



TWO SMALL FARMS

Community Supported Agriculture

July 2, 3, 4 2008

Preserving Farmland and Farmers, by Steve and Jeanne

In 1999 we lived in a rented house in downtown Watsonville while farming on two rented parcels, one in La Selva Beach, the other outside Corralitos. There were frustrations inherent in farming two parcels so far apart—moving equipment, supplies, and workers around was a headache. But the greatest frustration was not being able to live where we farmed. It was far from the life we had imagined leading when we started farming a few years before. The ideal of living and raising a family in an open rural setting was the main reason we wanted to farm in the first place. Instead, Steve would arise early, trying not to wake the baby as he left, often returning after she had gone to bed at night. (We hung a baby swing from the shed at the La Selva property, but the logistics of farming and baby care didn't mesh as well as we'd envisioned.) We hadn't realized before settling here that few growers in the Watsonville/Salinas area actually live where they farm. Most rented agricultural land does not include housing. And buying land around here is next to impossible on a small farmer's income. We grudgingly began to think about relocating to a less expensive area.

Around that same time, the Open Space Alliance (a Santa Cruz county land trust) bought an abandoned 39-acre dairy farm just outside of Watsonville in order to preserve it in farmland and open space. The property had been part of a hotly contested attempt by a San Francisco developer to annex it along with the neighboring 350 acres into the city of Watsonville, to clear the way for development of housing tracts, shopping centers, and a golf course. OSA arranged for two easements to be placed on the property. A conservation easement would preserve the half of the land that borders the wetlands of Harkins Slough. An agricultural easement would maintain the other half as farmland, protected against the constant pressures for development. The unique easement they crafted assured that the land would not only remain in agriculture, but be managed organically in perpetuity. These easements, which stay with the land forever, lowered the development value of the land considerably. OSA then offered the property for sale at a much reduced price.

Although it felt like a tremendous reach for us at the time, we realized that it probably marked the only opportunity for us to own good farmland in this area. In spring of 2000 we put forth an offer. We've never regretted that decision. Since

Time to Renew

Our next 9-week summer session starts July 23rd–25th. If you're paying on the 9-week schedule, now is the time to send in your \$180 for just veggies or \$234 for veggies plus flowers for the next session (through Sept 17, 18, 19). Or send \$360 veggies/ \$468 with flowers to pay through the end of the year (November 19, 20, 21).

Since we still have a waiting list, it is important that you let us know whether you are continuing by **Monday, July 14th** and mail your checks in time for them to reach our office by **Friday, July 18th**. You can e-mail or call Shelley anytime at (csa@twosmallfarms.com or 831/786-0625).

Please don't leave checks at the pick-up site—they are too likely to get lost, eaten by snails, or worse, sitting outside on the clipboard for a week before we return to that site.

moving here 8 years ago, the many benefits of owning this special piece of land have become evident. Farmers who own

their land can make investments in the long term health of the soil and environment that just don't make economic sense for renters. Getting to know a piece of property as farmland takes a few years. A farmer learns the lay of the land and gets a feel for how to best use different areas of the farm from year to year. Good farming practices like putting in a hedgerow of native plants to provide habitat for beneficial insects don't have immediate benefits. Erosion control and water saving improvements are also more palatable to a farmer's budget when we know we will be on the property long term. Now that we are a well-established farm, we are planning more and more for long term. Since we own instead of rent, we can put in an orchard which won't begin producing for a few years. A decent farmer will treat any land they farm with care, but

there is another level of care that applies when your farm is also your home. It comes from knowing it so well and envisioning it far into the future.

The arrangement we benefited from can be a model for other small farmers collaborating with land trusts. The Open Space Alliance this year launched its Small Sustainable Farm Protection Program, to focus on local farm land preservation. We support their work and hope that with their help we will see more and more sustainable farmers own land in Santa Cruz County. Considering the growing community of CSA members and others wanting to support small farms, we feel hopeful that we will.

This Week

Desiree New Potatoes ^{HG}

Little Gem Lettuce ^{MF}

Romaine Lettuce ^{HG}

Chantenay Carrots ^{HG}

Lacinato Kale ^{MF}

Dill or Cilantro ^{MF}

Baby Erbette Chard ^{MF}

Basil (Lemon or Genovese) ^{MF}

Mystery ^{HG}

Mystery ^{MF}

Flowers: Mixed Bouquet ^{HG,*}

Open Space Alliance/ Slow Food Dinner

Open Space Alliance and Slow Food Monterey invite you to dine at the 6th Annual OSA Slow Food Dinner, Sunday, August 17th at 4 p.m. at High Ground Organics in Watsonville. Featuring Guest Chef Jozseph Schultz of India Joze. We'll dine outside at High Ground Organics Farm, get a private tour of the natural-resource easement along Harkins Slough, and see the latest progress on the habitat restoration projects. Ticket price is \$125 per person for a 5-course meal including wine. This event is a fundraiser for the Open Space Alliance and Slow Food Monterey. For reservations, contact OSA: (831) 423-0700 or osa@santacruzosa.org.

