



Live Earth Farm (Com)Post

A weekly newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

12th Harvest Week

July 17th – 23rd, 2002

Season 7

What's in the box this week:

Strawberries
Basil
Red beets
Cucumbers
Garlic
Green beans
Red Russian kale or
collard greens
Lettuce
Onions
Red potatoes
Radishes
Summer squash
Mystery item

and if you have an extra-fruit share:

Strawberries, blackberries, and a mixed bag of plums and apricots

Last week we had a wonderful experience hosting 13 teenagers, ages 14-17. Most of them came from the East Coast and for most of them this was their first farm experience. They slept outside in tents, harvested and prepared their own food. The heat last week was challenging and we sure appreciated having more help harvesting and catching up with field chores. The last evening, sitting around the fire, many shared their impressions and experiences, and it struck me how positive most of them were. In many ways the patient guidance from Linnea and Andres (this year's farm interns) and their openness to these kids made them feel more connected to the farm. Thanks to both of them for their help, and to member Ken Eklund for introducing some of them to the magic of bread making. Ken also took some pictures of their visit, which can be seen at www.writerguy.com/friends/lef/globalroutes.htm. - Tom

"The day is coming when a single carrot, freshly observed, will set off a revolution."

- Paul Cezanne

(courtesy of member Rick Ehrhart of Willow Glen)

Q&A

Q: Aptos member Vaiva Bichnevicius asks, "How do you do the math? How do you figure out how many of this and how much of that to plant, to make sure that we all get enough quantity and variety in our shares over the course of the season? Is this science or art?"

A: One of the things I enjoy doing during the rainy season is developing my seasonal crop plan and ordering seeds and planting stock (which I do typically in late December to early January). First I determine the crops I want to grow, based on a couple factors: Is it a staple grown every year due to customer demand? Does it benefit the farm both financially and ecologically? Do we have the right conditions to grow it (i.e. climate, soil, labor, equipment, pest and disease control, etc.)? If I have grown it before, what was its performance in both quality and quantity? And I always like to allocate some space to experiment with new varieties. I then determine the quantity I want to plant of each crop. This is based on projected demand, which of course varies over the course of the season. To know how much to sow for each crop planting we take into consideration the spacing between plants and the area needed to obtain a predicted amount. Here is where experience and field notes come in handy, since for every planting one needs to consider varietal characteristics as well as site-specific conditions. Take lettuce, for example. I know from past experience that we need an estimated 1000 heads every week. Our bed spacing is 30 inches, and most of our rows are between 100 to 150 feet long. With two rows per bed and a spacing of 10 inches between plants, that provides 130 to 180 plants per row. Double that per bed and it tells me we need 3 to 4 rows of lettuce every week. In order to adjust for fluctuations in production, we plant 2 more rows. So every week, we sow 5 to 6 rows in order to have a continuous supply throughout the season. This exercise is performed for each crop and overlaid with a seasonal crop rotation plan.

Q: Some of the delivery locations do not specify an end time for pickup. They just say, "from 3:30 on" for example. How late can we pick up our shares at these places?

A: This means you can pick up as late as you want that day. Those locations are not at a private residence, nor are they 'closed' at a particular time, so missed shares are not generally removed until the next morning. The earlier you pick up though, the fresher everything will be, but although we don't encourage picking up really late, if you're running behind, a midnight pickup is technically okay. 🐾

Member to Member Forum

Hello all, this is Kristin Schafer again. For those of you who were CSAers last year, you'll remember that I've written occasionally in this space about pesticide issues (I work at an NGO called Pesticide Action Network, or PAN), and particularly about the issue of "body burden". Body burden refers to the load of chemicals we all carry in the course of our lives. Over the past several months I've been working with a national coalition of groups organizing around chemical issues, and we developed a web site specifically focused on the body burden issue. It provides basic information about the concept of body burden, what is known (and not known) about how low levels of chemicals in your body can affect your health, and what can be done about it. We're very excited about the site, and we welcome you to take a look - www.chemicalbodyburden.org - and let us know what you think. Send me an email (kristins@panna.org) and I'll be happy to summarize any reactions or comments here some future week. Meanwhile, keep enjoying those fabulous burden-free strawberries! - Kristin

Live Earth Farm Calendar

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| Fri - Sun Aug. 2 - 4 | <u>Children's Mini Camp</u> 7pm Friday - noon Sunday (registration required) |
| 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.

