults and children), to a maximum of \$120 per family, and you can pay during mini-camp.
- You need to have been a CSA member for at least 2 months to participate, and because space is limited, we only can allow CSA members and their children, but not extended family members.

Sign up now, as space in this popular event is limited to 12 families! Contact Constance at broz@baymoon.com or 831.763.2340 to register, and she will give you the remaining specifics on what to bring/what to expect, etc.

## Billy Bob's (delicious! organic!) Apple Juice

Due to the continued interest we are offering full cases (8 - 48oz. bottles) of Billy Bob's apple juice. [Unopened jars will keep as much as a few years, so you don't need to refrigerate them until opened.] Send a check made out to Live Earth Farm (mail it to our PO box) for \$28/case, and we will deliver it to your pick-up site the following week. ☐

## Cob Workshop in Downtown Santa Cruz

Come and learn how to build a "mud" house and all the parts of the process on a round, partially finished studio started last summer. Taught by an experienced local cobbler, "Shanti," and with lots of hands-on practice time, you will walk away empowered and ready to start your own project! A relaxing, fun, healing, artistic, healthy time for all out in the sunshine! When: June 25 & 26, 9am-4pm. Cost: \$150/weekend, includes lunch and handouts. Call Claudine at 831.423.5204 or email her at claudinedesiree@yahoo.com. ☐

## 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.)

Not enough room for a 'what I'd do' blurb, so just a recipe or two! - Debbie

### Carrot-beet salad w/mint, honey & lime (I made this up last week! - Debbie)

Grate raw carrots and beets (I like a 4-to-1 ratio of carrots-to-beets) into a bowl, add slivered fresh mint, a handful of golden raisins, and some toasted walnuts. Make a dressing of fresh lime juice, honey, pinch of salt, and (optionally) walnut oil and toss with carrot-beet mixture. Serve on a bed of butter lettuce leaves, with an optional dollop of mayonnaise on top!

Michelle Crawford, a new CSA member from Sunnyvale, sent me this recipe with her continuation checks:

### Sauteed Chard

"I just sautéed the bagged greens (in this case, chard) with sliced green garlic and olive oil, then when cooked, swirled in some butter, took it off the heat, and 'dressed' it with 3 tbsp. of apple cider vinegar, 2 tsp. sugar and salt & pepper. Went great with pork chops! [You could easily do this recipe with some of the other greens, or even with the zucchini! - Debbie]

### Debbie on mustard greens

To really get a sense of their flavor, just eat a leaf raw. Seriously! When you're washing them, select a fresh, vibrant leaf, pop it in your mouth and chew, and see what I mean. For a brief moment it will taste merely grassy, but then your mouth will burst with mustardy flavor. The green leaf mustards have a genuine 'mustard' taste, but the red mustard (which I tasted this weekend) has an amazing wasabi hot flavor! Yowza! Let that influence how you might use them. Why not in a salad with a funny dressing to complement the heat?