



Urban Roots

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In the Box

Spinach
Radishes
Lettuce
Green Garlic
Pea Shoots

Here come the spring greens! It is the season for salad once again. Of course, lettuce is the staple of every spring CSA share. This week you have your choice between a crisp, sweet Batavian type (my favorite), and a tender, mild butterhead type. Both are quite tasty, but both are also a bit dirty and damaged. We had some hail on the farm exactly two weeks ago and it took its toll on the lettuce (among other things). Luckily the rips and tears you see in the leaves have no effect on the flavor, only the beauty of the crop is damaged.

Radishes are the next most important piece of your salad. You have your choice of the French Breakfast variety, which is longer and has a white tip and a milder flavor, or the Cheriettes which are the usual red, round type with a strong bite. Radishes are also good on sandwiches with butter or cheese and a lettuce leaf. And their beauty is fully in tact this week!

Those little green bundles with the tender tendrils are pea shoots. They have a powerful, sweet flavor just like peas. You can cut these into your salad, or put them on you sandwich to balance the radish bite. You will be surprised by how much they taste like peas.

The green garlic might be the other mysterious item in the share. This immature garlic can be used like scallions (greens and all) but will have a garlic rather than an onion flavor. If you sauté a little green garlic in olive oil and then toss it with the fresh spinach, feta cheese, and kalamata olives you will have my favorite spring salad. I can eat this dish every night during spinach season!

Claire's Comments

Welcome!

I woke up this morning with the sharp realization that it is newsletter time again. Those winter and spring months of private farm musings are over. It's time to go public once more. For those of you who have been part of the farm in the past, you know all about the weekly articles you see on this page. For those of you who are new, I should tell your right off, that the vegetables are only one part of this CSA. The newsletter is another.

Here at Troy we believe in letting you taste our labors not only through the food we produce, but also through the stories we share. We'll tell you just what it feels like to harvest in the rain on the day the rain pants never made it out of the house. We'll share the joy of that first sunburn on the day the clouds cleared unexpectedly. And we'll do our best to convey the beauty of our neat rows of vegetables and flowers swaying happily in the breeze. But you should also know, that no matter how hard we try, we will never be able to do the experience of the farm full justice in words alone.

The best way to get a feel for where your food comes from is the visit the fields. Come to the events you hear about in this newsletter. Come to a Friday afternoon volunteer day some day when you cannot bare to be inside any longer (see the back for details on our volunteer days.) And in August when the flowers start blooming, come out to the farm to harvest a bouquet from the CSA garden before you leave the pick-up with your box. For a full 21 weeks this summer, your vegetables are grown right here on the same soil where you come to claim them each week. We would love it if you came to visit them while they are still in the ground. Then you will better understand what we mean when we use the word "beauty."

If you visit this week, you will see that the farm is almost full already. I say "already" because at this time last year it was raining so hard that I was wondering if we would ever get our tomatoes and peppers in the ground. But this year I'm happy to say that all the major crops are in, and we actually have some time for my favorite farm task – weeding! Maggie (the farm Assistant Manager) keeps saying that this might be the perfect year we've been waiting for. I hope she's right!



Some Logistical Questions and Answers

Q: If I get to choose my own vegetables from the piles, how do I know what and how much to take?

A: Someone will always be behind the stand to help you. Just ask. But a good general rule of thumb is that you take one item from each pile: one bunch, or head, or bag, etc. Sometimes there will be multiple varieties of a particular vegetable to choose from, but you will still only take one of that vegetable. For instance, there may be red and green lettuce in the pile, but you choose one or the other. Always look at the newsletter to see the complete list of vegetables included for the week.

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 some weeks. The farm will have some extra bags in the truck for you to use.

Q: What if I am out of town some Thursdays?

A: Have a friend 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: What if I forget to come to the pick-up some week?

A: There is a back-up plan. I set any unclaimed boxes 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. At 6:00 AM on Friday I pack the leftovers into bigger boxes for Shirley (a follow CSA member) to pickup and use in the free Friday meal at St. Mark's Lutheran Church. My porch is at 1814 Sheridan Drive, about a mile from the farm.

More Questions? Please ask in person or send me an e-mail. I will print the answers in the newsletter for everyone's benefit.

Recipe

Buttermilk Garlic Dressing

*This recipe is from the Madison Area CSA Coalition cookbook
From Asparagus to Zucchini.*

1 stalk of green garlic	1/3 cup sour cream
4 tablespoons minced green onion	large pinch sugar
3 tablespoons white wine vinegar	1/2 cup olive oil
1/2 cup buttermilk	

Mince the green garlic. Whisk garlic, green onion, vinegar, buttermilk, sour cream, and sugar in bowl. Gradually whisk in olive oil. Season generously with salt and pepper to taste. Make almost 1 1/2 cups.

Upcoming Events

Farm Volunteer Days

*Fridays, 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm
at Troy Community Farm*

The farm has an open volunteer day every Friday afternoon. This time is for fun jobs like transplanting (early in the season), mulching, weeding (Claire honestly loves weeding!), and some harvesting of large crops like garlic, onions, and squash (later in the year). Everyone is welcome to join in whenever they can. While calling ahead is appreciated, (so Claire can plan), it is not required.

Natural Areas Ribbon Cutting and Hmong Herb Garden Dedication

*Saturday, 18 June, 10:00 am to noon
at Troy Gardens*

Join FTG members and supporters, including the Governor, to celebrate the completion of the natural areas work of the last few years, dedicate the Hmong Herb Garden, and ceremonially "pass the torch" from the Urban Open Space Foundation to the Friends of Troy Gardens for the care and maintenance of the Natural Areas. This event will be the perfect time to explore the Natural Areas at Troy.

Savor the Summer Festival

*Saturday, 6 August, 1:00 am to 3:00 pm
at Troy Gardens*

Mark your calendars now for this annual Troy Gardens event! We will start out in the morning at the farm harvesting fresh flowers for bouquets, and making dried flower swags for you to take home. In the afternoon there will be music and food, including huitlacoche (a corn mushroom grown at the farm). And the festival will close with a performance by the Young Shakespeare Players. There will be activities for kids throughout the day, a tour of the site, and plenty of fun and fresh air for everyone.

Troy Community Farm

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