



In the Share

Snap Peas, 1 bag
Cucumber, 1 piece
Fennel, 1 bulb
Radishes, 1 bunch
Scallions, 1 bunch
Beets, 1 bunch
Shell Peas, 1 bag
Broccoli, 1 head
Spinach, 1 bag
Summer Squash, 2 pieces
Romaine Lettuce, 1 head
Choice of Herb, 1 bunch

Claire's Comments

Hoping for Rain

Some of you will be wondering why I have not yet written about the drought. Weather is a perennial farmer favorite after all. Honestly, I have been avoiding the topic, knowing that in the end there is nothing I can do to change it. But now, my patience is wearing thin. So much of our time at the farm is consumed by dealing with the lack of rain that I can avoid the topic no longer.

The really good news is that in 2011 we installed an irrigation system. For 10 years I grew vegetables at Troy with only rain and a garden sprinkler to water the crops. With very few exceptions, that was always enough. I only used the sprinkler to germinate seeds when necessary, never to actually water a crop. The rain took care of that part in its usual haphazard, though adequate, way. Since our last real rain (meaning more than 1 to 2 tenths of an inch) was on May 28th, I have been forced to realize that I can no longer count on the rain to be adequate the way I once did. Though I resisted irrigation for a very long time, right now I am extremely grateful that we have it.

The costs of irrigation are high in terms of water use (an environmental and financial concern), equipment, and labor. Though our system is lovely in that it can accommodate our crop rotation and allows us to use either drip or overhead irrigation on any bed, it is also fraught with leaks and other various issues that come hand-in-hand with its versatility. Jake is constantly doing repairs. And our intern irrigation team is constantly moving around tubing and towers in an effort to get some water to the whole farm every week. We all wish it would rain. Then we could weed and mulch and trellis and maybe even catch up on all the other tasks that we never seem to get to after filling in for the absent clouds.

When there is nothing left to do but look on the bright side, I remind myself that drought makes it harder for diseases to start and spread. Unless we get a lot of rain in July, it is highly unlikely we will have a late blight problem this year. Also, weeds have a hard time germinating in drought, and when we hoe them out in dry soil and sun it is more likely they will die rather than reroot. And most importantly, our irrigation system, for all its costs and flaws, is making it possible for us to produce full and delicious shares even under these extreme conditions.

I am a bit worried that the hot days we have coming up will multiply the negative effects of the drought. Until now the temperatures have been erratic, but with enough cool nights to keep most of the vegetables happy enough. I keep hearing that the heat over the next week or so will be somewhat unrelenting. Just what we do not need! So, for now we will keep watering and harvesting and looking on the bright side while hoping for rain.

We have a large and diverse share this week. We are officially transitioning out of the early salad season and into the warm weather crops.

Peas will be the most confusing item today. You have two separate bags with two very different kinds of peas, so it will be important to be able to tell them apart before you dig in. The snap peas have a thick, sweet, and edible pod and can be eaten whole. The shell peas have a thinner, leathery pod that you should discard before eating the peas inside. It may be hard to tell them apart just by looking, so feel the peas in order to judge the thickness of the pod. The most popular pea these days seems to be the snap pea. I think people really like that they do not have to go to the work of freeing the pea from the pod, plus they are very yummy. But my favorites are the shell peas. They are definitely more work, but worth it for the extra sweetness of the pea.

Beets are a new item today, and they are possibly the most beautiful beets we have ever delivered. This particular harvest was planted in the March warm snap, so it is also just a bit earlier
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Recipe

Beets are my favorite out of the root vegetables. They are beautiful in color and delicious in their sweet, earthy flavor. I have experimented with cooking beets in various ways, such as raw, pickled, boiled, roasted, and mashed, and I am starting to think the cooking possibilities are limitless because all have been successful so far! I choose the recipe below because it makes use of the beets and their greens, and when cooking pizza, you can be flexible with toppings and add on any seasonal vegetables from your share, so have fun with it!
--from Steph Armstead, Farm Intern

