In the Share

- Lettuce Mix, 1 bag
- Broccoli, 1 head/bunch
- Garlic Scapes, 1 bunch
- Radishes, 1 bunch
- Lettuce, 1 head
- Kale, 1 bunch
- Dill or Cilantro, 1 bunch

These early June shares are always a little tricky. We are constantly questioning, “will we have enough to make a decent share?” “how much salad will folks be able to eat in one week?,” “do we need to include some radish recipes?” We still went through the usual questioning this week as we harvested and packed. But in the end we agreed that this is one of the best spring shares we have had! What’s so great? Let me tell you.

First, the lettuce. You have your choice of two varieties. Both are Batavian types. Batavians are a cross between leaf and romaine lettuces. They have the sweetness of a leaf lettuce with the crispness of a romaine. These are far and away my favorite lettuces both as a grower and an eater, so you will have the chance to see many of them this year. The green heads are a variety called Nevada, and the reds are called Magenta. Both are huge and crisp and delicious and likely one of the best lettuce harvests we will see all season. For those of you who still have some lettuce left over from last week, there are a few smaller heads in the bunch and we can help you find them if you like.

Next, the kale. I know not everyone will be immediately excited about this vegetable. The way I see it, there are kale lovers and future kale lovers. I know it is part of my job to help make that future a reality for some of you. Let me start by saying that this first kale harvest of the season is always some of (continued on the back)

Claire’s Comments

Rain, Weeds, and Vegetables

We have been having such a good spring. Those hot days in May had me thinking we were in for a real summer this year instead of the prolonged spring that slipped directly into fall last year. I prefer heat in the summer, so that would be fine with me! Then we had a dry spell that lasted about two weeks and I was feeling lucky that we would soon have an irrigation system to solve that problem. Meanwhile, our intern and worker share crews had started and we were transplanting and weeding and getting so much done each week that I wondered if we would finally have the weed free farm we work for each year. Such lovely spring dreams.

After that dry spell it started to rain on and off, and really, it was perfect. We gained a little time to finish the irrigation system and the new seeds and seedlings were happy. We had had a few rain days, but there was plenty of rain day work, so all was well. Then last Friday the rain finally went too far for me. I was all prepared to wheel hoe and hand hoe our way through most of the farm. The weeds were just the right size to make the work quick and meaningful. The crew had just proved themselves the week before by transplanting over 2000 tomato plants, 1000 peppers, and 600 eggplants in less than 4 hours. We were all set for a very productive day. But it rained hard the night before and was still raining when we got to the field. Instead of weeding, we had to spend the morning in the basement finishing up the last of our rain day bean shelling and popcorn husking. We stayed dry, but I, at least, left unsatisfied.

The ground dried up enough on Sunday to allow us to transplant out more broccoli, lettuce, and scallions on Monday afternoon. We were also able to do some weeding in the morning. We focused on hand pulling since using hoes in wet ground is not usually so effective. We cleaned up the carrots, summer squash and cucumbers that way. But we left knowing that there were many more weeds to take down before they take over.

Tuesday brought more rain. We harvested all morning in our rain gear and mud boots. Walking through the field in such wet conditions is no good for the soil. Our footsteps disturb and compact the ground so much that when it finally dries we can see our boot prints set in the concrete the mud has become. But with harvesting we have no choice. It must be done, rain or shine.

Wednesday was a better day. No rain. We finished the harvest in the morning and did some weeding in the afternoon. Still, as I left the farm it was clear we needed to get on top of the broccoli, peas, and second planting carrots fast it we plan to stay ahead of the weeds in those sections. All spring up until now I have been so happy with
Recipe

As soon as we started harvesting garlic scapes this week, Jenna (one of our farm interns) started looking forward to some garlic scape pesto. Though I have heard of it many times, I don’t believe I have ever printed a recipe for it in the newsletter. Thanks to Jenna who was kind enough to send hers along. I can remedy that problem this week. Thanks Jenna!

