

Meanwhile Back at the Farm... April 19, 2001

Howdy Folks,

Well justice begins to prevail. Kosmo, the internet delivery rival of WebVan in a lot of cities just threw in the towel and closed down. Let's hope WebVan is close behind. Those of you who have been members since last fall know that these delivery services have really hurt CSA's. I can deal with fair competition but these over capitalized dot.coms were able to undercut us due to the fact that they weren't needing to make a profit with all that investment money pouring in. Now that the rubber has met the road and they have to make a living like other mortals they are finding it's not so easy. I will look forward to the organic food business to get back to normal with their eventual departure. The last beds are being prepared and planted now at the main farm and by the end of next week we will be planting at Matadero for the Summer and Fall. It will be great to finally get over and get to work at Matadero. Inspecting our enormous 150 cubic yard compost pile I discovered that there had been a giant earthworm population explosion over the winter. The gazillion earthworms in the pile have reduced the manure to fine granular black compost, which we will be putting to work soon. This bodes well for our peppers, and tomatoes this year. They really need the finely broken down finished compost to do well and it never seems like you have enough of this resource when you need it. Sure looks like we are going to be flush with it this year.

We have about 400 tomato plants almost ready to plant and I will be getting about 1000 pepper plants this week from Michael Halperin, another organic farmer down in Hollister. We have planted several hundred more tomato seeds, which are sprouting nicely and will be ready to put in the ground in about a month. It's about time to start eggplants, tomatillos and other warm weather fruiting plants as well.

Our first summer squash seedlings planted by the Zen Church a few weeks ago are ready to go into the ground and we will plant them on Monday probably (weather permitting). They will be going into the terraces at the very top of our west hill, the warmest spot on the farm. We can start looking for baby squash in about 6 weeks.

We had an important visitor from Mongolia yesterday at the farm. She is a leader at home and had come to America to learn about agricultural techniques to bring back to Mongolia. She spent the morning talking to the USDA. They shamelessly lied to her about Roundup being a safe alternative to the deadly 2.4D herbicide (agent Orange) they have been buying from Russia. I pointed

out to her that the State of New York fined Monsanto \$50,000 for falsely claiming their product was safe.

The most appalling thing is that people in other countries think that because we are wealthy, that products used here are tested and safe. I guess the logic is that rich people's lives are somehow more valuable than poor people's lives and that America would spend plenty to make sure our stuff is safe for us to use. My visitor thought that products are checked and rechecked before they were released into the market in the United States. I told her that nothing could be further from the truth. In fact products are put on the market with nothing more than corporate studies which companies submit with their applications. These studies aren't challenged by anyone unless a group with enough political muscle or money can prove the product is dangerous. The presumption is that it's safe until proven dangerous. She was shocked at such a dangerous and obviously one sided process in favor of the corporations.

The first inkling Americans have had of this thinking behind our regulations is the current disaster of unlabeled genetically engineered food. It's assumed safe unless someone can prove it's dangerous. It was refreshing in a way to meet someone from outside our system who clearly thought it was crazy.

This Saturday there will be Earth Day events all over. We will have a table at the Palo Alto event and also at the Pacifica Event. The Palo Alto event is happening in the late morning and Pacifica is happening from 2-5pm.

Nancy Hall from Pacifica has suggested we start up a committee to stop the potential spraying for the Glassy Winged Sharpshooter here in San Mateo County. I've been working on behalf of groups all around the Bay Area but have neglected my own backyard. After this week with all of the Earth Day events we want to put out a call for volunteers to help on this effort. So this is an early heads up for those of you who haven't done anything politically active in awhile. If you want to stop the jackbooted pesticide sprayers from spraying the lawn your kids play on with toxic nerve gas you need to get involved. By next week we will have some dates for meetings and a public event. If you know you'd like to help on this effort please call the office here at 650-365-2993 and let me know.

Special Farm Tour April 29th

If it's been a long time since you've toured here or if you always meant to get out to the farm for a tour we'd like to really encourage you to come on this date. My friend from New York, David Douglin will be filming this tour to be made into a video about Our Farm and Permaculture. I'd like to have a nice sized tour group here and it would be great if he could interview a few members as well. Bring your friends too.

Renewal Time- Season Ends Soon

Thanks to those who did the Earlybird Renewal. We appreciate your sending in your money early. The season ends for most people with the May 3rd delivery. We always try to keep up with the reminders as we approach the end so you can put aside some money for your renewal. Otherwise it comes as a shock to the budget for many people. Regular share renewals cost \$754 and small share renewals go for \$546. This season will run May 10th to November 1st.

The Food

Broccoli: From another farm

Arugula flowers: Use the flowers and buds in your salads or stir-fry

Lettuce: Green lettuce and red lettuce

Onions: Spring Onions- They are just starting their bulbing and are chock full of sugar. Over the next few weeks you'll watch them progress.

Red Chard: Another winter survivor

Garlic Greens: It looks a little like blades of grass but it's the growing tops of garlic. You can cook with them like leeks or use them like green onions.

Red Mustard: From Matadero

Turnips: Baby turnips for eating raw or stir-fry. Check various oriental cookbooks for little "cakes" made from grated turnips.