



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

20th Harvest Week

September 11th – 17th, 2002

Season 7

What's in the box this week:

Strawberries
Apples
Asian greens mix with
baby bok choy
Carrots
Rainbow chard
Eggplant
Garlic
Green beans
Lettuce
Peppers
Yellow Finn and/or
Yukon Gold potatoes
Summer squash
Heirloom and red to-
matoes

and if you have an extra-fruit share:

Strawberries, apples
and pears

Greetings from the Mediterranean. This seems like a dream, but I am actually sitting in a room overlooking the ocean right here in the south of France. Thanks to my in-laws, who live here (and who invited us for a family reunion), I spent my Saturday morning not selling produce in Willow Glen, but enjoying the atmosphere of a typical village market here in Saint Tropez. My guilt of being away from the farm at this time of year soon lifted as I found myself surrounded by beautiful vegetables, busy vendors and hundreds of shoppers getting fresh produce for their weekend meals. Not just produce, but cheeses, breads, meat products, flowers, honey, spices and many local handicrafts also filled the stands. I looked for organic vendors and was disappointed to only find a few, however the atmosphere in this market vividly expressed the long history and tradition one can only feel in a thousand-year-old European village. Most vendors seemed to display this deep running connection to both the community and the land. Although my French is deplorable, I felt completely at home with the produce. As I smelled, fingered, and tasted everything, I tried to explain to the vendors how at almost this very moment in Willow Glen, California – halfway around the world – the same fresh, vibrant, and healthy vegetables were being offered... and I felt deep inside the joy of this connection. The foods we eat are gifts the earth provides, and everywhere around the world we share these gifts. Nothing symbolizes our interrelatedness as a human family, or the Earth as our sacred place of origin, as strongly as food. My deepest hope is that we may learn to live in harmony and peace, and discover that it is in our differences that we celebrate the mystery of nature. Thank you to everyone on and off the farm who made it possible for me to join my wife Constance on this trip. It is a gift I will treasure for a long time. - Tom

*"When one tugs at a single thing
in nature, he finds it attached to
the rest of the world."*

- John Muir

What's Up on the Farm

(One of our farm interns, Linnea, fills in while Tom is away.)

While Tom is in the South of France things keep on truckin' at the farm. Since he's not here, I thought this would be a good opportunity for me to write something for the newsletter, giving you a different perspective! To give you some context, this is the first time I have ever lived or worked on a farm, and the new experiences – this new life – have had a profound impact on how I view things. The farm allows a space for the individual to observe the different cycles of time, which I personally would miss in the hubbub of a city. Although the farm is a fast-moving productive force, one can still easily sense the seasonal flow. Because I work outside every day I am always taking a mental note of the weather. So I have some great and exciting news... *last week I smelled Fall*. First came the morning chill that nips at your cheeks and sometimes makes your nose hurt if you breathe in too fast. Then I saw the anxious, unexpected golden tree. And then as I was picking flowers for last Wednesday's bouquets I happened upon a ripe, round, and radiant pumpkin, curled up at the base of some sunflowers. The signs are showing, and it is amazing to witness. Three Cheers to fall! 🍂

Crop of the Week

Oooh boy, eggplant eggplant eggplant... I'm doin' my little eggplant dance right now (did I tell you how much I love eggplant??). At long last Tom's eggplant is getting ripe in enough quantity to be in our share boxes, and I am one happy camper [this would be Debbie speaking]. Herewith is some eggplant info, excerpted alternately from "Greene on Greens," "Jane Brody's Good Food Book," and "From Asparagus to Zucchini." Greene: "Eggplant formally belongs to the Solanaceae, or nightshade, family, which, though it has connections to tomato, potato, and pimiento, also has stronger ties to belladonna, horse nettle, and tobacco – none exactly a source of life-giving nourishment!" And speaking of

nutrition, I get conflicting reports on this veggie from my three sources. Greene: "While relatively low in vitamins, [it] is extremely mineral-rich and heavy with the amino acids that control essential proteins in the body. Every slice of cooked eggplant affords a diner with megadoses of potassium, phosphorus, calcium, and magnesium." Brody: "The eggplant's main nutritional virtue is its high fiber content. It also contains a fair amount of potassium, iron, and protein." A-Z: "Eggplants are low in calories, high in fiber, and offer very small amounts of vitamins and minerals [and is] traditionally eaten in conjunction with other more nutritional foods." Go figure. But all three agree on a few key items: 1) do not eat it raw. It needs to be cooked to eliminate any toxic solanine that may be in the fruit. 2) it is very low in calories... until of course you cook it in oil, which it soaks up like a sponge (so steaming or baking would cut out the fat). They all talk about salting and pressing and draining eggplant between copious layers of paper towels or in a colander for 30 minutes, and that this reduces its oil-soaking tendency (and bitterness), but I for one have never bothered to do this. I think eggplant is bitter if it is undercooked or old. And also I love olive oil, and it is good for you, so heck, soak away I say! I believe Tom is growing the long, thin Italian or Oriental eggplant rather than the more traditional globe kind, but either way, says A-Z: "...[the different] eggplant varieties are for the most part interchangeable in recipes." Enjoy!

