There are several lovely items in the share this week. The most amazing item is the fennel. It is the best we have ever grown — generally large and clean. And somehow we were able to harvest it at that perfect moment when it is at its most mature, but not yet starting to elongate and bolt. Fennel has a distinct and unique licorice flavor, though a love of licorice is not always an indicator of a love of fennel. Jake, for instance, loves black licorice more than anyone I know, but he is not a fan of fennel. Our worker share Rachel, on the other hand, does not like licorice, but is really looking forward to using these two lovely fennel bulbs. Go figure.

Sarah’s parents Connie and Gene are visiting this week, and took us out for dinner on Tuesday night. I specifically chose a menu item that included fennel, in the hopes of gaining some insight into how to prepare this unusual vegetable. The fennel in the dish I ordered was simple and delicious. Though I do not know just how I would replicate it in my own kitchen, I did learn that I like fennel that is cooked to the point of being soft. Raw or lightly cooked fennel can be very fibrous. But when it is cooked, the texture is quite different. In addition to the recipe on the back, take a look at our website for fennel recipes in past newsletters: http://www.troygardens.org/what-we-do/troy-community-farm/csa/newsletters-and-photos

(continued on the back)

The CSA garden is one of my favorite things about Troy Community Farm. I love that it will draw you out to see just where your vegetables are growing and that you can take a bouquet home with your share each week. I hope you enjoy it as well!
Recipes

Farm intern Meghan Morris was very excited to see the fennel harvest this week. She is clearly in the fennel lover camp! This recipe is a family favorite of hers. She says it is very versatile and can easily accommodate additional vegetables like summer squash, peas, or beans. She also likes fennel chopped raw into a salad with greens, blue cheese, and walnuts.

Deep Dish Vegetable Torta
from Meghan Morris

2 lbs potatoes, peeled
3 bell peppers
other vegetables, optional
1 small onion, thinly sliced
1 cup fennel, coarsely chopped
olive oil
basil pesto
3/4 lb mozzarella or other melty cheese
1/4 cup romano or parmesan cheese
1/2-3/4 cup chopped kalamata olives

Preheat oven to 375. Steam potatoes until tender. Let cool and cut into thin slices. Roast peppers in oven until blistered and remove skin. Cut in strips and press between paper towels to remove moisture. If using other vegetables, precook as desired and remove excess moisture. Sauté onion and fennel in olive oil until very soft. Stir in pesto and cook for several minutes. Grease 9-inch pie pan or springform pan and place on baking sheet. Put half of potatoes, half of peppers, half of cheese. Then put onion and fennel mixture. Then top with another layer of potatoes and peppers and cheese. Then sprinkle with olives. Bake for 45-50 minutes. Serve hot or at room temperature.

~~~~

Twice this week I have been asked for this salad dressing recipe. Our friends and CSA members Amy and Julie came over for dinner on Saturday and wanted to know what was in the dressing. Then again last night Sarah’s mom Connie wondered what made it so good. What follows is not exactly a recipe, but more a description of how I make it. My friends Shirl and Kate gave the dressing its name. Whenever they come over for dinner they always request the “house dressing.”

House Dressing
from Claire Strader

Combine roughly equal parts of olive oil, tamari, and apple cider vinegar. Add in one or two finely minced cloves of garlic and a tablespoon or two of sesame oil. Shake well, taste, and adjust as desired. Add some minced ginger, and/or fancy flavored vinegar to enhance the basic dressing.

I usually make about a pint of dressing each time I make it and store it in the fridge. It will separate, so shake well before each serving.

(continued from “In the Share”)

Though not all of you will choose it over the last of the snap peas, the beans, in my opinion are the most exciting item in the share this week. I love beans, especially these particular green beans. The variety is Maxibel and they are an haricot vert type that grows long and thin and tender. They also have a sweet flavor unmatched by any other bean. The yellow bean variety in the bag is Rocdor and they are the best yellow bean I have found. Together with the green they make a beautiful and delicious dish. When I cook my first beans this year, I will just steam them and serve them with butter. Yum!

This share includes the last CSA peas of the season. Everyone has a pound bag of shell peas, and some of you will choose a half-pound bag of snap peas over the beans. After weeks of talking about peas, I will not say much about these, except that I hope that they are enough to hold you through to next year! If you worry that they will not be, we might have a small number of peas for sale at the farm stand next week.

With the lettuce and the radishes and the sprouts, this share feels like a return to the early season salad shares. Though the lettuce is smaller than the amazing lettuce of June, it is still crisp and delicious. The radishes are very spicy and more blemished than June radishes, but we thought you would enjoy them as the last of the radishes until fall. The sprouts are just as sweet and yummy as they are all year round, being the one crop we grow that it not really susceptible to changes in the weather. Add in some peas and kohlrabi and toasted nuts or cheese and you will have a salad that can serve as a meal. I’ve included my own dressing recipe on the left.

The summer squash is really coming on now. You have your choice of zucchini, yellow summer squash, and patty pan. To my palate their flavor is essentially the same, so I use them interchangeably. This week I would slice them into rounds, lightly sauté them with onion and fresh basil, and serve them on the side of pesto pasta.

The hearty basil bunch should be more than enough for a batch of pesto. I have printed many pesto recipes in the past. Take a look though the past newsletters on the website to find them. Just click on the year and the recipes will be listed by the date of each newsletter.

Next week: More beans! Also kale, scallions, beets, lettuce, and cabbage.

Troy Community Farm
Claire Strader • 442-6760 • claire@troygardens.org
www.communitygroundworks.org