



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

11th Harvest Week

June 5th – 11th, 2006

Season 11

What's in the box this week: (content differences between Family and Small Shares are underlined/italicized)

Family Share:

Strawberries
Arugula
Avocados (2)
Red Forono beets
Carrots
English cucumbers
Green garlic
Lettuce
Mizuna
Green onions
Radishes

Small Share:

Strawberries
Arugula
Carrots
English cucumbers
Green garlic
Lettuce
Mizuna
Green onions
Radishes

Extra Fruit:

3 more baskets of strawberries

With the warm and long days the farm is experiencing a crescendo. As the rhythm increases, everyone in our Farm Orchestra is playing many different instruments, paying close attention to this spring finale, when nature, our ultimate conductor, mixes her seasonal symphony with many spontaneous variations. Last week the weeds had their first solo performance; much of our attention was paid to them in order to avoid being overwhelmed by their explosive appearance. With last Monday a holiday, we felt a little out of rhythm come Tuesday morning, catching up with harvest and irrigation needs. Tuesday and Wednesday's theme is always allegro and andante, as we focus on composing and delivering more than 500 shares to our CSA members as well as attending to our farmer's markets in Santa Cruz and Felton. A burst in strawberry production had us marching bent over into the evening hours on Wednesday to harvest them all. Not something we want to make a habit of! Without much of a pause, on Thursday, our heat loving tomatoes drummed up enough support so that by day's end our first planting was staked and trellised. On our other fields, tractors were humming, preparing the soil for our last planting of more peppers and tomatoes. The last school groups before summer came on Thursday and Friday, picking their way through the strawberry patch; the chickens and baby goats were a hit, and even our red worm composting bin got some deserved attention. - Tom

"In the garden we feel that we are indeed pioneers... we are learning the very secrets of creation."

- Peter Caddy, from "Findhorn Garden"

Summer Solstice Celebration!

The beginning of summer is only 3 weeks away, so we invite you to set aside a few hours in your busy lives to join us for our traditional Solstice celebration. It is an opportunity to meet as a community and acknowledge that our lives are connected to the rhythm of the seasons. Celebrating is a way to connect with the land and join hands with the ones that grow, prepare, and eat the food that nourishes us all. So mark your calendars for Saturday June 17th! From 2-5 there will be farm games and tours, or you can help us sow squash, beans, and corn, bake bread in our wood-fired bread oven, pick berries, or climb around in our straw bale structure. Our potluck will be around 6 o'clock, and then we'll be able to dance and enjoy wonderful Zimbabwean music by Kuzanga Marimba as we light our solstice bonfire. Bring a dish of food to share for our traditional potluck, a sweater, maybe a blanket to picnic on, and instruments, stories... but most importantly yourselves! 🌱

What's Up on our Farm

We are embarking on a new and very exciting project, expanding the ways we "farm the sun." Mostly we farm the sun to grow food, but now we'll also try to generate electricity. Over the next month we are installing a 15kw ground mounted solar system. It will generate enough electricity for most of our farming (mostly cooling and pumping), as well as our residential needs, reducing the monthly electric bill as well as making a small contribution in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Last Friday we completed an almost 500 foot trench for the solar electrical conduit

Live Earth Farm 2006 Calendar

(see calendar on website for more info)

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

and this week we'll start laying out the structure the solar panels will be mounted on. 🌱

And on a farm nearby...

Naganini Farms here in Watsonville is growing something we cannot: English and Japanese cucumbers. Naganini has perfected the art of growing organic greenhouse cucumbers for many years now, and this week we are featuring their English cucumbers. Their skin is very thin so minimize handling before you slice them up. 🥒

Notes from Debbie's Kitchen

Have a recipe you'd like to share? Contact me at deb@writerguy.com or 408.288.9469. Check out my **recipe database** for a comprehensive list of recipes 'by key ingredient' (pictures too!). Go to our website and click on "recipes" (on the left).

Finally... a little more room for recipes! But first, a quick-and-dirty lesson on ID-ing this week's greens. - Debbie

Arugula and mizuna; what's what?

For those of you who've been a member before, you probably know, but I'm sure there will be some of you who are new to all this and want to know 'what those leafy green things are,' or 'which is which?' Tom tells me both the arugula and mizuna will be 'bunched' (as opposed to loose in a bag, like he did more often last year), so style of handling won't be a clue.

The mizuna has a delicate, feather-like (or sometimes described as sawtooth) multi-pronged pale to medium-green leaf on a whitish stem. It is a member of the mustard family, but Tom usually lists it separately from the 'mustard greens' he also grows (which we'll likely be seeing starting next week). You've probably seen baby mizuna in mesclun or salad mixes in stores or at restaurants.

