



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

6th Harvest Week

May 14th – 20th, 2003

Season 8

What's in the standard share:

Fruit:

Strawberries

Veggies:

Arugula

Broccoli

Carrots

Chard

Cilantro

Fennel

Green garlic

Red Russian kale

Kohlrabi

Lettuce

Onions

French breakfast radishes

Spinach

Mystery item

and if you have an extra-fruit option:

More strawberries!

(over for more!)

Hands and faces of the farm. The day we pack your shares is always busy and exciting. We harvest, wash, bunch and bag all the produce and neatly sort it into crates called 'lugs' before it is divided up amongst the boxes. The colors, textures, and smells are strong and vibrant, and I smile to myself as I think of all the members who will soon open their boxes to receive this nourishing sustenance alive with the earth's energy. What members don't see though is the effort and dedication of all those who have planted, cared for, picked, and carefully packed this food. I sometimes think that the real difference between a large and a small farm is that one is "high-tech" and the other is "high touch." Everyone here at the farm has a special relationship with the land, and connection to this community, and I would like to begin introducing you to them. Juan left his home state of Guanajuato, Mexico over 15 years ago, to work and live here in the Pajaro Valley where the climate and crops are similar to those of home. Before joining us, he worked on large, conventional strawberry and vegetable farms. I met him four years ago, when he was seeking to change his work away from the monotony and risk of riding tractors and spraying pesticides all day. He expressed a desire to work on a smaller, more diversified farm like ours. The match was perfect. Juan not only brought incredible skills as a tractor operator and a self-taught mechanic, but every fiber of his being is connected with the land he cares for. Farming is his passion, and he has a keen sense of observation, an intuitive understanding of the land and crops, and works with a wonderful natural rhythm. Juan and his family have become a fundamental part of this farm, contributing far more than the work of their hands in caring for the crops you enjoy every week. – Tom

*"To see a world in a grain of sand
And heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour."*

- William Blake

Eating Locally, continued.

Last week we talked about how choosing to buy local contributes to a stronger and more sustainable economy, as well as a healthier environment and stronger community. New CSA member Alison England of San Jose pointed out yet another advantage: consuming locally grown produce and other food items is actually better for your immune system. Over time the micronutrients from the local soils as well as pollens (in locally produced honeys, for example) build up in your system and act as a kind of immunotherapy, helping to desensitize your body to local allergens. 🌱

Education on the Farm

Farms and gardens are great teachers. Children seem to understand instinctively when they taste, dig, plant, harvest, and smell things. Last week we had a group of 4 and 5 year olds on the farm. They were all excited to visit the newborn baby goats. They experienced not just the cute and cuddly babies, but also saw how goats eat, sleep, and of course poop, which caused no end of giggling. Besides strawberries, the kids were fascinated with picking snails off the artichoke plants, and then later feeding them to the chickens. Most of the teaching came not from talking, but from just being together and enjoying the farm with no particular agenda in mind. Every year we experience more visitors to the farm, especially children and young adults. Live Earth Farm provides an excellent opportunity for people to reclaim their connection to food, and to understand and experience the cycles of this land. In just a few short generations we've relinquished nearly all power to grow our food to distant farms. Of course we can't all go back to the land, but we can reconnect with the pleasures of this vital process of growing food. The Farm offers this opportunity, as well as farmers markets, and school and community gardens. And if you have your own garden, this is the perfect place to feel that connection. 🌱

Memberships are still available...

We want more members! We'd like to reach our goal of 300 members by June, and have about 50 shares to go to get there. Word of mouth is best, as is giving our brochure to someone you think might be interested. Some people leave brochures or post a flier at work (take them from the back of the binder with your checklist in it, or call Debbie at the farm and she can email you a flyer or arrange to get you more brochures). Many thanks go out to all of you who have been helping us with our membership already. And if you have any suggestions of ways to reach out to new places and people, let us know. 🌱

"Mystery Item" explained

Although we do our best to let you know exactly what you will be receiving each week, at times some crops aren't quite ready to harvest when we think they will be (good ol' mother nature), and so box contents can be difficult to anticipate. So in order to give us some flexibility, we will sometimes add or change the box contents depending on crop ripeness/availability in the field. Look for a 'mystery item' if you can't find what's on the list in your box! But if you know we really left something out that should have been there (i.e. it was in others' boxes, but somehow not in yours), please let us know and we will do our best to compensate you. 🌱

Notes from Debbie's Kitchen

Have a recipe you'd like to share? Contact the newsletter editor.

