In the Share

Pea Shoots, 1 bunch  
Lettuce Mix, 1 bag  
Green Garlic, 1 bunch  
Radishes, 1 bunch  
Lettuce, 1 bunch  
Choice of Spouts, 1 bag  
Cilantro, 1 bunch

Our cooler smells like salsa today! The green garlic and cilantro are so fresh and pungent that they don’t seem to mind the complete absence of tomatoes and tomatillos. Still, I don’t think they can pull off a salsa without at least one of those essential ingredients. Perhaps these two will be happy chopped into a simple salad dressing with olive oil, vinegar, salt and pepper instead. Or use them in the Cilantro Lime Vinaigrette recipe on the back of this newsletter. Salad dressing is certainly in order this week given the number of salad fixings in the share!

We harvested a record 104 pounds of lettuce mix on Tuesday, thus the fairly large bag of it in your share. It is clean and tasty and mostly ready to go. When we packed it, it was still wetter than I would have liked, which could cause some rot in that plastic bag. So, I recommend that you eat it before you dig into the lettuce head, and that you put it through your salad spinner to remove excess moisture before you put it in your salad bowl. There are no mustards in this mix. (I have found it impossible to grow them in the spring.) I hope to deliver some spicy mustard with the sweet lettuce later in the year, but for now the mix is all sweet.

Claire’s Comments

Summer Plans

In the spring I am often asked if there will be anything new at the farm this year. Generally when CSA members ask that question, of course they are wondering if there will be any new and exciting vegetables in their shares. Usually my answer is rather bland. I just planted some new varieties of sweet corn, so I am hoping to deliver a taste of corn this year. We also planted five varieties of melons, and I have hope of delivering some of those delicious fruits after several years of failed attempts. But in general the vegetable menu will be much the same as it has been with a few new varieties thrown in here and there.

When I expand the scope of that question beyond the actual vegetables, my answer becomes much more interesting. The three big changes the farm will see this year are the completion of our passive solar greenhouse, the opportunity for CSA members to compost their vegetable scraps at the farm, and the installation of our new irrigation system. All these things will have a long-term impact on both the quality and quantity of food that we grow at Troy.

Many of you have heard about the greenhouse already. It is exciting because finally we can move out of the small and inefficient hoophouse in my backyard and into a real production greenhouse where we can grow not only seedlings for the farm and for sale, but also winter herbs and greens. The building process has been long and difficult and it is not quite over yet – though we are very close! I look forward to exclaiming the wonders of this new greenhouse after the building process is done. Until then, our main focus at the greenhouse is just to complete it!

One of the features of the new greenhouse is a worm room where we will begin a vermicomposting project. Once we get the system designed and installed, we will be able to offer you an opportunity to compost your vegetable scraps at the farm. The idea is that you bring your scraps to us, we turn them into worm food, the worms turn them into castings, we make potting soil from the castings, new seedlings grow in the potting soil, and finally those seedlings mature into the next crop of CSA vegetables. Lovely, isn’t it? Don’t start saving your vegetable scraps for us quite yet though, as we have a way to go before the system is in place. If all goes well, you will hear more about it before fall.

Finally the irrigation system is the change that will be in place before either of these other items is functioning. The parts and pieces have all arrived and we have started to put them together. With a bit of work and some luck, I will be able to report our first successful irrigation attempt next week! For eight years I have grown vegetables at Troy with only the rain to rely on. This irrigation system will force a paradigm shift for us, the closest we will ever come to controlling the weather. We are told by other farmers that once we have control of the water, we will wonder how we ever did it before. And most importantly, our vegetables will be much more productive. Maybe irrigation is just what the corn and melons have needed all these years!
Logistical Questions and Answers

CSA Share Pick-up:

Q: If I get to choose my own vegetables from the piles, how do I know what and how much to take?
A: The name and quantity of each vegetable is listed on a board at the pickup table as well as on this newsletter (i.e. radishes, 1 bunch; sprouts, 1 bag, etc.) The vegetables are displayed on the table in the same order that they are listed. This arrangement will help you identify any mysterious veggies and also make it less likely that you will forget an item. Sometimes there will be multiple varieties of a particular vegetable to choose from, but you will still take only the number listed for that vegetable. For instance, there may be red and green lettuce in the pile; you choose one or the other when the list says “lettuce, 1 head.” Also, someone will always be behind the stand to help you. Just ask.

