



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

8th Harvest Week

May 21st – 27th, 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
Chinese (Napa) cabbage
Carrots
Japanese cucumbers (Nagamine Nursery) (2)
Fava beans +
Fennel (2)
Garlic +
Kale (red Russian or Dino)
Lettuce +
Onions +
Zucchini (yellow zephyr from LEF and/or green from Lakeside)
Strawberries (1 bskt.)

Small Share:

Arugula
Beets
Chinese (Napa) cabbage or broccoli
Japanese cucumbers (Nagamine Nursery) (1)
Fava beans
Garlic
Kale (red Russian or Dino) or chard
Lettuce
Onions
Spinach
Strawberries (1 bskt.)

Extra Fruit Option:

4 baskets of strawberries

"Strawberry Bounty:"

4 baskets of strawberries

One way to see eye-to eye with nature is by exploring the farm with a class of 1st graders (or with my 2 year old daughter, for that matter). Just sit down on the ground. One enters a different reality; a 6 foot "giant" like me must stop and be sensitive and smell, see, and taste the details that are often overlooked yet which are sitting right there at my feet. During one of these "sit-downs" with a class of preschoolers last week, everyone had their hands in the soil digging up freshly sprouted seed potatoes... scratching and carving, stopping to inspect the occasional earthworm, beetle, or roly-poly, until finally pulling up the entire plant. With the potato still dangling from its stem we started inspecting the root system, holding on to a clump of fresh soil and marveling at the first stolons swelling into miniature potato tubers. We also honored the healing powers of plantain – not the tropical cousin of the banana tree, but a plant commonly found in our lawns and gardens (never too far from anywhere) with sword-like leaves. This little plant, considered a weed by many, is also known as nature's band-aid: useful for treating small cuts, stings, and even poison oak rashes. After playing with the goats and chickens we shifted our curiosity to sweeter and juicier explorations of the farm: the strawberry patch. Here, the advantage of being smaller always pays off as we search for the reddest and juiciest berry on each plant. Both tummies and harvest baskets quickly filled up and I decide to savor my bounty by sitting next to an almost mature patch of red onion and see if I couldn't engage the kids' curiosity in this less appealing but popular vegetable. Most of us only know the dry cured "storage onion" we get at the store, and never get to see a growing onion with it's long, green stems and hollow leaves. As we gently pull one out of the ground I explain how the onion belongs to the 'Allium' family, which has been cultivated since before the Egyptians. As I slice through a bright magenta-colored bulb, passing it around for a smell test, it doesn't take long for most kids to identify garlic as another relative of the onion. As we walk back to the parking lot I see a girl nibbling on her shiny, juicy onion bulb, a good sign that we have worked up an appetite to enjoy lunch.

"When the mind is full of memories and preoccupied by the future, it misses the freshness of the present moment."

- Matthieu Ricard

Harvesting and eating food that's growing right in front of you is a simple but powerful act. It reminds you that real food comes from the earth and is not made in factories by machines focused on profit (contrary to what the corporate marketers want you and your children to believe). It does not contain artificial additives or preservatives, nor is it engineered with magic tricks that scramble its genes. Real food is not packaged nor marketed; it simply is provided by the earth and the soil we stand upon. We are what we eat, and we should not do to food what would be an indignity if done to us. Food is sustenance, a common thread that links all living creatures. – Tom

Crop Notes

The potatoes are developing beautifully and abundantly, and my best guess is that we'll have spring potatoes before we celebrate the Summer Solstice. This year we are doing something new: dry-farmed potatoes. These potatoes will get no water from irrigation, only whatever falls from the skies. They are looking beautiful though, so I am excited. The fava beans are starting to slow, so this may be the last week we have them in our shares. We'll harvest what we can,

Live Earth Farm 2007 Calendar

(see calendar on website for more info)

Fri. May 18	<u>Four Fridays Mataganza Garden Internship</u> (5/18, 5/25, 6/1, 6/8)
Sat. Jun 9	<u>"Outstanding in the Field" Dinner</u>
Sat. Jun 23	<u>Summer Solstice Celebration</u>
July 10-14	<u>Teen Adventure Camp</u> -- cancelled; see newsletter
Aug 24-26	<u>Children's Mini-Camp</u>
Sat. Oct 20	<u>Fall Harvest Celebration</u>

then mow them down and incorporate the abundant organic matter of their tall stalks back into the soil. We are also harvesting the last of the chantenay carrots, so only the Family Share will be getting them this week. After that we'll be without carrots for a few weeks, until our new planting sizes up (approximately 3 weeks). They'll be the long slender type, called "Nelson."

