



# Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

3rd Harvest Week

April 10<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Season 11

## What's in the box this week:

### Family Share:

Beets  
Baby bok choy  
Red cabbage  
Chard  
Fennel  
Green garlic  
Baby leeks  
Lettuce  
Peppermint  
Radishes  
Rutabagas

### Small Share:

Beets  
Red cabbage  
Chard  
Green garlic  
Baby leeks  
Lettuce  
Peppermint  
Radishes  
Rutabagas

(items in the small share are sometimes less in quantity than in the family share)

### Extra Fruit:

(doesn't start 'til May)

Never enough beets!!! "Beets again?" you might ask when you look inside your box this week, but one bunch almost doesn't seem like enough to me. Last week with 8 beet roots (4 golden and 4 red) I made this finger-licking delicious beet salad, which both Elisa (our 19 month old) and I (42 years young) gobbled up... with our fingers! With a pressure cooker, in less than 15 minutes the beets are soft. Then under cold running water (so I don't burn my fingers) I slip off the skin, quickly chop the beets into pieces, throw them all in a bowl, add olive oil, a little salt, a good sprinkling of balsamic vinegar, a little bit of honey and a touch of mustard, stir it all up and you have a delicious warm beet salad. I knew I scored when Elisa approved of my dish. "Yummy, yummy!" she said, which means "I want more!" and her beet-stained grin turned all the bad weather into sunshine.

This week the raindrops will keep falling on our heads and fields; my neighboring farmer, Bill Peixote of Lakeside Organic Gardens, remembers the 1983 El Niño year as being similar – March and April were a solid downpour that year, he said. The only difference between then and now is that no meteorologist has attributed this year to an El Niño effect; maybe it's the "El Globo Caliente" (Global warming) effect. Balancing economics and biology is at the heart of what is so challenging about farming. Every season is different: the weather, the prices, the soil, the crops... they all have their cycles. Sometimes they're more abundant, sometimes less. Farming is a matter of trust and faith in nature. As organic farming pioneer, Denesse Willey of T&D Willey Farms, is quoted in Michael Abelman's recent book 'Fields of Plenty' as saying, "To plant a seed and believe that it will germinate, out-compete weeds, bloom, set fruit, and be harvested and sold at a fair price is a great leap of faith."

The truth be told, it's all about SOIL! A recent article in the San Francisco Chronicle comparing the nutrient value of organic versus conventionally grown produce was sent to us by one of our members, Susan Schaefer, and written by another of our members, Deborah Rich. Thanks, Susan, for sending it to us, and thanks Deborah for writing it! It brings into the limelight what organic and sustainable farming advocates have always been saying (and most of you all know), that organically grown food is significantly higher in essential nutrients than conventionally grown food. It is now recognized that "the fruits and vegetables our parents and grandparents ate were more nutritious than the ones we feed our children today." Studies show that many conventional, so called "modern" methods of farming have depleted productive soils by overuse. Sterilized and contaminated by pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, the soil life is reduced, limiting the microorganisms' activity, which in turn limits the nutrient and mineral availability to the plants... and ultimately to all of us. Results from studies quoted in the article, indicate that important nutrients such as vitamin C, magnesium, and antioxidants were almost 30% higher in produce coming from organic farms than in produce from conventional farms. [If you would like to read the full text of this excellent article, we have re-printed it on our website, with Deborah's permission. Go to our [www.liveearthfarm.com](http://www.liveearthfarm.com) and click on "interesting stuff" in the left-hand sidebar.]

The foundation of organic farming is to improve and sustain the health of the soil. Spreading compost, rotating crops, adding

*"The best way to predict the future is to invent it."*

*- Alan Kay, quoted in 'The Sustainability Revolution' by Andres R. Edwards*

## Live Earth Farm 2006 Calendar

(see calendar on website for more info)

Sat. June 17	<u>Summer Solstice Celebration</u> field tours 2 - 5 celebrations 5 - 9
Aug 25, 26, and 27	<u>Children's Mini Camp</u> Friday evening to noon Sunday
Sat. Sept. 23	<u>Fall Equinox Celebration</u> 3pm until dark
Sat. Oct 21	<u>Halloween Pumpkin Palooza</u>

soil amendments such as gypsum, lime, and rock dust, growing cover crops, and reducing soil erosion are some of the common soil building practices on organic farms. Soil is alive and should be treated as a living organism. Every cubic inch of organic soil teems with billions of microorganisms that play many different parts in the soil's cycle of fertility. Worms, ants, termites, springtails, protozoa, fungi, bacteria ranging from the visible to the unimaginably minute perform important functions which drive most of the activity in the soil and specifically the transfer of nutrients to the plant. To stress the importance of soil, David Suzuki gives one of my favorite and most vivid descriptions in his book *Sacred Balance*: "Imagine a giant tomato with a diameter of 70 meters (210 feet) but skin no thicker than that of an ordinary tomato. That thin outer layer corresponds to the fine wrapping of soil that covers the surface of our immense planet. The constant renewal of life on Earth occurs in that thin layer, we, like all other terrestrial life forms, depend on it, directly or indirectly, for our food." - Tom

## Raw Goat Milk and Artisan cheeses

"I heard I could get raw goat milk (and yogurt, kefir and cheeses) with my Live Earth Farm CSA share. Is that true?" A qualified yes. You do not purchase your goat milk share through Live Earth Farm (like you do the eggs). In fact, you don't purchase 'milk' at all – you purchase *a share in a goat* for the season and *your goat is milked for you*, and then your milk is delivered to you along with your CSA share. Here's how it works. As in years past, **Lynn Selness of Summer Meadow's Farm** is offering shares in her milking goats, so that you can get fresh, raw, delicious goat milk and hand crafted yogurt and cheeses delivered through our CSA. Lynn has twenty does this year (2006).

