

# Earth Dance Farm



Newsletter 7/23/07  
Volume 2, Issue 6

27842 141st Ave. Spring Valley, MN 55975 (507) 378-4252 www.earthdancefarm.net

## Quote for the Week

*To finish the moment, to find the journey's end in every step of the road, to live the greatest number of good hours, is wisdom.*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## This week:

Eggplant  
Green Beans  
Red Potatoes  
Cauliflower  
Sugar Snap Peas  
Summer Squash  
Beets  
Swiss Chard  
Cucumber  
Thyme  
Cabbage  
Green Pepper

## Notes:

Wash vegetables before eating them.

Please put boxes and ice packs out by Monday morning. (Also, egg cartons)

The list of the upcoming week's vegetables will be available on the website by Friday evening. I will be adding recipes and copies of the newsletter soon. Email us with any good recipes that you would like to share.

## Day Camp this Saturday, July 28<sup>th</sup>: Getting to Know Horses

Please send in registration form if attending:

[http://www.earthdancefarm.net/youth/camp\\_registration\\_2007.pdf](http://www.earthdancefarm.net/youth/camp_registration_2007.pdf)

## Eggplant...

Eggplant finds its origin in Burma and is extremely popular in SE Asia, Africa and the Mediterranean. There are 56 known varieties that vary in size from smaller than a golf ball to larger than a foot long. It belongs to the Nightshade Family and is closely related to the tomato. Technically, it is actually a botanical fruit since it is a seed bearing structure that develops from the ripened ovaries of flowers. It thrives in these hot days of summer and is very sensitive to cold temperatures.

I attempted to grow it last year but ended up with a fine plant that made a futile attempt at fruit late in the summer only to fizzle out

before fall. This year I planted "Orient Express" in the green house in early April and presently have large gorgeous plants with bountiful blossoms and fruits.

I must admit that I catch myself "fussing" over these plants like a woman with her first grandchild. No weeds are found in these rows and the Colorado potato beetles are daily squashed. I find this very curious since I did not grow up with eggplant in the least and have rarely enjoyed eating its fruit. I've preferred to use it as a boomerang then to eat the slimy mess. But since growing the crop myself, all this has changed. Perhaps the time, intentionality and effort involved in growing it has altered my perspective. I have a desire to prepare

and enjoy eggplant now that it has grown so wonderfully for me this year, hence, this article and the recipes below. I do hope that in the forthcoming weeks you can join me in discovering the delicious world of the eggplant.

## Notes from the farmer...

It is late Sunday evening and it is raining pleasantly outside. Actually, we have been blessed with a very cool weekend and cloudy with a mild breeze all today. It was very enjoyably in the fields harvesting the vegetables. We had a couple extra hands also, which makes the work go by so much faster. We are continuing to receive enough rain at the right time to sustain the crops sufficiently. I have had to use drip irrigation only for one week in early July on a few crops. The deer totally ate your head lettuce for this week. They are like coons and sweet corn and know that

exact day when it is the sweetest right before harvest. I figure if I can put row cover on the head lettuce two weeks before harvest, chard, beets and edamame (soybean) the deer will have no interest in my gardens. That or put up a deer fence around a plot where I grow these things that they love.

Comments on the crops: It is serious Pepper, Cucumber and Eggplant time. We will have plenty of the former 2 if you have interest in any additional. Tomatoes may be ready next week if we are lucky. Also hot peppers, carrots, plums, onions and garlic coming right up.

Potatoes, though early, are now big but still new and uncured. They should be eaten in the next week. Cabbage has about run its course with only a few red heads yet to go. Cauliflower may have some hidden green worms deep inside. We soak them for 20 minutes, but still some stay. Peas are now the ones to eat the whole pod either straight up or cooked. Beans are the last of this succession and are a bit large. The next beans are haricot verts or a French type variety. Squash are abundant and I'm trying to give smaller ones for more flavor. ENJOY!