Signs of summer are on the horizon, with the first summer squash in the box this week! The yellow ones with the light green tips are called "zephyr" and are just sizing up. Soon we will have plenty from our own fields and not have to supplement with zucchinis from Lakeside. Our green beans and cucumbers will be making their first appearances soon too – sometime in June, I expect (the Japanese cucumbers are from nearby Nagamini Nurseries, not from us). Raspberries and blackberries will be diversifying our fruit shares in the coming months (just not quite yet), so in the meantime, enjoy our strawberry bounty. 🍓

Calendar Update

The Teen Adventure Camp has been cancelled this year due to a low response, however the children's Mini-Camp is so popular it is already full. We are considering having two Mini-Camps next year, in order to accommodate everyone. (Possibly even a second Mini-Camp this year; stay tuned!) 🍓

Lynn talks about sour milk and Debbie about checklist notes

See details in this week's e-newsletter. Lynn has a great recipe for pancakes, so don't miss it! 🍓

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).

What I'd do with this week's box

I am resurrecting this concept because I think it's a nice way to encourage 'thinking differently' about the contents of your box. If anyone thinks they'd like to write a 'what I'd do' for a future newsletter, let me know and I'll give you the skinny! Meanwhile...

It's supposed to get warm this week, so I'll be doing recipes that don't require a lot of heat in the kitchen. I'll underline the box ingredients, for easy spotting! Let's start with beets: I'd use the beet greens in a breakfast scramble – steam them 3 minutes until soft, squeeze out excess moisture and chop. Sauté up some mushrooms in butter or olive oil (once we get potatoes, I'd dice up a few into small [quarter-inch] dice and brown them first, then add the mushrooms and proceed). Chop up some of the light green part of the onion stems (I use them in place of scallions). Grate some cheese and have it standing by. Whisk up a couple eggs. Once the [potatoes and] mushrooms are done, up the heat and add the 'scallions' and stir just a minute. Add the egg, and scramble; add the beet greens when the eggs are about half-done. Generously season with salt and pepper, and as soon as the eggs are done, turn off the heat, top with cheese and cover until melted.

The beets themselves I'd roast (rub with oil, wrap in foil, bake in a moderate oven around an hour), then peel and refrigerate. Then they're handy to slice cold into salads, or I'd do my current favorite: diced beets with plain yogurt, a little crushed fresh garlic, a little salt, and minced fresh dill. Eat just like that or serve on a bed of lettuce leaves. If it's too hot to roast them, just peel and grate them and make this

same concoction with the raw grated beets instead of diced cooked ones.

I'd make a salad with arugula, lettuce, thinly sliced cucumbers, maybe just a touch of very thinly sliced fresh onion, toasted walnuts, crumbled chevre or feta cheese, and sliced strawberries. For the dressing I'd combine some lemon juice and balsamic vinegar with a dab of honey, a dab of Dijon mustard, salt and pepper, and either olive oil or roasted walnut oil. Toss all together and serve in big bowls!

I've been waiting to get Chinese cabbage because I want to try making kimchi! Alas there's not enough room for the recipe here; I'll put it in the e-newsletter though.

I'm also a firm believer in cooking simply and letting the flavor of the veggies shine. I know at least one dinner will include grilled fennel and zucchini. Simply slice them in half, baste with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper and grill (for me, alongside the lamb chops). I'd make a carrot side dish by simmering whole carrots in salted water for 10 minutes, draining, peeling (the skins just rub off), then returning to the skillet and sautéing in a little butter and salt.

Kale: my old standby – cook leaves in boiling salted water 2 minutes. Drain, squeeze out water, chop, serve drizzled with good olive oil and fresh squeezed lemon juice. Optional: top with some freshly grated parmesan cheese.

Lastly, I plan on making a sandwich spread out of mashed cooked fava beans, feta cheese, sundried tomatoes and herbs!

Mark's Wilted Sesame Spinach

Member Mark Stevens of Saratoga says, "I made this for dinner the other night and it

turned out well. I was trying to emulate a steamed spinach with sautéed garlic dish that we often get from Mandarin Gourmet."

2 green garlic
1 bag spinach
2 bunches chard
¼ to ½ C white wine
Olive oil
Sesame seed oil
Some good salt, such as Fleur de Sel

Chop the green garlic very coarsely, including the green portion as far up as can be used. Tear the leaves of spinach and chard into large chunks (approx 2"). In some cases, this will be the entire leaf.

In a wok or equivalent, sauté chopped garlic in the olive oil, with a little sesame oil added for taste, until the garlic is turning soft. Add wine and bring to boil. Add chard, cover and cook until it starts to cook down (1-2 minutes). Stir the ingredients in the pan, add the spinach, and cover and steam for another minute. Uncover and cook on high heat, stirring occasionally, for another minute or so. Using tongs or a slotted spoon transfer vegetables from pan into a serving bowl, making sure to include all the chopped garlic, but leaving most of the liquid behind. Don't squeeze the liquid out of the veggies, but you don't want to have it swimming in the serving bowl either. Add salt to taste and serve immediately.

As a variation, you could chop the chard stems and sauté them for a few minutes before you add the garlic, and then proceed from that point. I did not use the chard stems when I did the recipe.

more recipes in online newsletter! Salad dressings, fresh herbs, and more!