



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

19th Harvest Week

August 6th – 12th, 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 +
Basil
Beets
Broccolini +
Carrots
Chard or kale
Leeks
Lettuce +
Mei qing choi +
Bag of mixed peppers and eggplant
Summer squash +
Heirloom and dry-farmed tomatoes
Cherry tomatoes
Strawberries (2 baskets)

Small Share:

Arugula
Basil
Broccolini
Carrots
Chard or kale
Leeks
Lettuce
Mei qing choi
Potatoes
Summer squash
Heirloom and dry-farmed tomatoes
Cherry tomatoes
Strawberries (1 basket)

Extra Fruit Option:

2 bsks strawberries plus
Weds: 2 bsks. blackberries
Thur: 2 bsks. raspberries

"Strawberry Bounty:"
stopped 'til next flush

If the farm's workload were to be compared to an orchestral performance, we are currently performing the most brisk and liveliest of Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" – Summer. It's not easy, even for an experienced and well-seasoned player, to maintain Summer's demanding tempo. The tempo of each season is not so much about the speed in which tasks have to be accomplished, but rather how one relates to the overall rhythm, the basic beat, of the farm. Each season has its own tempo, some faster some slower, and as long as that tempo is in harmony with the rhythm of the farm, one finds a fulfilling satisfaction.

In summer the tempo is *allegro* (happy) – life all around us expresses a mature and diverse abundance, like a crescendo that has been building since the start of Spring. Each crop has its unique rhythm and life cycle, and its own particular character. Radishes and most leafy greens are fast and short lived; carrots and beets are steady and reliable; lush crucifers such as broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower like it cool and are generally hungry and thirsty. Potatoes, unless planted early, are prone to sickness and disease; and in the vegetable kingdom, none gets more attention during the summer season as does the Tomato... the "grand dame" of the nightshades, courted of course by her relatives the Peppers and Eggplants.

Live Earth Farm's green beans and strawberries are probably the most popular, and have developed into cornerstones whose performance usually determines the overall financial health of the farm. They also demand the most labor and physical exertion, requiring hours of stooping, backs bent, to reap their benefit. In the last few years the caneberries (blackberries and raspberries) have also carved out an increasingly import niche, and typically are less exhausting to harvest than strawberries and green beans due to their upright and more perennial nature.

One of the biggest challenges of operating a CSA farm is maintaining continuity and abundance in the harvest throughout the season. This requires a keen sense of timing in planting of the successions of crops. For example, green beans are planted up to 20 times throughout the season between early April and end of August in order to maintain a continuous harvest. Planting intervals vary depending on day length – from every 8 days to every 3-4 days as the days grow shorter by the end of August. Successional plantings not only need to fit natural variables such as soil moisture, temperature, and day length, but also need to synchronize with the timing, field rotations and the unique physiological and cultural growing habits of all the other crops. Experimenting from year to year has helped me to identify which specific vegetable varieties perform better in the varying soil types and microclimates of the 5 different fields we farm. And the advantage of this combined knowledge of vegetable varieties and soil/microclimates is the ability to extend our growing season (or at least the growing season of particular crops).

Perfecting all these techniques is important for keeping up with the tempo of each season. But even more important for all who work and live here on the farm is the ability to stay connected to the same rhythm; otherwise, there is no joy in playing the seasonal music at all.

For me one of the most important crescendos of the summer season is the harvest of our Warren pears. This year, the combined

"One of the most rewarding things about farming and eating with the seasons is the anticipation it provides."

- Thomas Broz (aka 'Farmer Tom')

Live Earth Farm 2007 Calendar

(see calendar on website for more info)

Aug 10, 17, 24, 31, Sept 7 and 14

Mataganza Garden Sanctuary

Internship Program

(see week 16 newsletter for details)

Aug 24-26

Children's Mini-Camp

(this is sold out)

Sat. Oct 20

Fall Harvest Celebration

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

(see Week 10 newsletter for details)

effects of hand-pollination and favorable spring weather has developed into one of the most promising and abundant pear crops ever. The time is almost upon us to pick them off the trees. The sugar levels (like the brix of wine grapes), the color and the size are reaching their optimum stage and I expect we will start with a selective harvest this week. Because of the size of the crop this year, we'll be picking the largest and ripest fruit first, and then pausing 1 to 2 weeks before picking the rest of the crop, leaving the smaller fruit on the trees until they reach their optimal level of maturity. By spreading the harvest out over a couple of weeks we hope to not feel quite so overwhelmed by the already accelerated tempo of this bountiful crescendo, as we turn the corner of the summer season and head towards fall. - Tom

Member Quote of the Week

This is from member Molly Tierney, in her farewell to the farm (she and her family are moving away, and so reluctantly must give up their CSA share): "It's been so great. I can't say enough. The thrill we get each week getting our share and fruit and eggs and goat milk... my five year old now chooses the veggies from the weekly share that he wants to make in his own stir-fry to contribute to the family dinner. And the color of those egg yolks! And how we have to count out a share of the berries for my husband each Wednesday so he'll get some when he comes home from work. Oh we're going to miss you folks. Thanks for a wonderful season." 🍷

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).

