

Meanwhile Back at the Farm...April 25, 2001

Howdy Folks,

Well this week has just flown by. We've been busy at the farm getting seed into the ground and transplanting lots of different things. The rain last week was just incredible. We had just planted millions of seeds on over half an acre and the rain just germinated it all. It is just beautiful. Row upon row of tiny seedlings, all straining up to the sun and pounding roots down into the soft soil. Even the carrots, notoriously difficult to germinate, came up thick and lush. This week we've been rushing to get the drip irrigation tubes installed everywhere to keep the ground wet while all this sprouting is going on. The main farm has never looked so good with all of its beds prepared and planted. So ironic that just when we really get working this place down to a science we have to leave.

It's tough to change my routines around the farm. Regeneration and restoration has been so much a part of how we farm that leaving makes us feel like we are cutting corners. We aren't building for the future here anymore so when we don't integrate that into our daily work it feels like we are cheating. But you don't keep investing in a place that you are leaving. I don't ever want to leave a farm again.

We are using up the last of our compost here at the main farm. We have had compost continually being made for 8 years here and it feels weird not to have 100 tons of compost cooking out there. We are only preparing the beds down to 6 inches or so instead of our usual 16 inches deep. We were constantly pushing the fertile zone deeper and deeper, working air and compost down into the cracks and crannies so that the worms, digging for and eating the organic matter, would convert our adobe clay into friable loam.

On the other hand we have learned so much here that we know that we will be able to work much more quickly at a new place building soil. Our accumulated techniques will have us enjoying great soil in only one to three years instead of the eight years it's taken here. If we do get the Half Moon Bay site we will be starting out with highly fertile soil rather than building it up from scratch.

How about those oil companies eh? They blow up a refinery in L.A., which of course means they can't make as much gasoline. Then they use that "shortage" to justify, via free-market fundamentalism, a price rise since there suddenly is more demand than there is supply. Sounds a lot like our utility crisis only even more cynically manipulated. The oil companies have even floated the idea that we could be looking at \$3 per gallon gasoline by summer.

Well you know once they float that in the press it's damned sure going to happen. This is identical to the situation over a year ago in the Bay Area where they blew up a refinery in Contra Costa county and jacked gas prices from \$1.09 to 1.69 a gallon. When the refinery was fixed prices of course didn't go down. What's really going on is that we are running out of oil and the corporations are going to squeeze us for every cent as it dries up. Never mind the fact that they have been compensated via the oil depletion allowance for using up their stock specifically so the price wouldn't go up when oil started to run out. Our last decent president, Jimmy Carter, slapped a huge "windfalls profit tax" on the oil companies when they pulled this kind of malarky back in the 1980's and gave the money to alternative energy projects. Not infected with today's free market fundamentalism it wasn't hard for congress to see that it wasn't fair that the corporations should be able to profit unreasonably in their monopoly control of a public resource. Nowadays it seems like unholy profits are a religious freedom enjoyed by corporate capitalists, especially with their high poo-bah, the illegitimate son of a Bush, as president-select.

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- Next week is the final delivery of the cool season!!! Renewal fee for a regular share is \$754 and for a small share is \$546. The warm season goes from May 10th all the way through November 1st. Although we prefer checks, you can use a credit card if you haven't been budgeting enough money for your renewal. Remember you gotta eat!

The Food

Broccoli: From another farm

Fava Beans: Use the entire pod, cut up, in stir-fry or shuck the larger beans to eat raw, in salad, or to cook. If this is your first time eating Fava beans and you have a Mediterranean and/or Jewish heritage eat only a small handful. A very small number of people from the Mediterranean have a reaction somewhat like an allergy called Favism. If you don't have any

negative reactions you can eat them all you want.

Lettuce: This is from another farm but it looks like we'll be back on our own lettuce next week.

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.

Beet Greens: Use them like chard. In fact Swiss Chard is actually a type of beet which makes big leaves and no root.

Carrots: from another farm.

Osaka Purple Mustard: From Matadero

Red Russian Kale: You can use Kale like any other leafy green. Cooked, chopped and mixed with mashed potatoes is another tasty way. Kale marinates in oil and vinegar well too.

No Recipe Still: Jean Pierre hasn't resurfaced yet after his move to the Southwest but we will start up other recipes next week if he isn't ready to start doing them for us yet.

"Monsanto Can Steal Farmers Land at Will"

In an outrageous miscarriage of justice a Canadian court is permitting Monsanto damages in a case where their pollen blew onto an adjoining farm. The court ruled that when Percy replanted his own seed, which now had some of Monsanto's genes in it that he owes them money. Not discussed in this article is that fact that this amounts to corporate piracy. Farmers like Percy, when sued by giants like Monsanto, will not be able to afford to defend themselves and Monsanto will simply take their farms. Not only did Monsanto's pollen pollute Percy's field's but the corporation hired the Pinkerton's to trespass on Percy's property to steal samples of his plants and these stolen plants were permitted as evidence in the trial. Who the hell do these guys think they are? Well the courts have decided that one. They are gods and can do what they like.

Even before this case was decided, Monsanto was mass mailing letters to farmers stating that they suspected the farmer had illegally obtained their gene's and that they had a choice of paying something like \$28,000 in fees or be sued by the corporation. Now if you or I did this we would go to jail for extortion. Some farmers, fearing the killing stress and expense of a lawsuit have actually paid Monsanto this extortion. We need to revoke Monsanto's corporate charter and put them out of business.