



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

31st Harvest Week

October 23rd – 29th, 2006

Season 11

What's in the box this week: (content differences between Family and Small Shares are underlined and italicized; items with a "+" in Family Shares are more in quantity than in Small)

Family Share:

Avocados

Basil (bagged; last of the season)

Broccolini

Carrots

Chard

Green beans +

Jerusalem artichokes

Kale or collard greens

Lettuce (butter and romaine) +

Sweet peppers +

Summer squash

Dry-farmed tomatoes +

Winter squash (Delicata or butternut)

Small Share:

Apples

Basil (bagged; last of the season)

Broccolini

Chard

Green beans

Jerusalem artichokes

Lettuce (butter and romaine)

Sweet peppers

Dry-farmed tomatoes

Winter squash (Delicata or butternut)

Extra Fruit Option:

Apples, pears, and either strawberries or pineapple guavas

Saturday was a glorious day... clear, sunny and warm. Starting at 10 o'clock the first eager pumpkin hunters showed up, and while I was still getting things ready, more cars started arriving, and it didn't take long until the farm was alive. Pumpkins were being carried, heaved and rolled out of the field. As usual the straw bale structure was buzzing with children and the apple press was center stage, with children (of all ages) continuously crushing and pressing apples into fresh cider. The cider just kept flowing as fast as it was being consumed. The cider press never stopped until the end of the day when we ran out of apples; the children must have crushed at least 16 crates weighing 40 pounds each! Toastie, our faithful wood-fired cob oven, was put into action once again, and baked some delicious raisin bread. Thank you Jonathan for preparing the dough and shaping the loaves! Thank you Debbie and Ken for carving pumpkins, and thanks also to the many hands that shelled the dry beans which we will save as seed to plant next year. **There are still enough pumpkins left for anyone who would like to pick theirs up during the week.** I always enjoy the opportunity to meet so many of you during our annual events, and I hope you don't hesitate to visit and bring the kids to the farm outside of the regularly scheduled events. The above words by Wendell Berry come alive when I see so many people together on the farm, reconnecting with nature, discovering where their food comes from, and most importantly sharing this experience together as a community. From all of us here at the Farm, we wish you a "boooooootiful" Halloween! – Tom

"The future depends on reconnecting with the natural world: knowing our food, regenerating our land, and strengthening our communities. We cannot isolate one aspect of our life from another."

- Wendell Berry

Field Notes from Farmer Tom

Carrots are slowly starting to size up; this week only the Family shares will get them, but next week everyone again can count on a regular bunch of these tender crunchy treats. We started planting our first strawberries last week. The Camarosas (which are the more elongated conical shaped strawberries) are the first to produce in the spring, and we're hoping they will do so even earlier if we plant them now. We are finishing up harvesting our winter squash – and by the way, they are to be eaten; they're not meant to just decorate your dinner table over the winter holidays! Someone was surprised, when I introduced them to the Delicata and Sweet Dumplings stored in our barn this weekend (the creamy colored ones with blue-green stripes), that they were actually to be eaten! Check out the pictures on Debbie's recipe database on our website, as well as great recipes for how to cook them. In the fields we are incorporating compost and sowing cover crops, and the crops we've already planted for the winter are all growing nicely in this wonderful weather. We'll be ready for our winter shares come December! 🍂

Tom's Crop Notes

New in your share this week: Native American Jerusalem Artichoke. The name is somewhat of an oxymoron, it grows wild in parts of this country and has a name that has nothing to do with either Jerusalem or artichokes. If you were a member last year, you will probably remember these knobby, ginger root-looking tubers. They are also

Live Earth Farm 2006 Calendar

(see calendar on website for more info)

All of Oct. Members Only Early Registration
www.liveearthfarm.com/2007EarlyReg.html

Nov. 15/16 Last 'regular season' shares!

Nov. 29 First Winter Share delivery

known as sunchokes, and are a real treat; easy to cook, and of course very nutritious. Here is a description I got off the internet:

“Jerusalem artichoke is a type of sunflower that is grown for its edible tuberous roots as well as its pretty yellow flowers. This is a large, gangly, multi-branched perennial with rough, sandpapery leaves and stems, and numerous yellow flower heads. It can get 10 ft (3 m) tall and its branches can spread to nearly as much. Jerusalem artichoke grows wild in North America from Saskatchewan east to Ontario and south to Arkansas, Georgia and Tennessee. Its original distribution is not clear because it was widely spread by Native Americans who cultivated it for the edible tubers. The original range probably was the northern Great Plains of Canada and the U.S. The edible tubers produced by Jerusalem artichokes are delicious and nutritious. The tubers can be harvested anytime starting about two weeks after the flowers have faded. Expect 2 to 5 pounds of tubers per plant. Jerusalem artichokes can be stored fresh in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for several weeks, but it's better to leave them in the ground until you need them. Jerusalem artichokes are a pain to clean. They must be brushed and scrubbed under running water to remove the sand and dirt that hides among the knobs and folds, but they do not need to be peeled. Raw Jerusalem artichokes have a sweet nutty taste which has been likened to Brazil nuts. They are especially good grated into fresh salads, and are a perfect snack for dieters. Boiled and mashed they are rather similar to potatoes, and can be used like potatoes in most recipes. Jerusalem artichokes make delicious French fries. The British make a creamy soup from them. They are excellent pickled. Roast Jerusalem artichokes as you would potatoes with fowl or meat. Bake with cream and cheese for a delicious (and decadent!) scalloped au gratin. Be careful not to overcook; Jerusalem artichokes will collapse and turn mushy within just a few minutes after they are fully cooked through.” 🍷

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).