Live Earth Farm Calendar

Sat. Sep 21	<u>Fall Equinox Celebration</u> 3pm - 9pm
Sat. Oct 26	<u>Halloween Pumpkin U-Pick</u> all day
Nov. 20/23	(Weds/Sat) **Last box**

Notes from Debbie's Kitchen Have a recipe you'd like to share? Contact the newsletter editor.

You all know what my recipe leanings are going to be this week if you read "Crop of the Week," above! - Debbie

Vegetable Moussaka

This recipe will be appearing in a forthcoming "National CSA Cookbook" (to be published next year). It is one I tested and really liked. If you try it, we'd love to hear how you like it too. - Debbie
Serves 4

Olive oil

Freshly milled black pepper

2 medium globe (or 5-6 Oriental long-type) eggplants, sliced diagonally 1/4" thick

4 green onions, thinly sliced

3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

1 tbsp. butter

3/4 lb. (2 medium) baking potatoes, thinly sliced (I think you could use any potato here – even the purple ones. That's what I used!)

1/2 tbsp. fresh or 1/2 tsp. dried oregano

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. garam masala

1/2 lb. (2 medium) tomatoes, sliced 1/4" thick

4 oz. goat cheese

1/2 C plain yogurt

2 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley

1/4 tsp. fresh lemon juice (or 'a small squeeze')

Heat 1/2 tbsp. olive oil and about 1/8 tsp. pepper in a heavy skillet over medium heat. Place eggplant slices in the skillet making sure that the surface of each slice makes full contact with the skillet. Let eggplant cook on each side for about 3 minutes, periodically pressing on each slice with a spatula. Set aside cooked slices and repeat, adding oil and pepper as necessary each time, until all eggplant has been cooked. In same skillet, sauté green onions

and garlic in 1 tbsp. oil for about 2 minutes. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Spread the butter around inside an 8- or 9-inch baking dish. Place a layer of potato, and sprinkle with half the oregano, half the salt, and 1/8 tsp. pepper. Add a layer of half of the eggplant slices, and sprinkle with half of the garam masala. Top with half the goat cheese and half the tomato slices. Next add the onion and garlic mixture. Then repeat the potato, eggplant, cheese and tomato layers. Bake, uncovered, until the potatoes are tender, about 45 minutes or more (test occasionally with a sharp knife for doneness). Meanwhile, prepare the yogurt sauce. Combine yogurt, parsley and lemon juice in a small bowl and refrigerate. Serve moussaka topped with yogurt sauce.

Steamed eggplant with sesame-soy sauce serves 2 – 3

by Kasma Loha-Unchit, from her "Cooking on the Rim" column in the SJ Mercury News

2 long Chinese eggplants

2 tbsp. soy sauce

1 tsp. pure sesame oil

1/2 tsp. rice vinegar

1/2 tsp. ground dried red chiles

1 tsp. sugar

1/2 tsp. toasted sesame seeds

Cilantro sprigs for garnish

Trim off stem end of eggplants and cut crosswise into segments about 2" long. Place on a steamer rack and steam over medium-high heat for 6-8 minutes, or until done to your liking. While eggplants are steaming, make sauce by combining soy, sesame oil vinegar, chiles and sugar. Stir well to blend flavors. Remove cooked eggplants from steamer. When they are cool

enough to handle, cut each piece in half lengthwise and each half again into 2-3 long strips. Arrange in a single layer on a serving plate. Spoon the sesame-soy sauce evenly over the eggplant pieces, sprinkle with sesame seeds and garnish with cilantro. This is good warm, cold or at room temperature. Serves 2-3 with rice in a multi-course family-style meal.

Southwestern Ratatouille

from an undated newspaper clipping of mine
serves 2-4

2 tbsp. olive oil

1 small onion, minced

1 clove garlic, minced

1 small globe eggplant (or 2-3 Oriental), diced (peeling is optional)

1 large (2 small) zucchini, sliced 1/4" thick

1 serrano chile, cored seeded and minced (you could probably substitute a jalapeño or maybe a small, canned chipotle - Debbie)

1/4 to 1/2 C dark beer or ale

2 large tomatoes, cored and diced

1/2 tsp. ground cumin

1/4 to 1/2 tsp. chili powder

1/2 tsp. sugar (optional)

1/4 C chopped fresh cilantro

Heat oil in a large skillet. Add onion, garlic, eggplant, zucchini and serrano, sauté over med. heat, stirring occasionally, until veggies are tender (~10 min.). Pour in 1/4 C beer and scrape up any veggies that stick to the bottom of the skillet. Add tomatoes, cumin, chili powder and simmer 15 min., stirring occasionally and adding another 1/4 C beer if it starts to look dry (mixture should be soupy). If beer is bitter, add sugar. Season to taste with salt and pepper, stir in cilantro and serve over hot rice.