Kind of a mish-mash for you this week.
- Debbie

Kohlrabi the 'sputnik veggie' returns

Those otherworldly, flattish purple spheroids with the leaf stalks jutting out from their equator would be kohlrabi. I should have pictures of 'em up on the recipe database by next week. Kohlrabi is not a root vegetable like carrots or beets. The bulb is actually a fat part of the stem, and grows above ground. Both the bulb and the greens can be eaten. The simplest, and my favorite way to eat kohlrabi is raw: Simply peel off the purple skin much like you would with jicama, cut into slices or sticks for dipping, or into thinner slices or matchsticks for tossing into salads. But kohlrabi can also be cooked. Prepare as above and add to stir-frys for crispness like water chestnuts. Alternatively, kohlrabi can be boiled and mashed like or along with potatoes, or baked in gratins. FYI there are green kohlrabi too – we're just getting the purple ones now.

Cilantro rice

I love making this – the rice comes out bright green and redolent of cilantro. It is great with Mexican food (as an alternative to red rice), but would go well as a side dish to, oh... lots of things!

rice

lots of fresh cilantro, washed, roots removed (but okay to use the stems!)
boiling water

Cook rice however you normally do. While your rice is cooking, in a separate pot blanch cilantro in boiling water about a minute to soften. Fish it out with tongs or a slotted spoon and drop into a blender with a tiny bit of water and purée. When your rice is done cooking, simply fold/stir the pureed cilantro into it until evenly mixed, adding salt to taste. It's that simple!

Roasted Fennel and Onion

(adapted from a Dec 1996 recipe in Gourmet magazine)

Can be prepared in 45 minutes or less.
Serves 2.

2 fennel bulbs, washed, stalks trimmed
flush with bulb
2* onions, stalk trimmed and root removed,
quartered lengthwise
1 tbsp. butter, melted
1 tbsp. olive oil
1 tbsp. balsamic vinegar

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Cut each fennel bulb lengthwise into 4 or 6 wedges and in a roasting pan toss fennel and onions with butter, oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Roast vegetables, stirring once halfway through roasting, 25 minutes, or until tender. Add vinegar to vegetables and toss to coat.

*the onions in our boxes are starting to size up, but if you only have smaller ones, just use more and halve them or leave whole!

Live Earth Farm Calendar

(see calendar on website for more detailed info)

Sat. Jun 21	<u>Summer Solstice Celebration</u> 4pm - 10pm with Kuzanga Marimba!
Aug 8, 9, 10	<u>Children's Mini Camp</u> Friday evening to noon Sunday
Sat. Sep 20	<u>Fall Equinox Celebration</u> 3pm - 9pm with the Banana Slug String Band!
Sat. Oct 26	<u>Halloween Pumpkin Palooza</u> all day the Banana Slug String Band will play here too!

Lettuce

excerpted from "Tassajara Cooking," a marvelous, 30 year old 'cooking book' by Ed Brown

"The idea is that somebody is going to eat some lettuce. Why not just rinse off the earth and serve it? If you appreciate and enjoy lettuce like this and the other people eating do also, read no further, nothing could be simpler. But maybe a little salt is added to bring out its natural taste. What happens when salt is added is that the water is drawn out of the lettuce. It goes limp, loses its crisp. With cabbage this is appropriate, but lettuce leaves, more delicate than cabbage, don't have crisp to spare. The answer to this is get the lettuce coated with oil first. The salt won't penetrate nearly as fast. But now the lettuce is sure gummed up with oil. What cuts oil is vinegar. A bit of zing, too, not bad. So that's the basic dressing: oil, vinegar and salt. Beyond this basic dressing we can explore ways to further amplify, mollify, pacify."

"Washing and drying lettuce. Dirt is one of the most unappetizing things that could garnish lettuce. It may be that only the outer leaves of the head of lettuce need washing. These leaves will often have some dirt tucked away in their folds or at the base of their stalks. ... [But] wet lettuce will water down the dressing, and the oil will not stick to the leaves, so it must [also] be dried." [Debbie speaking now] Spin well in a salad spinner then wrap in a dish towel and blot or shake. Leave wrapped 'til ready to use.