In the Share

Broccoli, 1 larger & 2 smaller heads
Green Garlic, 1 bunch
Radishes, 1 bunch
Spinach, 1 bag
Lettuce Mix, 1 bag
Batavian Lettuce, 1 head
Choice of Spouts, 1 bag
Mint, 1 bunch

Claire’s Comments

Irrigation

“Plan and install and irrigation system” has been on our “to do” list for no less than three years. Even before those three years started, it took Jake some time to convince me that irrigation should be on the list at all. I have been growing organic vegetables for about 16 years and I have never used irrigation on a farm that I managed. Sure it can be difficult when there is no rain for weeks, but the rain always came eventually and we were always able to feed our CSA members well. The thing that finally convinced me to go ahead with an irrigation plan was the thought that if we could manage our water (in addition to the fertility, weeds, and insects we already manage) we could produce more food off of our same land. We will never have more farmland at Troy. Our challenge has always been to grow more on what we have, and finally it seemed like irrigation was the logical next step.

So we learned about and considered many options – solid set pipes with rain birds, a traveling gun, drip tape, mini-wobblers, and more. I can list those things now and tell you some of the pros and cons of each, but I have to admit that it took us at least a year to sort through our irrigation information and settle on a system that might work for us. I say “might” because though we are now in the thick of installing and beginning to use our system, Jake and I have days when we are still not sure we can get the thing to work like we want it to.

We have had a number of successes, however. It was great day a few weeks ago when we were able to water in a whole half-acre of newly seeded cover crops. It was an even better day last week when we seeded edamame (a CSA favorite) into dry soil and watered it enough to get even and uniform germination. And finally earlier this week we set up drip tape on our water-loving onions and carrots and gave them all a much-needed drink.

We have rejoiced at each of these junctures though we have also been hounded by leaks and blowouts and various other equipment malfunctions. This week’s catastrophe struck when Jake tried to fix a small leak we had sprung in the main 2-inch line that feeds the field. The first fix leaked more than the original problem. The second fix blew out entirely and dug a small hole in the field road where the water came out with so much force. After a few more trips to the hardware store for parts and advice, Jake was feeling good that the third fix would hold. When it blew out a minute or two after the line was turned on, Jake paused just long enough to throw his hat on the ground in disgust before running back to the main valve to shut it all off again. Thoroughly frustrated, Jake tried a new idea for the fourth fix, which I am happy to say is currently holding.

The rain last night was very welcome. It will buy us some time to get more of our system in place without feeling like we also need to be using it every night to water. Jake has been working on the system in every spare minute and is about halfway through with the installation. Once we are at a place where we can water where and when we need to, he will begin the process of going back over all the little leaks that remain and doing what he can to close them up. I hope he gets to keep his hat on from now on!

Part of the reason we did not install this system last year or the year before was because those years were so very rainy. Though I’m still hoping this is the perfect year with just the right amount of timely rain, I’m also hoping it is dry enough for us to get to know and appreciate our new irrigation system.
Recipe

This recipe comes from Audrey Trainor. She is both a CSA member and my across-the-street neighbor. She introduced me to spring rolls a few years ago, and it turns out I love them! They are wonderfully refreshing and cool in all the heat we have been having, and making them does not require turning on the stove! The veggie content is very flexible, so this week we will use shredded radishes and maybe even some spinach in addition to the essential lettuce and mint. Audrey’s notes and tips are below.

Spring Rolls
from Audrey Trainor

You can use any veggies in these. I typically add shredded carrots or turnips, but I did not have them on hand so I used the sprout mix, which tasted grand. I also had no basil for the recent batch – no big loss.

1/2 package of spring roll wrappers (rice paper, not dough)
1 package of baked tofu (Thai style is de–lish)
.75 head of lettuce
handful of mint
handful of basil
1 package of sprout mix
1 stalk green garlic
1 green onion

1. Thinly slice tofu and set aside.
2. Chop/shred/mix all other ingredients in a large bowl.
3. Fill a baking dish (big enough to lay a wrapper in it) with an inch or two of warm water. Put a wrapper in the water (submerged completely). Let soften (less than two minutes).
4. Pick up the wrapper and gently shake off extra water or blot dry. Lay the wrapper flat on a cutting board surface with one corner facing you (in the diamond position).
5. Lay two slices of tofu on the wrapper and put veggie mix on top of tofu.
6. Fold and roll up, following the diagram on the wrapper package.
7. Arrange rolls on a plate to serve, or set them aside in fridge if serving later. They keep well over one night.

Spring Roll Dipping Sauce

1/3 cup peanut butter
2 Tbs. water or more to make into desired consistency
2 Tbs. rice vinegar
1 Tbs. soy or tamari
1 inch ginger
1 jalapeño
1 handful of cilantro

1. Put all ingredients in small blender jar.
2. Blend until smooth, adding additional water as necessary to achieve your desired consistency.

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