Beet, Caramelized Onions & Goat Cheese Pizza with Kale & Beet Green Pesto

Kale and Beet Green Pesto:

1 large bunch of kale, stems removed
1 large handful of beet greens, stems discarded only if they're woody
½ cup reserved vegetable blanching liquid (see below)
½ cup toasted walnuts
1 large clove garlic, roughly chopped
½ cup freshly grated Parmesan

½ cup olive oil
salt and pepper to taste
the juice of one lemon

Blanch kale and beet greens for four minutes in salted, boiling water. Just before draining, remove a half-cup of the liquid, and set aside. Drain greens and rinse under cold water. Pat greens dry. In a food processor, pulse the walnuts, garlic, and cheese until finely ground. Add the kale and beet greens, pulse until smooth. With the machine still running, add the olive oil in a slow stream, then add the lemon juice and the reserved water to achieve desired consistency. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Pizza:

1 ball of pizza dough
¼ cup corn meal or flour
2 large beets, roasted and thinly sliced
1 red onion, roughly chopped

6 ounces goat cheese, crumbled
3 ounces mozzarella, shredded
Extra-virgin olive oil
2 scallions, finely chopped

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. To roast beets, remove stems and wrap each beet wrap in aluminum foil. Place them in an oven-safe dish and roast for 30 to 40 minutes (time will vary depending on beet size). Beets are ready when a knife goes through entire beet easily. Set aside to cool, then skin them carefully.
2. Preheat the oven to 500°F, along with a pizza stone or baking sheet.
3. Heat 1-2 tablespoons of olive oil in a large frying pan, then add the onions and caramelize over medium-high heat until golden.
4. Roll out the pizza dough, using flour or cornmeal to ensure it doesn't stick, until dough reaches a desired thickness.
5. Place dough on preheated pizza stone or baking sheet, and parbake for 5 minutes to help ensure a crispy crust.
6. Once pizza dough starts to get golden, place cheese, beets, caramelized onions and kale & beet green pesto evenly on top.
7. Return pizza to the oven and continue to cook for 5-7 minutes until the cheese has melted and crust is to desired crispness.
8. If not using the pesto, drizzle the pizza with a little extra-virgin olive oil, scallions and sea salt. Enjoy!

The Pizza recipe is from Lauren Hendrickson on YumSugar.com, posted on October 24, 2011. The Kale & Beet Green Pesto recipe is from ModerateOven.com, posted on July 14, 2011.

Troy Prairie Walk Series

Thursday evenings in July

Prairie walk #1

July 12th, 5:30-6:30 pm

Join us for a summer stroll through the Troy Gardens prairie. We will see many of our beautiful prairie plants in full bloom and learn about why prairies are important to Wisconsin's history.

Prairie walk #2

July 19th, 5:30-6:30 pm

On this evening nature stroll, we will talk about ways that humans past and present have used Wisconsin's prairies. We'll learn about Native American uses of the land, prairie food sources, and more. The tour will include a visit to our edible landscape.

Prairie walk #3

July 26th, 5:30-7 pm

This summer nature walk will introduce visitors to the history of Troy Gardens' Natural Areas. We will learn about ways to enjoy and contribute to the Natural Areas, and the tour will culminate in a short volunteer work session in the prairie.

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than usual. See Steph's recipe for beet pizza on the left. Since we do not have kale this week, I plan to replace the kale in the recipe with more of these excellent beet greens!

Scallions, cucumber, and romaine lettuce are also new today. Our cucumber crop is suffering right now because so few of the seeds germinated out in the field and what did germinate is being attacked by cucumber beetles. Still, we decided to deliver them because they taste good, and we do not foresee the aesthetics of the crop improving any time soon. The scallions and romaine on the other hand, are lovely as well as tasty.

This spinach is the last of the season. It was a great spinach spring, and we hope to have more in the fall. Radishes are also likely done until fall.

The herbs are great this week, and we harvested large bunches. You have your choice of basil, cilantro, or parsley.

Next Week: More summer squash, lettuce, scallions, and beets plus possibly some kale. We will also have the last of the peas.

Troy Community Farm

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