Arugula, also a member of the mustard family, has a broader, darker green leaf, on a green stem, and although its leaves, too, are kind of sawtoothed, the tips are more rounded, rather like an oak leaf.

If you want to visually ID these greens, I have pictures of both in the recipe database on our website.

Arugula has a wonderful peppery flavor that I just adore. I can eat lots of it all by itself in a simple balsamic-dressing salad. Mizuna is a 'bitter green,' also flavorful, but I like to mix it with other things.

Fortunately, both greens are rather versatile, and can be used either as a salad green or in cooked dishes, so if you got them mixed up there likely would be no great harm done. Heck, try combining them! Put some of each in with your lettuce for a wonderful salad.

In fact, here's a salad I'd make with them: wash, spin and blot or air dry a bunch of

arugula, mizuna and lettuce. Tear into bite-size pieces and dump into a big bowl. Thinly slice some of those lovely English cucumbers and add to the mix. Wash, top, and quarter several strawberries and add too. Make a simple fruity or balsamic dressing: balsamic or fruity vinegar*, a little dijon mustard, a little salt, some lemon juice (optional), and some oil – a nice nut oil if you have one (I have a roasted walnut oil I love!). Dress the salad with this and eat it! Optional additions: toasted walnuts, crumbled feta cheese or chevre, some very thinly sliced fresh onion.

*Like raspberry or blackberry; sometimes I'll just add a dab of honey to apple cider vinegar to achieve the 'fruitiness' I'm looking for.

Aromatic Whole Wheat Pasta

from Moosewood Restaurant New Classics serves 4

1 tbsp. olive oil
3 C diced onion *[more or less]*
1 C diced carrots *[more or less]*
1 C diced celery *[still got celery from two weeks ago like I do? Use it here!]*
1 tbsp. minced garlic *[or a few tbsp. minced green garlic]*
¼ C Marsala, red wine, or vegetable broth
2 tbsp. minced fresh parsley
12 oz. whole wheat pasta, preferably a chunky shape such as elbows, penne, or small shells
1 C finely chopped arugula or Swiss chard
1 tsp. salt
ground black pepper to taste
½ to 1 C grated Pecorino Romano cheese

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat the olive oil on medium heat. Add in order, the onions, carrots, celery, and garlic and sauté until the vegetables are just tender. Add the Marsala and parsley, cover, lower the heat, and gently simmer. When the water boils, add the pasta, stir, cover the pot, and bring back to a boil. Cook the pasta until al dente. Meanwhile, add the greens to the vegetables and stir for 1 minute, until brightly-colored and wilted. Add the salt and pepper, cover, and set aside. When the pasta is al

dente, drain it and toss with the extra-virgin olive oil. Spoon the vegetables over the pasta and serve immediately, passing the grated cheese at the table.

Simple Cucumber Salad

Important to remember: the English cucumbers do not need to be peeled! They have a lovely delicate skin, and the skin typically has a lot of nutrition when it comes to vegetables, so given the opportunity, leave it on! Okay, the salad now: thinly slice a bunch of cucumber into a bowl, dress with vinegar (diluted with a little water), salt and pepper... and that's it! The water addition was something my mom always did; it seems right somehow – straight vinegar would be too sour, I think. On hot summer days (this was back on sticky, humid Long Island) she'd coarsely crush up a few ice cubes and use that instead of the water, so the cukes would stay nice and chilled at the table, and the ice would dilute the vinegar.

Beet 'fries'

You can do this with beets alone, or beets and potatoes (or just potatoes too, but then it wouldn't be 'beet' fries now, would it?).

Preheat your oven to 375 degrees.

Remove leafy green tops from beets (and save!! Wash and use like chard or spinach). Peel beets (or scrub reeeeeelllly well and leave the skin on) and cut into French-fry like sticks. If you're using potatoes too, wash and dry but *don't* peel, and cut into sticks too. Thinly slice and chop up a stalk of green garlic. Put beets, potatoes and garlic in a bowl and toss with olive oil to coat. Spread out on a baking sheet (I laid down a piece of parchment first for easier cleaning later), sprinkle liberally with salt (I like salt), and bake for 45 minutes, scooping and turning (or otherwise rearranging) once during cooking time with a spatula, until browned on the outside and soft in the middle. Dump onto a platter and pass around while still hot. You'll be surprised how fast they disappear. [And if it's July 4th, use white and 'blue' (Purple Peruvian) potatoes, for a festive red-white-and-blue combo!]