In the Share

Pea Shoots, 1 bunch
Baby Bok Choy, 3 heads
Green Garlic, 1 bunch
Lettuce, 1 head
Choice of Spouts, 1 bag
Mint or Oregano, 1 bunch

Claire’s Comments

The Newsletter Season

Sometimes I think of the summer CSA season more as the newsletter season than the fresh vegetable season. Thankfully fresh and local vegetables are readily available in our community through a number of excellent sources – farmers’ markets and grocery stores that sell local produce being some of the easiest to utilize. But CSA vegetables are the only ones that come with a weekly story from the farm. With CSA it is not just about what the vegetable is and how you can eat it, but also how it arrived in your share in the first place. As we harvest and mulch and weed and plant the next round of crops, we are thinking about all of you and which of our farming adventures will be the most interesting for you to read about, and which will most enhance your connection to our particular little farm.

Though the irrigation geyser that let loose during sweet potato planting might make for a more dramatic story, I feel I must talk about the weather in this first newsletter. The weather is the one factor at the farm that you will see the most evidence of your in shares for the next few weeks, so it is worthy of some comment.

The best example of the effect the weather is having on our crops is radishes. Never have we had a first CSA share without them, until today. Radishes are one of the most reliable spring vegetables. They grow quickly and actually enjoy cool temperatures. The particular planting of radishes that was scheduled to be ready for today was planted on April 18th. Then we had hail and snow on April 26th. When we came out the field that day, it was all white. Though radishes typically mature in 21 to 28 days, it looks like it will take about double that time after their snowy start. But do not worry too much radish lovers, I expect you will have them in your share next week.

The peas, broccoli, kale, and lettuce that were also planted that day are also well behind schedule. What’s worse in the case of the peas is that many of them never germinated after the snow. In the case of the broccoli, the snow and hail stressed the plants to the point of making them think that they had to made heads as soon as possible before another disaster struck. Our first planting of broccoli is buttoning, which means that because of the cold stress, the heads are about one tenth the size they should be. Luckily, we have a number of broccoli plantings after that first one which should fair much better. The kale and the lettuce look beautiful in the field, just small. We expect those crops will grow out of their slow start in the next few weeks.

The warm temperatures this week have been very welcome in the field. The carrots and beets look great, the spinach is sizing up, even the green beans are sprouted and looking good. Once we get going this year, we have every reason to believe we will leave this cold, slow start well in the past.
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. green garlic, 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.

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Recipe

Choi with Gingery Butter
from Farmer John’s Cookbook, Angelic Organics

3 choi sliced crosswise into 1-inch strips
6 Tbs. butter
2 Tbs. tamari or soy sauce
1 Tbs. grated fresh ginger
1 clove garlic (or green garlic) minced
1 Tbs. finely chopped fresh cilantro
salt
black pepper

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the choi; cook until the choi is tender but still crisp, 2 to 3 minutes. Drain the choi in a colander and immediately run under cold water. Drain well.
2. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the tamari, ginger, garlic, and choi; cook, stirring constantly until the choi is well coated and heated through.
3. Remove the skillet from heat. Stir in cilantro. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately (with rice).

(continued from “In the Share”)

I have to admit that I am a bit sad over how small the lettuce is this week. Usually our spring lettuce heads are huge - not this cold spring. Still, there is enough for a small salad with sprouts and pea shoots and fresh mint or oregano sprigs cut in. If you want to get fancy, wrap your salad up in a spring roll and dip the roll in dressing. As the temperatures rise, either salad or spring rolls make for a refreshingly cool meal.

The pea shoots are the green bunch with tendrils. 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!

Use the mint or oregano directly in your salad or in salad dressing. The fresh mint can also be steeped in hot water for tea. If you cannot use all your herbs this week, hang them in your kitchen to dry and then crumble the dried leaves into a jar to use later.

Coming next week: spinach, salad mix, radishes and more green garlic and sprouts.

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