



The Weekly (Com)Post

A newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

22nd Harvest Week

August 9th – 15th, 2004

Season 9

What's in the standard share:

Fruit:

Strawberries

Veggies and herbs:

Red beets

Carrots

Chard or Kale

Green beans

Parsley

Potatoes

Spinach

Stir-fry mix

Summer squash

Tomatoes

Mystery Item

and if you have an extra-fruit option:

Raspberries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes

Coming soon:

Pears and apples!

(over for more)

Hi everyone, it's me, Debbie: it is late (about 10pm) Monday night Aug. 9th, and I am just now getting to the newsletter. I had an emergency and had to spend the day in Gilroy helping my elderly aunt get settled in with a home caregiver (she lives by herself). Tom is out of town, and emailed me his parts of the newsletter from Jackson Hole, Wyoming, so I'm going to do my best to assemble it all for you – but please forgive any typos or bad editing! Thanks!!

As many of you probably know we (Constance and I, and our son David) are soon expecting the birth of our second child, due sometime around the 17th of September. With the birth of every child, life seems to take on a new beginning. It feels even more so, since it's been more than 10 years since our son David was born. The miracle of life is a wonderful thing to witness when a part of oneself is developing and birthing. I am humbled by the realization how every moment is precious allowing us to celebrate and participate in the unfolding story of creation. I have been given the unique opportunity to spend 5 days away from the farm here in the great wilderness of Teton National Park in Wyoming, surrounded by astonishing beauty. I have a moment to play with my son David, and to reflect and give thanks to the many gifts life has to offer. – Tom

"As farmers, we are emotionally involved, personally engaged and spiritually invested ... surviving as both art and business ... we perform despite limited economic incentives because we offer gifts to the world."

*- David Mas Masumoto,
from "Four Seasons in Five Senses"*

Crop Notes

Tomatoes are now in full production so think about the days between November and July when these wonderful fruit/vegetables are not available locally. So now is a good time to make some salsa, spaghetti sauce, or just simply skin and freeze them to enjoy during the rainy and cold months to come.

The tomato, bar none, is probably the most common vegetable in the American kitchen garden. Anybody with just a few square feet of topsoil will place tomatoes on their most-want-to-grow list. There are literally hundreds of varieties. Originally native to Peru and Ecuador, it can still be found there in its lobed and marble-sized state. It was cultivated in Central and South America as early as the fifth century B.C. The Mayans called it xtomatl hence the name tomato. When the Spanish brought the first tomato to Europe it was given the name "pomodoro" (golden apple). Only the Italians showed any interest in this fruit, the rest of Europe cursed it to be poisonous like some of its relatives in the nightshade family. It was given the botanical name lycopersicum, which

Live Earth Farm 2004 Calendar

(see calendar on website for more detailed info)

Sat. Sept. 25

Fall Equinox Celebration

3 – 9 pm

with *The Banana Slug String Band!*

Sat. Oct 23

Halloween Pumpkin Palooza

means "wolf peach." Furthermore, the dubious character of this fruit also gave it a reputation as an aphrodisiac, hence its nicknames "love apple" and "pomme d'amour." If you are looking for this exotic taste, your best option is to pick them ripe off the vine, since store-bought tomatoes are usually tasteless and mealy. We pick ours vine-ripened, aiming for the most flavor and nutrition. The tomato is low in sodium and a fair source of vitamin A and C as well as potassium and iron. A tip on storage: tomatoes continue to ripen after they're picked, so do not put them in the refrigerator. Cold temperatures destroy the chemicals that give mature tomatoes their essential flavors, so store them in a cool place but not a dark and cold place. 🍷

Notes from Debbie's Kitchen

Have a recipe you'd like to share? Contact me at deb@writerguy.com or 408.288.9469.

Visit the recipes link on our website for a comprehensive list of recipes 'by key ingredient' (pictures too!). Includes recipes from newsletters back to 1998.