All of Lynn's goats are Nubian, not only a beautiful breed of animal, but also known for the rich butterfat content of their milk. "Their milk is so healthy," she says. "Dairy sensitive babies and lactose intolerant people can drink this milk without problem. The size of the fat molecules in goat's milk is the closest to human mothers' milk of any other milk. People and their children with health problems have been drinking this milk and doing so much better in no time. I am so thankful to hear these people's stories, people getting healed from my (goats') milk. This makes me so happy!" Debbie (Live Earth Farm's CSA coordinator and recipe maven) has been up to Lynn's farm on the side of Mt. Madonna and can attest to the fact that these are the most pampered, loved and cared for goats. If you know anything about dairy, you know that a contented animal makes a huge difference in the flavor of the milk.

Goat milk shares are all coordinated through and paid to Lynn directly, so don't contact the farm about 'wanting to sign up' for it. Please **call Lynn at 831.786.8966** and she will give you all the details. Like in past seasons, the goat milk shares will be delivered to your CSA drop-off (in well-insulated ice chests) and noted on the member checklist. Lynn says to remember that her supply is limited, so orders will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. 🐐

## Notes from Debbie's Kitchen

Have a recipe you'd like to share? Contact me at [deb@writerguy.com](mailto: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.)

*At last... green garlic! This usually makes an appearance early in our shares. Now since we're getting both green garlic and baby leeks, be aware that they look very similar! Best way to tell the difference is to use the ol' nose: do a scratch-and-sniff test! Meanwhile, here is a recipe from a friend of mine (and fellow CSA member) who is always itching to get that green garlic, concurrently with our red cabbage. It is a big hit with his family. - Debbie*

### Red Cabbage & Green Garlic stir-fry

by member Mark Stevens of Saratoga

1 head cabbage  
1 bunch green garlic  
Olive oil  
Sesame oil  
Kirin rice cooking wine  
Thyme (I usually use dried, but fresh would be okay — add later in cooking)  
Other stir-fry spices optional: hot oil or hot peppers (to taste — I like some in the dish)  
Cut cabbage into 1 inch cross sections, and then quarter these. Boil in water in a wok or equivalent for about 8-10 minutes. Should still be firm, but no longer crispy or hard, and the color should have mellowed to a light purple. If the head of cabbage is older (i.e. if you've been keeping it in your fridge

for weeks), then the core can be cut out — I usually don't. Drain cabbage well and set aside. It will probably continue to cook from residual heat. Chop green garlic very coarsely. Heat up oil in pan (about 50-50 olive and toasted sesame oil — I'm not good at amounts; oil to cover bottom of pan, with some sloshing around) and cook garlic until starting to get soft. Add thyme (and any other seasonings) and rice wine (perhaps 1/3 of a bottle). Cook down until tastes blend. Stir in reserved cooked cabbage. Cook on high heat and stir to combine — perhaps 3 - 4 minutes. Serve in a bowl, pouring liquid from pan over the veggies. I usually put grey salt or something on top as a garnish, but we like a lot of salt. Could also sprinkle with some sesame seeds for the presentation.

Optional: You can add the broccolini we've been getting in our shares to this dish as well. I boil it for 2 minutes (after I've boiled the cabbage, in the deep purple water that is left after the cabbage is done), and then add it back to the pan before I add the cabbage. It makes for a nice color contrast. Make sure you have enough room in your pan for all the cabbage as well as an entire bag of broccolini though (I didn't last night!).

### Bok Choi in Oyster Sauce

from Debbie's kitchen

a couple heads of bok choi  
1 tbsp. seasoned rice vinegar  
1 tsp. sesame oil  
1 clove garlic (or a stalk of green garlic!) finely chopped  
1 tbsp. oyster sauce

Either separate stalks of bok choi or trim bottom and cut in half lengthwise. Whichever you do, be sure to wash carefully between the stalks to get the dirt out. Combine vinegar, oil, and oyster sauce in a small dish. Simmer bok choi in a some water (or steam it) for just a minute or so. There's kind of a timing thing here: this all cooks quickly, and you don't want to over-cook the bok choi, so while it is steaming or simmering, in a skillet or wok sizzle your garlic in a little olive or canola oil. Drain bok choi and add to sizzling garlic, then add sauce ingredients and stir/simmer until bubbly. Serve with rice or maybe some cooked soba noodles. Optional additions: toasted cashew nuts.

### What about the mint?

No question about it: I'd mince it up and add it to Tom's warm beet salad! (see Tom's opening blurb, above, if you're going "huh?")