Veggie Notes and Recipes

Store all this week's produce in the fridge, except the basil if your fridge gets too cold. Top the carrots for storage, the roots store better without the greens.

Donna of Pacific Grove suggests: "Sometimes when I have extra greens, I take kale, spinach, whatever and sauté them up with onions and garlic, add mushrooms and sliced bell peppers. I then freeze just the right amount to make a couple of omelets. I can take the greens out of the freezer even the morning of, heat them in the microwave, prepare my eggs and put in the greens with some of my favorite cheese—a healthful way to eat up all those wonderful greens. Or I make a quiche: 4 eggs beat with 3 cups of fat free cream, salt and pepper to taste and 1½ cups gruyere cheese. I dice a little ham and put it in a 9 inch pie plate that I have sprayed with oil, sprinkle the cheese around, spread the greens then pour the eggs on top and bake at 400° for about 50 minutes."

What Murielle Would Do With This Week's Box: I see a week of fresh flavorful salads. Romaine suggests a hearty Caesar salad. A typical Caesar salad comprises romaine lettuce and home made croutons dressed with Parmesan cheese, lemon juice, anchovies, olive oil, egg, Worcestershire sauce, and black pepper. I like to use parmesan crisps instead of the croutons. Especially refreshing is romaine salad with avocado, jicama and orange. I would make the most out of the new potatoes and little gem lettuce with a grilled new potato salad with cherry tomatoes, summer beans, and basil (see below). With the carrots I would gently sauté them in butter, or a nice grated carrot salad with ginger and fresh orange juice. When I have arugula, I always make my favorite salad—arugula & oranges with balsamic vinaigrette.

Grilled New Potato Salad with Cherry Tomatoes, Summer Beans and Basil, from *Field of Greens* by Annie Somerville

1 lb. new potatoes	olive oil
1 small handful of little gem lettuce	1/8 lb. fresh summer beans (green, yellow wax, or haricot vert)
¼ pint cherry tomatoes	sea salt and pepper
Basil Garlic Vinaigrette	6 Nicoise or Gaeta olives
Chopped fresh dill	

Toss new potatoes with a little olive oil and a few pinches of salt and pepper. Cover and roast until tender. Cut the potatoes into halves or quarters, if large. Slide onto skewers for grilling. While potatoes are roasting, prepare the beans by slicing

diagonally, cook in water until just tender, and rinse under cold water and drain. Wash lettuce and make the vinaigrette.

Place the potatoes on the grill and grill until golden and crisp, cut side down. Slide grilled potatoes from the skewers and toss with the beans, cherry tomatoes, and vinaigrette. Season with salt and pepper. Loosely arrange the greens on a platter, spoon the vegetables over and garnish with olives.

Basil-Garlic Vinaigrette

1 TBS Champagne vinegar	3 TBS extra virgin olive oil
½ cup fresh basil leaves	½ tsp. sea salt
1 garlic clove, coarsely chopped	

Kale & Potato Hash, from *Eating Well Magazine* www.eatingwell.com

Serve as a side with a steak or pork chops or set a poached egg on top for a hearty breakfast or brunch.

8 cups torn kale leaves	2 TBS horseradish
1 medium shallot, minced	½ tsp. freshly ground pepper
¼ tsp. salt	2 cups cooked shredded potatoes
3 TBS extra-virgin olive oil	

Place kale in a large cast iron skillet and sauté in butter, until wilted, about 6 minutes. Cool slightly, and finely chop. Meanwhile, mix horseradish, shallot, pepper and salt in a large bowl. Add the chopped kale and potatoes; stir to combine. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the kale mixture, spread into an even layer and cook, stirring every 3–4 minutes and returning the mixture to an even layer, until the potatoes begin to turn golden brown and crisp, 12–15 minutes total.

Tip: When preparing kale for these recipes, remove the tough ribs, chop or tear the kale as directed, then wash it, allowing some water to cling to the leaves. The moisture helps steam the kale during the first stages of cooking.

Garden Soup with Lacinato Kale and Cauliflower, adapted from *Vegetable Soups from Deborah Madison's Kitchen*

2 onions, diced	½ pound potatoes, diced
2 TBS olive oil, plus extra to finish	2 cups stemmed and slivered lacinato kale
2 cups small cauliflower florets	1 garlic clove, minced
S & P to taste	6 cups broth or stock
Asiago cheese for grating	

Chop the potato. Warm the olive oil in soup pot over med. heat. Add onion and potato, give them a stir, and while they're warming up, slick the kale off its ropy stems, then slice the leaves into short ribbons. Add the kale to the pot along with the cauliflower, garlic, and salt. Cook for about 5 minutes. Add the stock, bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer until the vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes. Ladle the soup into bowls and drizzle some olive oil into each. Season with pepper and grate a little cheese into the soup.

Everything in your box and the flowers are organically grown. From Mariquita Farm: little gem, dill, cilantro, kale, chard, basil, mystery (radishes or arugula). From High Ground: romaine, potatoes, carrots, mystery (cauliflower, strawberries, summer squash), flowers. From Thomas Farm: some flowers.