This week, Alie and Bruce Victorine share their experiences as first-time members (new this season!) and how they would go about using this week's bounty. Since they wrote more than will fit in this space, please see email version for complete text – it's quite wonderful! - Debbie

What I'd do with this week's Box

by Bruce and Alie Victorine

This is our first season enjoying the box, and it has been delightful developing new routines and discovering new habits in our culinary lives.

When we get the box, we follow all of Debbie's wonderful suggestions for storing the veggies and fruit. One of our habits has become to put a large bowl in the sink as we wash the leafy greens and scrub the carrots. We then use the water in the bowl to give our garden a drink. Feels good to conserve in our dry year, and it's amazing to see how many gallons of water the process can take. Even though we live in a condo, we vermicompost, so all the unusable parts go out to the worms. But other parts – trimmings and such, like the ends of carrots, kale stalks, and tops of onions – go into a bag in the freezer. Bruce uses all these to make veggie or chicken broth when the mood strikes.

It's just the two of us, so one of our new habits has become cooking something and freezing it for later. And because we are both busy, when we cook we will often make a few things at a time.

So this week we know that we will be baking Zucchini-Carrot Muffins that we take for our "on the go" breakfast. The **summer squash** works just fine. We've also discovered that apricot jam is a good substitute for the orange marmalade in the recipe. We often make a double batch and freeze one

for the following week.

Since the food processor is in use, we'll grate extra **carrots**, **squash**, or **beets** to expedite salad making during the week. Store them separately in airtight containers. Or we might make a quick carrot/squash slaw that will keep for a few days [recipe in e-newsletter]

Another new habit is making appetizers that we can freeze and reheat later. Two of our favorites are muffin size Citrus Feta Beet Quiche and Greens in Phyllo. This week we'll use the **chard** or **kale** and the **leeks** to make this yummy dish. [see e-newsletter for recipes]

Okay enough about cooking ahead. What are we going to cook and eat right away?

For a bit of a southern style meal, Bruce will either roast a chicken or pan "fry" some thin chicken breasts. We'll also cook up a batch of Noah Thompson's Zucchini Fritters using the **summer squash**. Alie will use the chicken drippings, plus real butter and olive oil to make a delicious gravy. Slice a large, meaty **tomato** and keep it in the fridge until ready to serve. Now pour that hot gravy on that cold tomato and enjoy!!!

A nice Beet Apple Salad with Horseradish Dressing would go well with this dinner [see recipe at end].

One more new habit we have developed: **kale** for breakfast! On the weekends, Bruce poaches or fries a few eggs, while Alie sautés chopped greens and onions. Bruce makes an open face egg sandwich with bread, mayo, egg, tomato, and the sautéed greens, while Alie just layers the greens on top of the egg, and has the tomato on the side. Very satisfying.

We have also been enjoying Debbie's tip for creating frozen cubes of **basil** butter. They are so handy to start a sauté with. Alie also

used one for making her gravy. But here is another great way to use a good portion of the **basil**: making Basil and Garlic-Slathered Chicken Breasts. [recipe in e-newsletter] Bruce will grill **potatoes** to go along with it, and Alie will make a salad of **arugula**, olive oil, lemon juice and slivered parmesan cheese.

Lastly, the **mei qing choy** and **broccolini** will get stir-fried together with some onions (or **leeks**) and maybe a few **peppers**. A concoction of rice wine vinegar, soy sauce, white wine or vermouth, chicken broth, sesame oil, white pepper, dry mustard and ginger will be made to pour over the sautéed veggies (you'll need about a ¼ to ½ cup of liquid), and then they'll be gently steamed for a few minutes before serving. This will be served with rice and Grilled Thai Summer Squash and probably a grilled teriyaki steak.

Beet Apple Salad with Horseradish Dressing (Betty Ann's)

½ C (+ or -) red onion diced
2 apples, chopped into bite-sized chunks
5-6 cooked beets (steamed or roasted), chopped

Dressing:

1 shallot minced
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
1 tsp. horseradish
2 tsp. red wine vinegar
¼ tsp. celery seed
¼ tsp. salt
2 tbsp. vegetable oil
2 tbsp. olive oil
Pepper

Toss all together and let stand at least 15 minutes. As with all salads of this type, it gets better as it marinates. To serve, sprinkle with chopped fresh dill and or scallions.