



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

10th Harvest Week

June 4th – 10th, 2007

Season 12

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:

Arugula
Beets
Broccoli (LEF/Lakeside)
Chinese (Napa) cabbage
Fennel
Garlic
Dinosaur kale
Lettuce +
Mei qing choy (3)
Mizuna
Onions
Radishes
Strawberries (2 bsks)

Small Share:

Arugula
Broccoli (LEF/Lakeside)
Carrots
Garlic
Dinosaur kale
Lettuce
Mizuna
Radishes
Summer Squash
Strawberries (2 bsks)

Both shares: coming in two weeks – green beans and potatoes!!

Extra Fruit Option:

4 baskets of strawberries

"Strawberry Bounty:"

5 baskets of strawberries!

Due to excellent farming conditions this year, we are opening up the CSA to accept approximately 40 more members. If you know of friends, family, co-workers or neighbors interested in joining, send them to our website for the details, and they can sign up! We are also blessed with plenty of strawberries!! If you would like to add a "Strawberry Bounty option" to your share, let us know. There are now approximately 12 weeks of "Bounty" remaining.

As you know from gardening, using the right tools can make all the difference in how well we care for and manage the soil into which we plant. The heaviest and physically most demanding job on the farm is tilling, which is the general term for soil preparation. It includes working the soil, incorporating soil amendments such as lime, gypsum, rock dust, compost, green manures (cover crops), and other mechanical processes. Today, we could not accomplish these tasks without the help of our tractors – the mechanical substitutes for traditional draft animals. We have different tractors for different tasks; the larger and more powerful ones are generally used for primary cultivation, which includes deep tillage. Deep tillage involves pulling 2-3 foot long shanks of steel through the ground to aerate the soil. Deep tillage is important to break up compacted layers without mixing the subsoil with the topsoil. It improves drainage, rooting depth, and the amount of soil nutrients for the roots, helping the process of topsoil deepening, which greatly increases the fertility of the soil. Then there's surface tillage. For surface tillage we use a disc or spader, which only disturbs the top 4-6 inches of soil, and is ideal to achieve the right tilth for planting and sowing.

"Perhaps our most precious and vital source, both physical and spiritual, is the most common matter underfoot which we scarcely even notice and sometimes call "dirt," but which is in fact the mother-lode of terrestrial life..."

- Daniel Hillel from Out of the Earth

The real art of driving a tractor is in cultivating and weeding between rows of crops that are already established in the field. Here, different knives, shovels and discs are set up in such a way that they cut, remove and throw soil all at the same time, just inches away from the crop that is growing. If the timing is right regarding the moisture and development stage of both crop and weeds, we can cultivate everything mechanically with the tractor and avoid the more time consuming and arduous task of hoeing and weeding by hand. Most of the time we achieve the best results through a combination of hand and mechanical cultivation.

When you receive your share of vegetables every week, I want you to think for a moment, not just of the farm or the farmer, but about the soil. It is truly THE fundamental substance and source of life on Earth, and we, like all other terrestrial life forms, depend on soil directly or indirectly for our food. As a farmer, I see the importance of growing good, healthy soil as my most important task. The healthier the soil, the healthier and more nutritious the crops you receive will be. To understand this link between our existence and the quality of the soil is to understand the fundamental interconnectedness of all things. As a farmer, I constantly think of ways to coax a harvest from the soil: when to plow, which crops to plant and rotate, how to protect the soil from the weather so that the forces which put it together cannot take it apart. I strive to fit my needs into the natural systems, which have adapted to the local conditions designed by this place over a long period

Live Earth Farm 2007 Calendar

(see calendar on website for more info)

Sat. Jun 9 "Outstanding in the Field" Dinner

Sat. Jun 23 Summer Solstice Celebration

Aug 24-26 Children's Mini-Camp

Sat. Oct 20 Fall Harvest Celebration

Farm Work Days: 6/29, 7/27, 8/31, 9/28, 10/26

of time. With every group that visits the farm, I make it a habit to have everyone touch and feel the soil we stand on, to bring their attention to the fundamental substance and source of our nourishment.

Slowly but steadily we are adopting a new consciousness, one based more on agrarian principles. By agrarian, I mean a mind-set of respecting our interconnectedness with the rest of nature, and honoring ways that sustain and perpetuate the commonwealth. You don't have to get dirt under your fingernails or spend a day pulling weeds, or grow vegetables in your apartment or keep the family cow in your garage. But being more aware of where your food comes from, and of the amount of work that goes into producing it is a start.

