



# Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

1st Harvest Week

March 27<sup>th</sup> – April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006

Season 11

## What's in the box this week:

### Family Share:

Red beets  
Mixed brassica florets  
Carrots  
Chard  
Fennel  
Baby leeks  
Red leaf lettuce  
Rutabagas  
Baby spinach

### Small Share:

Golden beets  
Mixed brassica florets  
Chard  
Fennel  
Baby leeks  
Red leaf lettuce  
Rutabaga  
Baby spinach

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

### Extra Fruit:

(doesn't start 'til May)

We are excited to start a new season; the Earth, although somewhat slower than usual, has woken and returned life to its surface, the farm is covered with a lush green blanket of cover crops, the orchard is blooming, our greenhouses are filled with seedlings, and everyone is ready to start another seasonal dance of growing, sharing, eating, and celebrating nature's abundance and generosity. Welcome to our 11th farming season!

Planting seeds is an act of trust – a trust that nature, no matter how unpredictable, will provide us with sustained nourishment. Your box of vegetables is more than just its content of earthly gifts. You have decided to participate in a seasonal relationship that is directly woven into the life of our land, its people, plants, animals, and soil. In this partnership we journey through the upcoming season sharing both the risk and bounty inherently involved in growing food. You may not see yourself as a revolutionary, but as a CSA member, you have made a fairly radical choice. The food you receive is not a commodity or conventional off-the-shelf type business transaction. The bunch of chard, the baby leeks, the beets or carrots you will eat is a choice where together we the farmers and you the "eaters" want to support and honor the earth, our health, and the pleasure of eating delicious flavorful food close to home. I invite you to see the farm as an extension of your backyard and take the opportunity to learn who the people are that grow your food and discover the land that fills your weekly shares with its nourishing surprises. As Michael Abelman says in his book *Fields of Plenty*, "Even though people will always need farmers, the more people can participate in and question their food system, the more they will benefit." As members of this farm, you support a way of farming where "organic" goes way beyond that 'seal of government approval.'

*"A good gardener always plants three seeds - one for the grubs, one for the weather, and one for himself."*

- C. Collins, *Zen Gardening*

Throughout the season we welcome you to come visit and get to know the farm. And if you're ever interested in helping out at our various farm events, please don't hesitate to let us know. Every year we host and facilitate community events such as our seasonal celebrations, workshops, mini-camps, school visits, retreats, field work days, farm dinners, and other activities such as canning, food drying and bread baking here on the farm. To find out more about this year's activities see our 'Calendar of Events' (in newsletter, below, and also on our website). Spring is here and we hope to see you all here on the farm this season!!! - Tom

## Field Notes from Farmer Tom

Start thinking dry-weather thoughts. We are beginning this season with a challenging weather pattern: cold, icy, and lots of rain. As I am writing this newsletter, another storm system is moving in. So please hold off with you inquiries just yet about when we'll have tomatoes... they are growing beautifully in our greenhouse right now and eager to be planted out, however the soil is still too wet and muddy to do this so we must wait. This is also true for our summer squash, peppers, potatoes, and eggplants. Also, for the first time in our CSA's history, we will be starting the season without strawberries in your

## Live Earth Farm 2006 Calendar

(see calendar on website for more info)

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Sat. June 17          | <u>Summer Solstice Celebration</u><br>field tours 2 - 5<br>celebrations 5 - 9 |
| Aug 25, 26,<br>and 27 | <u>Children's Mini Camp</u><br>Friday evening to noon Sunday                  |
| Sat. Sept. 23         | <u>Fall Equinox Celebration</u><br>3pm until dark                             |
| Sat. Oct 21           | <u>Halloween Pumpkin Palooza</u>  |

shares. The plants are healthy and vigorous, but the berries are still mostly green, slowed in their normal progress by the cooler, wetter weather (and the hail and snow that fell a couple of weekends ago!). Typically we would have had strawberries in your first share, however the present weather has set us back by about 1-2 weeks. Look for them soon! This week the lettuce and fennel in your share is from Lakeside Organic, from a field of theirs which is planted immediately adjacent to ours. Their crop right now is more mature than ours, so we have arranged to harvest from their fields for this week's shares. The 'brassica florets' in your share are actually from a variety of crops that are sending out their side shoots; so it will be a mix of kale, collards and broccoli florets. I would cook them just like you would broccoli raab – just barely steamed or sautéed. Lastly, looking into the uncertain future (i.e. weather permitting!) you will see arugula, radishes, mustard greens, broccoli, cauliflower, and green garlic... and by the middle of April there should be lots of delicious tender fava beans. 🌱