I'm not sure if Tom left eggplant off the 'what's in the box' list accidentally or intentionally this week (I had no way to reach him to ask), so I'm going to do one eggplant recipe here, as our good friend and regular recipe contributor Sue Burnham brought it by for me last Saturday! But I'll slip in a few other recipes too. – Debbie

Eggplant with Cumin and Black Pepper

from "All-American Vegetarian" by Barbara Grunes & Virginia Van Vynckt
serves 8

2 lbs. small eggplants (baby or Japanese are ideal)
8 tbsp. olive oil
3 cloves garlic, finely minced
1/2 tsp. ground cumin
1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
1 lemon, cut in half
2 tbsp. finely chopped fresh mint, cilantro or parsley

Preheat oven to 500 degrees F.

Trim and peel eggplants. Cut lengthwise in approximately 1/8" thick slices. Brush 4 tbsp. of oil evenly over 1 very large or 2 smaller cookie sheets. Lay eggplant slices on sheets, overlapping slightly if needed. Brush remaining 4 tbsp. oil lightly over top of eggplant. Bake eggplant, turning once, for 15 – 25 minutes or until soft and beginning to turn golden. If eggplant is on 2 cookie sheets, transfer all to 1 cookie sheet at this time. Mix garlic, salt, cumin and black pepper. Sprinkle over eggplant, then sprinkle with juice of 1/2 lemon. Toss well. Return to oven for 5 minutes, until eggplant is very soft. Place eggplant on a plate or shallow bowl, season with juice of 1/2 lemon. Scatter with herbs and toss. This tastes best if refrigerated for several hours and then brought to room temperature before serving.

Sue says, "It really does make a large difference to let sit and meld. I used parsley as my herb."

Mashed Potatoes with Sage and White Cheddar Cheese

from an undated Bon Appetit clipping
serves 10 [but you could easily cut it in half]

4 lbs. russet potatoes [I'd use either Tom's red or yellow potatoes, but not purples], peeled [I don't peel 'em either] and cut into 1 1/2" cubes
1/4 C (1/2 stick) butter
2 tbsp. plus 1 tsp. minced fresh sage
3/4 C whipping cream
3/4 C whole milk
2 1/4 C (packed; about 9 ounces) coarsely grated sharp white cheddar cheese

Butter an 8- to 10-cup baking dish. Cook potatoes in a large pot of boiling salted water until tender, about 12 minutes.

Meanwhile, melt butter in medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Add 2 tbsp. sage; stir until butter begins to brown, about 3 minutes. Add cream and milk; bring to simmer.

Drain potatoes; return to pot. Stir over medium heat until excess moisture evaporates. Add cream mixture; mash potatoes. Stir in 1 3/4 cups of cheese. Season potatoes with salt and pepper. Transfer to prepared dish. Sprinkle with 1/2 C cheese and 1 tsp. sage.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Bake potatoes uncovered until heated through and golden brown, about 45 minutes.

Baked chard stems with tomatoes, garlic and Parmesan

(this is from a copy of a newspaper clipping of a recipe Sue Burnham gave me a year or two ago!)

Serves 4 as a side dish

1 lb. chard stems (about 12 large stems), bruised parts trimmed, halved crosswise
Salt
1 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for baking dish
2 medium garlic cloves, minced
1 (14 1/2-oz) can diced tomatoes, drained [obviously this is the time of year to peel a bunch of fresh tomatoes; dip them into boiling water for anywhere from 10 seconds to a minute, until their skins split, then transfer to a bowl of cold water. Skins will peel off easily. Chop after peeling. Figure about 2 cups or so.]
1 tbsp. minced parsley
Freshly ground black pepper
1/2 C grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Bring several quarts of water to a boil in a large pot. Add chard stems and salt to taste. Cook until stems are almost tender, about 10 minutes. Drain.

Meanwhile, cook oil and garlic in a medium skillet over medium heat until garlic is golden, about 2 minutes. Add tomatoes and simmer until sauce is almost dry, about 5 minutes [I think it will take longer than that]. Stir in parsley and salt and pepper to taste.

Cover bottom of a lightly greased 8-inch square baking dish with a single layer of chard, cutting stems as necessary to make them fit. Spoon a little tomato sauce over chard and sprinkle with a little cheese. Repeat this process two more times, alternating direction of stems for each layer and using remaining tomato sauce and cheese.

Bake until chard is very tender and top layer is lightly browned, about 25 minutes. Remove pan from oven and let settle for 5 minutes. Cut into squares and serve.