If, however, you want to take another step down that path of agrarian awareness, I am going to open the door again to the idea of Farm Work Days. So before making a life-changing decision to quit your desk job to start farming, consider instead swapping a day of working behind a desk (or whatever you do) for a day of working in the field. We have already started a process like this with the local Montessori Middle School (see next story), but due to persistent inquiries by members for the opportunity to help out on the farm, we are going to set up Work Days for this purpose (see Farm Work Days, below). – Tom

Future Farmers?

Approximately 40 Middle School students from the Santa Cruz Montessori came to work on the farm last Tuesday and Wednesday. I enjoyed the diverse levels of enthusiasm and energy expressed by the group, and was astonished how much we were able to get done in such a short period of time. The entire group descended on the radish patch and harvested 300 bunches for Wednesday's shares, then picked more than 10 flats of strawberries (which were turned into delicious smoothies the next day). They pulled onions and laid them out to dry, planted sunflowers and gourds, and even helped assemble share boxes for Thursday's delivery. We are exploring the idea of integrating the farm into the Montessori Middle School curriculum. This idea would directly follow Maria Montessori's vision: she believed that farm life greatly benefits the development of adolescent children by putting them in direct contact with the land and engaging them in on-farm activities, which in turn serve as the basis for pursuing science, environmental, social and economic studies. 🌱

Farm Work Days

Get more involved with your farm – spend a day on the land, helping out with any number of farm tasks. Like your CSA box (where you don't select its contents), you won't pick the task, but rather it will be whatever needs doing on the farm on the day you arrive. Experience the joy and satisfaction of working in tandem and community with other members to get a job done, and enjoy a day outdoors. We need a minimum of 5 people to hold a Work Day, but could easily accommodate up to 40, so don't be shy!

Specifics:

- Work Days will be held on the last Friday of each month, starting now (June) and going through October [Dates: 6/29, 7/27, 8/31, 9/28, 10/26]. You can come just one time, or every month!
- As this would be a true workday, we would need you to arrive no later than 9am (shoot for 8:45 to be safe!). If you've never been here before, directions to the farm are on our website. Want to carpool? Post a note to the Friends of LEF Yahoo Group.
- We will work about 3 hours, then break for lunch, then work approximately another 3 hours after lunch, then quit for the day.
- Pack yourself a lunch (we can keep it in the cooler for you), and bring water, hat, gloves, sunscreen, and shoes that can get dirty. We will provide any tools, if needed.
- We need to know you are coming. Call or email Debbie at the farm to get on the schedule for whatever date(s) you would like to work. We will announce in that week's newsletter if a Work Day is 'on' (i.e. we have enough participation). 🐼

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).

Suggestions for what to do with this week's box

(see e-newsletter)

Beet Salad w/Pomegranate Dressing

by member Farrell Podgorsek, who says, "This is my new favorite recipe for beets."

Beets, roasted until soft, peeled and cubed or sliced

salad greens

2 tbsp. finely chopped onion

3 tbsp. pomegranate juice

3 tsp. vinegar - pomegranate or red wine

3 tbsp. olive oil

1 tbsp. Dijon mustard

salt & pepper

Combine dressing ingredients and toss half with the beets. Let marinate for 30 minutes or longer. Mound the salad greens

on a plate or platter. Drizzle with the remaining dressing. Top with the beets.

Farrell's veggie storage tip

I line my vegetable drawers with the plastic bags that the shares come in. All the lettuce and greens get washed, wrapped in a towel, and placed in one bag. All the other veggies go into the drawer lined with another bag. Pull the bag up over the veggies. Everything stays very fresh for a long time.

Arugula Salad with Pecorino Romano and Toasted Walnuts – OR – Radishes with walnut oil vinaigrette!

from member Sue Burnham

8 to 10 C arugula leaves (Sue will also use a mixture of arugula and salad greens)

1/2 C grated cheese (Romano, Parmesan)

1/2 C toasted walnuts

walnut oil vinaigrette*:

1 1/2 tbsp. sherry vinegar

2 shallots, finely diced

1 tsp. dijon mustard

6 tbsp. roasted walnut oil (or plain walnut oil, or a mix of walnut and olive)

salt and pepper to taste

Macerate shallots in vinegar, then combine with rest of dressing ingredients and toss with arugula, cheese and walnuts.

Radish option:

Sue says that radishes are wonderful dressed with the above walnut oil vinaigrette... especially in the summer. Just slice a bunch of radishes and toss with dressing; tastes something like a Japanese pickle.