## 13 Moon Permaculture Design Course

As part of our on-going educational programs, we will host the first ever Permaculture Design Certification Course at Live Earth Farm beginning April 8th. It's not too late to sign up for this educational and inspiring course for those seeking to go more deeply in the process of applying the principles of ecology to how we grow food, provide for energy needs, construct dwellings, and organize our communities in a sustainable way. The completion of this 12 month course (held at the farm on the second Saturday of each month) will result in a Permaculture Design Certificate, and participants will come away with the tools and many practical techniques for evolving a more just, sacred, and sustainable world. Brian Barth and Collette Streight will facilitate the course along with guest instructors including Larry Santoyo, Tom Ward, Dave Henson, Kevin Danaher, Weston Miller, and Lydia Nielsen. Call Collette Streight at 831-469-3147 or email her at [cstreight@yahoo.com](mailto:cstreight@yahoo.com) for information and to register. For more information on the course and on the Mataganza Garden Sanctuary – a special educational garden and sacred grounds located at the farm that will host this course – go to the farm's website at [www.liveearthfarm.com](http://www.liveearthfarm.com) and click on 'Education and Community Outreach Programs.' 🌱

## 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.)

*Aaaah, at last! I've talked to so many of you over the winter and the sentiment has been unanimous, "I can't wait for the season to begin!" Well the wait is now over, and the happy, healthy eating can begin! With that in mind, here are some ideas for what to do with this week's bounty. - Debbie*

### Misc prep and storage tips

Probably the most important and simple thing you can do is to separate the carrots and beets from their tops. (You would do this with the rutabagas too, if they came with the tops attached, but I believe Tom tops them before we pack the shares.) Both of these veggies will go limp and get rubbery if stored with their tops attached. Don't chuck those beet tops though! The leaves are a wonderful cooking green. Throw them into a sink of cold water, swish 'em around to remove any grit, then spin 'em dry and store in a plastic bag in the fridge. If the leaves still have water clinging, I like to wrap them in a thin cotton towel (like a floursack towel) before bagging; this wicks the moisture from the leaves but keeps them humid and fresh. Any of you who have good alternatives to the 'store-it-in-a-plastic-bag' option, please email me and I can share the info with members in a future newsletter.

### Colorful Beet Salad

from Debbie's kitchen

Hooray! Tom has finally grown golden beets for us! You can make this salad with either color of beets, but if you save some beets until the following week (they keep for

weeks anyway), we'll be alternating them in your shares (whoever got golden beets will get red beets the following week and visa versa) and then you can make it with both.

beets (golden and red)  
salad greens of some sort  
nuts (pine nuts or walnuts would be good)  
feta cheese  
scallions (try thinly slicing the baby leeks)  
dressing for golden beets: champagne or rice or white-wine vinegar, dijon mustard, oil (I like to use walnut oil), salt  
dressing for red beets: balsamic or some other fruity dark vinegar, or red wine vinegar, dijon mustard, oil and salt

Remove beet tops and save for another use (or steam/wilt and use as the 'greens' for this salad!) If the beets are big (2 1/2 to 3"), cut them in half; smaller beets leave whole. Cook in a pressure cooker, skins on, for about 14 minutes under full pressure. Release pressure, run beets under cold water so they're cool enough to handle, then slip off the skins and cut off any remaining stems, then dice them, keeping the two colors separate. Dress each color with their corresponding dressing (okay to dress 'em warm, they take to the dressing better that way anyway); feel free to experiment – if you have a favorite honey-mustard dressing or whatever, try using it if you like. Let the dressed beets sit while you toast your nuts, slice scallions and prepare the salad greens. To serve, on each plate place a bed of greens, then spoon on some of each of the dressed beets, and top with toasted nuts, scallions and crumbled feta cheese.

### Heaven and Earth

emailed to me by a recipe database fan from Buffalo NY! Recipe source: Mother Earth News

"There's a German dish called *Himmel and Erde* – Heaven and Earth – that's perfect for folks who like solid, homey cooking; The proportions are up to the cook. All it is, is cubed potatoes cubed turnips and sliced apples cooked separately until just tender and then mashed very lightly together. Leave the mixture a bit lumpy and add salt, pepper, minced cooked bacon and chopped onion softened in the bacon fat. Sounds terrible, tastes delicious." Note from Debbie: I tried this recipe using rutabaga instead of turnips and it was indeed yummy!

### Mashed Rutabaga (instead of potatoes)

C'mon... give it a try! Honestly, rutabagas have lots of flavor, kind of hauntingly sweet, and a lovely buttery yellow color when cooked. It is so simple. I just peel them (if you make your own soup stock, by the way, add the rutabaga peels. They're a great flavor addition, whether it be a veggie, chicken or meat stock), cube them (1/2 to 3/4" cubes) then simmer them in salted water for about 9 to 10 minutes (smaller cubes, less time) or until tender, but not too long, as you don't want mush. Drain well, then mash with a potato masher (or whatever) and some butter if you like, and more salt (if you're a salt fiend like me) and voila!

### The Brassica Florets

Oops, running out of room! What'd I do? Steam until tender, and dress with olive oil, lemon juice and a little salt. Easy. Gooooood.