## Green Bean Idea...

The green beans are a little bigger this time so we used them to make roasted green beans. Our kids love these.

Preheat oven to 450°F. Lightly grease a large sheet pan or shallow roasting pan with oil.

Arrange the green beans in a single, uncrowded layer on the prepared pan. Drizzle the oil over the beans and roll the beans until they are evenly coated. Sprinkle with kosher salt or coarse-grained sea salt.

Roast for about 15 minutes, or until the beans are well browned, shaking the pan occasionally for even cooking.

Transfer the beans to a shallow serving bowl. Serve immediately.

## Eggplant...

**Eggplant Cheese Pie**

4 ½ c. eggplant (cut into ½-inch cubes)  
1 med onion (minced)  
2 cloves garlic (minced)  
In large frypan sauté in 1 ½ tbsp oil, 2 minutes. Cover and cook until eggplant is soft, about 5 minutes, stirring as needed.

1 tbsp fresh oregano (chopped; or 1 tsp dried)  
1 tbsp fresh basil (chopped; or 1 tsp dried)  
Add and salt to taste.

1 small zucchini (sliced)  
Line bottom and sides of greased 1-inch pie pan with zucchini slices. Spoon eggplant mixture on top.

2 c. mozzarella cheese (shredded)  
2/3 c. evaporated milk  
1 egg  
Combine in a bowl then pour over vegetables. Bake in preheated oven at 375F for 30 minutes.

(from Simply in Season)

**Marinated Eggplant Steaks**

1 med eggplant (about 1 pound), peeled and sliced 3/8 inch thick.  
1 tbsp salt  
1/3 c. Italian-style salad dressing

Sprinkle the eggplant slices with the salt and let drain in a colander for 30 minutes.

Rinse well and pat dry. Transfer the eggplant to a shallow baking dish and pour the vinaigrette over it. Let stand for a least 15 minutes to absorb the marinade.

Prepare a medium-hot fire in a grill or preheat a broiler.

Grill or broil the eggplant, turning occasionally, until tender and grill-marked, 10 – 14 minutes. The eggplant should be slightly crusty on the outside but still moist and soft inside. Serve hot.

(from the Garden-Fresh Vegetable Bookbook)

## Swiss Chard...

**Swiss Chard Stracciatella**

6 c. chicken broth  
3 garlic cloves, minced  
1 lb (6 – 8 stems with leaves) Swiss chard  
2 tbsp freshly grated Parmesan, plus more for serving  
2 large eggs, beaten

Combine the broth and garlic in a large saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Add the chard, cover, reduce the heat to medium, and cook until the chard is tender, about 8 minutes.

Stir in the Parmesan and simmer for 1 minute.

Beat the eggs in a small bowl. Bring the soup to a boil. With a fork, gradually stir the eggs into the soup. Cook Briefly, stirring constantly with a fork until threads appear, less than 1 minute. Season to taste with the salt and pepper.

Serve immediately, passing

additional cheese at the table.

(from Garden Fresh Vegetable Cookbook)

**Swiss Chard with Raisins and Pine Nuts**

1 bunch Swiss chard, any variety  
2 tbsp olive oil  
3 tbsp minced shallots  
Grated zest of 1 lemon  
¼ c. raisins  
½ c. toasted pine nuts

Rinse the chard and cut the ribs off the leaves. Cut the ribs into ½-inch dice and set aside. Stack the leaves and cut them into ½-inch strips. Set the leaves aside separately.

Heat the olive oil over medium heat in a large, heavy pot or large, deep skillet (preferably nonstick) with a tight-fitting lid. Add the shallots and chard ribs and cook, uncovered, until soft, about 5 minutes.

Add the chard leaves and cook, stirring frequently, about 1 minute. Add 2 tbsp of water, most of the lemon zest, and the raisins. Cover the pot and cook, stirring occasionally, until the chard is tender and the water has almost evaporated, 4 to 8 minutes. If the water evaporates before the chard is tender, add an additional splash of water.

(from Food to Live By)