Garlic Scape Pesto

½ lb. garlic scapes, top bulbs removed, chopped into 1” sections
½ cup pine nuts
2 cups grated parmesan cheese (substitute romano or asiago)
½ cup extra virgin olive oil (to achieve the correct texture)

Possible additions: ½ cup fresh herbs – parsley, dill, or cilantro

Use only the tender parts of the scapes, peeling bottom ends if tough. In a food processor, combine the scapes, pine nuts, and optional herbs, pulse to chop into a rough paste. Add cheese and pulse. With processor running, drizzle in just enough olive oil to achieve a moist spreading consistency. Taste for salt and add some sea salt if necessary.

Uses: Add to omelets, eat on crackers, add to potato salad, season veggies or rice, and of course serve on pasta.

Can freeze - will keep for several months.

(continued from “Claire's Comments”)

how on top of things we have been. Now we are teetering on the edge of either catching up or falling behind for the duration. Jake is being more optimistic about it, which is great. It is especially hard when both of us are struggling with feeling overwhelmed. If we can tackle the weeding this Friday that we were not able to do last Friday, we just might catch up after all. I think that is what Jake is counting on.

Meanwhile, all the rain is reminding us how much vegetables love water. If you can look past the weeds we still have, you can see that the farm is looking healthy and lush. Everything is growing – big and tender and beautiful. The recent rains are certainly to thank for the lovely share you have this week. Water is good for plants not only because they need it to live, just like we do, but also because water in the soil makes more nutrients available to the plant. Moist soil allows plant roots both to access and take up nutrients more easily. Though the same nutrients are present in our soil when it is dry, the plants have a much more difficult time actually using those nutrients.

Everything in balance, I suppose. It can be hard for me to appreciate the rain when it is keeps me from doing the weeding that must be done. But when I harvest lettuce like we have this week, I know it is due to that same rain.

(continued from “In the Share”)

the best, most tender kale we will have all year. If you have puzzled over the toughness of this vegetable in the past, let this harvest show you just how tender and delicious it can be. You have your choice of Red Russian, Redbor, and Lacinato. Each is at its very best today!

Every year I am asked to reprint the kale recipe that farm interns Maggie and Ryah made up back in 2003. It is called Joyous Kale and many folks have come to love it over the years. Instead of reprinting it this year, I am including this link to a 2007 newsletter that includes it: Urban Roots 6 June 2007. The recipe is at the bottom of the second page. You can find more historical newsletters and recipes on our website. The website address is in the footer below.

My favorite way to prepare kale is very easy. Wash the kale to get it a bit wet. Remove the stem and chop the leaves. Sauté onion and garlic in olive oil until tender. Add the kale, some tamari, and vinegar and cover so the kale will steam over medium heat. When the kale is thoroughly wilted, toss in some sesame seeds. In my house we eat this dish as a side with just about anything.

Back to the list of deliciousness, the garlic scapes. A couple years ago we started harvesting our scapes a new way. Now instead of just cutting them off the plant, we actually pull the scape out of the garlic. This new method allows us to harvest the scapes when they are younger and more tender and also produces a long white base that is the best a garlic scape has to offer. Though I was surprised to hear it, Jake admitted this week that with this new harvest method he actually prefers the scapes to the green garlic. The scapes can be used just as you would use garlic or green garlic, though Jake asked that I also mention that the tender scapes are far and away the best for raw eating. See Jenna’s recipe for garlic scape pesto on the left. The cilantro or dill in your share can also be added to this recipe.

Broccoli and spinach are both new items this week and both so obviously wonderful that I don’t think I need to say much about them. The spinach will be just enough for a small salad with feta, olives, and caramelized onions. My favorite! And the broccoli will be delicious simply steamed and eaten as is. After a winter of frozen broccoli, there is nothing like the first taste of this vegetable fresh from the field! Portions on both these items are small this week, but there should be more to come over the rest of the month.

Next Week: More lettuce, radishes, spinach, and garlic. New items may include turnips, bok choy, and chard.