



Notes From The Field

BLUE HOUSE FARM

For the week of June 14, 2008

In Your Box This Week

Salad Mix	Swiss Chard
Cilantro	Strawberries
Garlic	Spinach
Beets	Dill

Recipe: Fresh Strawberry Sauce

Perfect drizzled over pancakes, ice cream, cheesecake, brownies or really just about anything!

Makes 3 cups sauce

1 qt strawberries, hulled and sliced thin scant 1/4 c sugar
pinch salt 1/2 cup strawberry jam 1 tbsp lemon juice

1. Toss the berries, sugar, and salt together and let stand until the berries have released their juice and the sugar has dissolved, stirring occasionally, about 30 minutes.

2. Simmer the jam in a small saucepan over medium heat until the froth subsides, about 3 minutes. Stir in the lemon juice, then stir the warm jam mixture into the strawberries. Cool to room temperature before serving, about 1 hour.

Recipe adapted from *The America's Test Kitchen Family Cookbook*

Along with the writings of the Blue House Farmers, Ned and Ryan, from time to time you will get to hear from the interns who work, play, and learn here. This weeks column is by Susan Squaglietti~

Is Mother Nature Present on the Farm?

Hello, my name is Susan and I am an...intern on the Blue House Farm for the 2008 harvest season. I am a mother with an adult son; I live locally in the Bay area and am a partner to a loving husband. I work three days on the farm and continue my work week at the Veterans Hospital in Palo Alto as a cardiac nurse practitioner. Several years ago, I began thinking how I might change my career focus and after much web searching found this exciting opportunity. Ned and Ryan have broken the tradition of working with the "usual" intern on the farm and hired this mother during another mid life crisis.

My new role has been challenging. It has required developing new skill techniques, learning a new language and adapting to new settings. I began the season viewing most of my experience through my nursing lens. I was asking "Whose is in charge of bed control on this farm?" and believed the fragile flower seedlings placed in the ground were really being admitted to the flower neonatal intensive care unit. Was I doing another version of "Pharm care"? Malfunctioning irrigation lines haunted me like an intravenous line at risk for clotting off. I placed plants into the ground as if I was helping a patient at the bedside and gently cut all plastic wrap on the beds as if I was making a gentle suture line.

As weeks passed, I began hearing new phrases while working such as "What would Ryan (Jesus) do?" Ned and Ryan sounded like Santa Claus always saying "Hoe, hoe, hoe". I had to become comfortable with cruel terms like "hardening off" the plants. "Hang loose" was the standard measurement for estimating spacing between plants.

Becoming competent with farm techniques continues to be an on going lesson. Thanks to Ned and Ryan's patience and good humor, they (and the farm) have survived my mistakes. Like the time...my plate in the seed hopper began milling the seeds before they were sowed, like the time...Ned was under a geyser as I "primed the pump", like the time...I caused flooding (i.e. hemorrhage) at the main line while putting in T-tape. We have even used unorthodox farming practices such as singing "My Girl" to the early girl tomatoes to stimulate them to spread their roots.

So why would I choose this disruptive, intensive lifestyle change at my age? I am privileged to know my anti-oxidant source, first hand. By participating in organic farming, I am helping produce healthy foods for CSA members to fight chronic illness such as heart disease and cancer. Organic farming is "good for the people and good for the planet". Hopefully, CSA members will sow their seeds by informing others to eat fresh and buy local.

The Blue House Farm is a spiritual place filled with nutrients that feed the heart, soul and body. During World War II, our country was covered with "Victory Gardens" that served to feed over 50% of the nation. We do not need a war or oil crisis to achieve this "victory" again to help our planet and population. Thank you for supporting a larger cause.

- Susan

From Our House to your House



Adam Monica Nico Susan
Ryan Raina Ned

Strawberry and Summer Solstice Festival at Blue House Farm • Saturday, June 21, 2:00-6:00