



In the Share

Spinach, 1 bag
Pac Choi, 2 heads
Turnips, 1 bunch
Garlic Scapes, 1 bunch
Green or Purple Kohlrabi, 2 bulbs
Salad Mix, 1 bag
Broccoli, 2 heads
Leaf Lettuce, 1 head
Basil, 1 bunch

It has been difficult to get all this harvesting done AND keep up to speed on our “no weed left behind” policy! We often have to split up into two crews so that we can keep making progress on both jobs. I must admit that weeding is my favorite task and it has been especially fun this week. The soil is soft and the weeds are small. Even so, we did tear ourselves away from weeding long enough to harvest this lovely share.

The turnips are new this week and they taste great. These little sweeties are meant for salads or for fresh eating right off the stem. Typically the greens can be used as well, but given the warm winter, the insect pressure is greater than normal and the leaves have a number of holes. Luckily the white roots are as delicious as ever!

Garlic scapes are also new. These elegantly curled stems are actually the seed heads of the garlic. Only hard neck garlic produces them and we pull them off in order to encourage the garlic to send its energy to the bulb rather than the seed. Plus, then we get to eat the scapes! We make an effort to harvest them when they are still fairly small so that they are also tender. Chop the green stems up to the white seed swelling and use them as you would green garlic or bulb garlic.

(continued on the back)

Claire's Comments

Jake came to Troy in 2007. Over the years we have had many conversations about both the personality and goals of our farm. Given our different farming backgrounds it was not unexpected that we would have different ideas on how to change and grow. As we went back and forth on the benefits of irrigation, a cultivating tractor, more land, etc., we learned a lot about what farming is and what it could be in our changing world. Did we want to take the typical path of getting bigger and more mechanized?

Or did we want to stay small and forge a new path for intensive urban agriculture in Madison? One of the things we have both struggled with on and off has been our own perception that being small means that we were not as legitimate as bigger farms with more tools and more tractors. What follows are Jake's thoughts on what makes a farm real even when it's farmers take a new, smaller, and more urban road.

A Real Farm

-- Jake Hoeksema, Farm Manager

I didn't grow up on a farm (or even close to any), so my childhood idea of what constituted a “real farm” likely involved a big red barn, lots of four legged creatures, and some cartoonish guy leaning on a pitchfork with a long piece of grass stuck between his teeth. In my early 20's, my conception of a real farm dramatically expanded when I worked my first season on a mixed vegetable CSA farm. It now included never-ending rows of every type of organic vegetable I had ever heard of, as well as a few I had never before encountered. That farm happened to be one of the largest CSA farms in the entire country and was thus quite mechanized. I worked in the fields along side cultivating tractors, mechanical transplanters, all manner of veggie washing equipment, and a bean picking machine that was about the size of the apartment I was living in at the time. That first farm definitely hooked me on farming as a vocation, and it also heavily influenced my vision of what a farm “should” look like. Over the following handful of years, my farming journey made several more stops. Each one further honed my vision in its own way, but “fairly big and somewhat mechanized” continued to be a cornerstone of my idea of a real farm.

Then, six seasons ago, I landed at Troy Community Farm. Once again my idea of a real farm expanded...but not without a few growing pains. I remember feeling at home at Troy from the beginning, but also harboring some initial misgivings about it somehow not qualifying as a real farm. Surely a real farm could not be only 3 and a half acres of vegetables, with no prospect or plans to get any bigger. A real farm could not be content to remain at a scale where nearly all of the work is performed by people wielding hand tools. A real farm would be too chaotic and pressed for time to place a huge emphasis on education and teaching others to farm.

(continued on the back)

Recipe

I love Kohlrabi because I think of it as the “unknown” vegetable. Not a lot of people are not very familiar with it, let alone know to cook it.

I asked around to a few of my friends to see what they do with kohlrabi and everyone said, “make a root vegetable coleslaw.” This is a great idea, but kohlrabi is much more versatile than that! You can bake it, bread it, roast it, fry it, even peel it and turn it into pasta. I chose to share a salad because it is a perfect meal on a hot summer day, and it includes several of the vegetables found in the share this week. Enjoy!

-- from Lindsey Stoner, Farm Intern

Curried Red Lentil, Kohlrabi and Couscous Salad

-- from *Bon Appétit*, August 2010

Minutes to Prepare: 35

Minutes to Cook: 10

Number of Servings: 4

- ¼ cup white wine or white balsamic vinegar
- ¾ Tbsp curry powder
- 2 Tbsp green garlic (or garlic scapes), chopped
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 8 oz. dry red lentils (about 1 generous cup)
- 1-2 large kohlrabi (about 3/4 pound), leaves stemmed and thinly sliced, bulb peeled and cut into 1/3" pieces (about 1 1/2 cups)
- ½ cup whole wheat couscous
- ½ cup scallions
- 3 or 4 oz. baby spinach
- ¼ cup chopped fresh mint

1. Whisk white wine vinegar, curry powder, and chopped green garlic/garlic scapes in medium bowl to blend. Gradually whisk in olive oil. Season dressing to taste with salt and freshly ground pepper.
2. Cook lentils and kohlrabi leaves in a heavy large saucepan of boiling salted water until lentils are barely tender but not too soft, about 6 minutes. Drain; rinse under cold water; drain again.
3. In the same saucepan, bring another 3/4 cup of water to a boil. Remove from heat, add 1 tbsp dressing, and salt if desired. Stir in couscous, then cover pot and let stand 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork.
4. In a large bowl, mix together couscous, lentil mixture, diced kohlrabi, scallions, and mint with 1/2 of remaining dressing. Toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve with remaining dressing on the side.

(continued from “Claire’s Comments”)

Through my first few seasons at Troy, however, my understanding began to deepen, my thinking began to evolve, and I began to appreciate what we do here in a whole new way. I started to ponder different questions about farms and our food system. How will farmers deal with a changing climate that is becoming increasingly volatile and extreme? How will we learn to produce quality food in the face of peak oil? What about the ever-increasing length of the supply chain that delivers us our industrial food? How will we pass the knowledge and experience of our aging farmers on to the next generation? In this rapidly changing world, how are we going to feed ourselves?

Maybe some of the answers to these questions include a farm that gets as much as it possibly can out of a small space. Perhaps they include a farm that strives, at every turn, to minimize outside inputs, especially fossil fuels. Or a farm that is located right within the city for which it grows food. Maybe the answers include a farm that tries to teach and empower a new generation of aspiring farmers and growers.

Maybe Troy Community Farm is as real as it gets.



(continued from In the Share)

Kohlrabi is back with mostly green bulbs this week, though there are still a few purples to choose from as well. Take a look at Lindsey’s recipe on the left for a kohlrabi salad that also uses garlic scapes and spinach from the share. Whatever you do with the kohlrabi, enjoy it. After this week, it will be gone until the fall.

Also on the way out are garlic (back in late July when we harvest the bulbs), pac choi (which will make another showing in the fall), and salad mix (which will be back on an off depending on the weather).

Spinach and lettuce are still coming in strong. We should have both of these crops for another one or two weeks. The broccoli is really getting going now as well. There are two larger heads in the share this week and more on the way for next week. Basil, of course, is just starting and will be in the shares on and off throughout the summer - these first bunches are just a taste of what is to come. I might use this bit of basil to replace the mint in Lindsey’s recipe on the left. There will be larger bunches for pesto coming later.

Next Week: More broccoli, spinach, lettuce and turnips, plus fennel and the first scallions and peas.

Troy Community Farm

Claire Strader • 442-6760 • claire@troygardens.org