In the Share

Cherry Tomatoes, members 36 - 80
Beets, 1 bag
Carmen Red Peppers, 2 pieces
Edamame, 1 bag
Salsa Basket, 1 bag
Scallions, 1 bunch
Belgian Greens, 3 stalks
Lettuce, 1 head
Choice of Herb, 1 bunch
Garlic, 1 bulb
Tomatoes, see signs on crates

Claire’s Comments

Ten Years?!

Before coming to Troy, the longest I had been in one job as an adult was four years. I think the four-year pattern was set in college – four years to graduation. After that I was at a farm for four years. Then I had a close to four-year stint as a produce manager. Of course there were some shorter stays here and there, but certainly by year four I was ready to go.

I remember when I reached four years here at Troy, I though seriously about leaving. I even had a job offer at another non-profit farm in Minnesota. It was very tempting, but I decided it was time to break the pattern. I decided to stay and see what could happen in one place for the long haul.

June first was my 10-year anniversary at Troy Community Farm. This marker is huge for me not only because I broke the four-year pattern but also because when I started the farm in 2001, it was nothing more than a field full of grass, thistle, and a couple hundred honeysuckles and buckthorns. We had no greenhouse, no cooler, no shed, no tools, not even a deer fence. In 2002, the first year of the CSA, we harvested our 14 shares and drove them to my driveway to wash and pack them, because we had no water at the farm. Then we stored them on an unused shelf in the produce cooler at the Willy Street Co-op before bringing them back to Troy for pickup. Though it was still grown and delivered right on Troy Drive, our food was well traveled in those days!

Ten years later we have a cooler, a tractor, a passive solar greenhouse, an irrigation system, 160 CSA members, 75 interns trained on the farm over the years (some of whom have started their own farms), and I am on the second round of my eight-year crop rotation. We have truly come a long way. In the day to day at the farm, it is so easy to focus on what we have yet to do, what we still strive to achieve. We still have plenty of things on our “to do” list, but it is good to stop and remember the many things we have already accomplished. When I let myself think about it, it really is impressive what we have been able to achieve on these five urban acres in ten short years.

Last week a friend of mine asked me if I had seen the new Isthmus favorites poll results for the year. I had not. He then carefully told me that Troy had placed third as Madison’s favorite CSA. He was worried I would be sore that we did not place first. On the contrary I was beside myself with delight. There are close to 50 CSAs in the Madison area, many of them many times larger than us. I am completely tickled that our tiny farm came in third! I feel truly honored that so many of you think highly enough of your experience at Troy to vote for us – delighted, tickled, and honored.

I am so glad I stayed here. I am so happy to mark these ten years with all of you, our wonderful, supportive CSA members. I’m ready to put down my hoe and celebrate! Please join me and the rest of the farm crew at the Garden Party on Saturday the 10th of September. The party from 8:00 to 10:00 PM is free and features music and dancing. I will be there with my hoop dancing my heart out. I will also be at the dinner before the party and would be thrilled to share an excellent meal prepared by amazing local chefs from our own Troy produce with all of you. Dinner tickets are $110 – which I know is steep for many folks. I also know all the work and amazing food that has gone into making this event and I know it will be well worth it. Whether you have been with the farm for one year or ten, please come and celebrate!
Recipe

Farm intern Sarah Luetzow took some Brussels sprout tops home and prepared them for guests as she describes below. Her guests loved them!

One Way of Preparing Belgian Greens from Sarah Luetzow

1. Sauté some minced onion or scallions in olive oil over medium heat until translucent.
2. Remove stems from the greens. Then rinse and chop the leaves, retaining as much moisture on the leaves as possible.
3. Add the chopped leaves to the pan with the onions. Cover and let the greens steam for a few minutes. Then stir and steam for a while longer, until the greens are tender. Add a splash more water if necessary.
4. When water is evaporated and greens are tender, uncover and drizzle with olive oil, sautéing for a couple minutes more. Add salt and pepper to taste.

(continued from “In the Share”) heads are not quite as large and lovely as they were in the spring, but I am so pleased to have some lettuce to go with all the tomatoes that I am willing to forgive them. We will have some Batavian lettuce in the next week or two as well.

Edamame and salsa are also stars in this share. This week you have a full pound of edamame, and you can expect another half pound or so next week. What a pleasure to be so rich in this delicious and unique crop!
While we are not quite so rich in salsa this year, I am happy to have this one last salsa basket for you. I’ve heard from many of you how much you like them. I hope you enjoy this last salsa batch for the year.

Coming next week: The first potatoes and leeks of the year and the last of the edamame. Also more winter squash, carrots, and tomatoes.