Q: What do I pack my vegetables in?
A: That is up to you. Bring a bag or a box to take your vegetables home in. But don’t worry if you forget a tote on occasion. We will have some extra bags in the truck for you to use.

Q: What if I forget to come to the pick-up some week?
A: I bag unclaimed shares and set them on my front porch for the night. You can come by to get yours anytime between 7:00 PM on Thursday and 6:00 AM on Friday. In this case, you will simply take a pre-packed bag and will not be able to choose your own varieties. At 6:00 AM on Friday I take any leftovers to the farm to distribute to our volunteers. My porch is at 1814 Sheridan Drive (don’t be distracted by nearby Sheridan Street).

Q: What if I am out of town during the pickup?
A: Have a friend or neighbor pick up your vegetables instead. You can ask your friend to deliver the food to you, or just have her/him eat it if you will be gone for a while and won’t be able to use it. If you cannot find someone to come to the pick-up, please try to let me know ahead of time and I won’t harvest your share that week.

Q: I signed up for eggs. How do I get them?
A: Eggs will be in a separate cooler. Just cross your name off the egg list on top of the cooler and add your dozen to your bag. Folks who signed up for a weekly dozen will get eggs every week. Those who signed up for biweekly eggs will be assigned to an “A” week or a “B” week and will get their dozen every other week accordingly. Either way, your name will be on the list if you are scheduled to get eggs that week. If you are picking up your share at my house, the egg cooler will be there as well, and you should follow the same procedure as at the farm.

Market Share Pick-up:
The market share is different from the standard share in that it is a simple credit at the farm stand. Market share members can shop as often or as little as they like. If you miss a week, just come the next. There will not be a share waiting for you on my porch. This is a new share style for us, so we expect you may have additional questions.

More Questions? Please ask. Contact information is below.

Recipe

Cilantro Lime Vinaigrette
from Madison Herb Society Cookbook, K. Milanich

2/3 cup (6 oz.) lime juice
3 Tbs. minced garlic
¼ cup apple cider vinegar
pinch salt
2/3 cup packed cilantro
2-4 dashes bottled hot pepper sauce
1 Tbs. cumin
¼ cup canola oil

Place all ingredients except the oil in a blender. Turn on blender. Add oil very slowly through the “hole” in the middle. Use a little water if you lose the hole, but just enough to keep the little hole so the oil will get blended. Makes about 1 ¼ cups.

(continued from “In the Share”)

The pea shoots continue the sweet theme. Anyone who has not tried them before is always surprised at how delicious and full of pea flavor they are. Snip them into your salad stem and tendrils and all. Or have them on a sandwich. Finally peas on a sandwich without having to worry about them rolling off! The stems at the base of the bunch will tend to be a bit tough, so snip them off and discard. For those who like some spicy with their sweet, the radishes are for you. There are two varieties of radishes in most of the bunches. The dark red ones are cheriette and the pale pink ones are pink beauty. Both are deceivingly sweet in the first bite, but they hit you with the spicy kick soon enough.

The green garlic is especially large and lush this year. For those of us whose winter garlic is moldy and sprouted, this green garlic could not be more welcome. Cut it as you would cut a scallion, stem and leaves all. But use it anywhere you would use clove garlic: hummus, stir fry, garlic bread, salad dressing, etc.

Coming next week: more salad mix and lettuce and radishes, plus kale, spinach, and possibly turnips.

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