A year or two ago someone emailed me asking what to do with radishes. At the time I simply said, "salt 'em and eat 'em!" but last week I learned of this lovely and intriguing concept - radish sandwiches - from fellow member Ron Williams of San Jose. Read on, not only for the recipe, but also for the delightful story of where it came from. More recipes follow, but I really thought this one deserved special attention. - Debbie

Radish Sandwiches

The short version:

Good radishes with plenty of flavor but not too hot make great sandwiches. The other requirements are real French bread and sweet unsalted butter. Just slice the radishes and pile them on the buttered bread. You can sprinkle some salt on the radishes, but the unsalted butter still seems better than salted butter. A slice of cheese can also be added, or the bread can simply be "buttered" with goat cheese. This is an old favorite in rural France. Try it.

The long version:

In 1953-54 when I was 15, my two brothers, baby sister, and parents spent 10 months driving around Europe in a Studebaker which we had hauled across the Atlantic with us aboard the French liner Liberte. Our luggage was piled high on a roof rack. It would have been too expensive to eat lunches at restaurants so we usually picnicked. Each morning wherever we were, we would make the rounds at the local shops gathering bread, cheese, sausages, and fruit. One time in France we had stopped at a greengrocer for some

melons and asked the grocer where to find the charcuterie to get meat for sandwiches. He said we didn't need meat because his fresh radishes would make the best sandwiches. Dad was willing to try it, so that is what we did. I've enjoyed radish sandwiches ever since, and over the years I have seen them mentioned several times in travel magazines as a staple in rural France.

Creole Grilled Summer Squash

(also contributed by Ron Williams)

Cut off stem ends and slice summer squash lengthwise (pattypans horizontally through the middle), coat lightly with olive oil, sprinkled with Creole seasoning* and grill. "These were a huge favorite with our dinner guests!" sez Ron.

*"Zataraines Creole Seasoning" in the red and green shaker is available at many grocery stores.

Fruit-Cheese-Greens Salad

With the advent of stone fruits in our shares (sometimes only in the extra-fruit option, but sometimes in our standard share boxes too!), I wanted to let you know of a magic combination of flavors: fruit, cheese and greens. First I'll tell you what I've made, then pass on the flexibility of substitutions and additions. - Debbie

Fresh plums, apricots, and/or strawberries
Black Fig vinegar (or balsamic)
Good feta or cottage cheese
Arugula

Slice plums, apricots and strawberries into

a bowl. Splash on a little of the vinegar, stir gently to coat. Place a handful of arugula on each plate, topped with either a scoop of good creamy cottage cheese topped by the fruit, or topped with the fruit followed by a coarse crumble of feta. The sweet fig or balsamic vinegar really makes the fruit pop, and the combination of that with the crisp, peppery arugula and the piquant cottage cheese or salty feta is just amazing. Be sure to get a bit of each in each mouthful!

Substitutions and additions:

- Some of the Asian greens have a peppery bite similar to the arugula, and would work well instead or in combination with. You could also use the sweeter butter lettuce or red leaf (or oak leaf) lettuces. You'd lose that peppery contribution, but the salad would still taste good (and I'd do that over not making the salad just 'cause I didn't have arugula!)
- The Black Fig vinegar I discovered last year - it is dark and fragrant, and sweeter even than balsamic. Balsamic would work equally well though. Another good substitute would be a fruity vinegar like raspberry or black raspberry, possibly mixed with a dab of honey if it is too sour, or if the fruit is on the tart side.
- If you only had sweet leafy greens, you might consider adding a dab of mustard to the sweet vinegar to provide the 'pop'.
- If you like bleu cheese, that, too would make a good substitute in the cheese dept.
- Additions of toasted nuts like walnuts or pecans are good for crunch and fragrance.
- Very thinly sliced sweet onion, separated into rings and scattered on top are also a welcome addition.