It was fun Saturday to meet and put more faces to names of members I've talked with and emailed over the years; thanks for finding me and introducing yourselves! Since Jerusalem artichokes (sunchokes) are new in the box this week, I'll focus on them, and add other recipes if I have room. - Debbie

Sunchoke storage, handling, ideas

excerpted from Farmer John's Cookbook (see last week) with minor additions by Debbie

Sunchokes ... store poorly after they've been harvested because of their delicate skins. If you can't eat them right away, keep unwashed tubers in a perforated plastic bag in your refrigerator crisper drawer for up to two weeks. If the skin looks shriveled after you take them out of storage, rehydrate them in cold water.

If tuber is multiply-knobby, you may need to break the knobs apart in order to clean any dirt out of the interstices. Rinse them and scrub gently to get out any dirt [you don't want to scrub off the delicate but nutritious/tasty skin!]. The skin also retains nutrients and holds the tubers together during cooking. If you want to remove the skin, you'll find it relatively easy to slip off after cooking [kinda like beets and carrots]. Remember that contact with the air causes the flesh of raw sunchokes to discolor, so soak sliced or skinned raw tubers briefly in a mixture of 2 tbsp. lemon juice and 1 qt. water.

Here's an important bit: be careful not to leave them unattended when cooking, because they can abruptly go from firm and tender to mushy! Also, don't cook cut or peeled sunchokes in aluminum or iron cookware, as it can discolor the flesh. And remember that residual heat will continue to cook them a little, so take that into consideration when preparing them!

Farmer John's Cookbook suggests:

- Use raw, sliced, or julienned sunchokes in salads or on a tray with other raw vegetables.
- Steam, boil, bake, or mash then with butter or olive oil and lemon just as you would potatoes.
- Disguise them by mashing them and using to thicken soups or stews
- Make sunchoke french fries!
- Slice them ¼" thick and sauté in oil with salt until lightly browned, or stir-fry them.
- Roast whole sunchokes alone or with other root vegetables in a 425 degree oven until tender, 30 – 40 minutes.

From Debbie:

- Heck, I bet you could grill them too! I'd clean them well, coat them lightly with olive oil and pat with salt that was ground in a mortar and pestle with a little fennel seed or thyme. Not sure how long they'd take... maybe I'd parboil them first, then season and grill for a couple minutes per side along with some other veggies, like the sweet peppers and summer squash!

Sautéed Sunchokes

from Farmer John's Cookbook, serves 4
(adapted from the Victory Garden Cookbook)

“This is a great alternative to potatoes on the dinner plate, and just as versatile. You'll surely be asked, 'What do to your potatoes? They're so good.'”

- 3 tbsp. butter
- 1 ½ tsp. vegetable oil [I'd use olive oil]
- 1 lb. sunchokes, sliced into ¼" rounds
- 2 tbsp. minced fresh parsley, divided
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat butter and oil in a skillet over medium high heat. Add sunchokes and 1 tbsp. of

the parsley; cook, turning frequently, until the sunchokes are lightly browned on the outside and tender inside, 4 to 6 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste and garnish with remaining parsley.

Kale with orange and walnuts

I made this up last week, and it was good! Serve it alongside baked winter squash and rice*, or maybe rice and lentils, or some rice, grilled grassfed beef (if you're an omnivore).

- 1 or 2 bunches of kale [or collards]
- a few tbsp. minced onion or shallot
- butter, olive oil (say, 1 tbsp. each)
- coarsely chopped or broken up walnuts
- juice of 1 orange
- a splash of balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp. honey
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- salt

Cook the kale 'my usual way' (strip leaves from stems, boil 2 minutes in salted water [or 4 to 5 minutes if you're using collards], drain, squeeze and chop) and have standing by. Sauté onion and walnuts in oil/butter until onions are translucent and nuts fragrant; add OJ, vinegar, mustard, honey and a little salt. Simmer maybe 5 minutes or so, until sauce is reduced, then add chopped cooked kale and stir to mix. Cook a few more minutes or as necessary until excess liquid has evaporated.

*I often make what I call 'tandoori rice' – my husband made this up actually: he just introduced a dab of tandoori marinade to the rice cooker and voila! Spicy, colorful, flavorful seasoned rice!