



# Urban Roots

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## In the Box

Bok Choy  
Green Garlic  
Salad Mix  
Radish  
Spinach  
Basil

“When we got our pac choi last week, I thought it was so precious that I parceled it out so that we could have it in several meals.” I heard this from CSA member Sarah Bradley. This week the parceling out of the very similar bok choy should not be hard – it’s huge! You should have enough for several stir fries including the Stir-Fried Bok Choy with Cashew Sauce recipe listed on the back. Bok Choi is just a once-a-year spring treat at Troy, so enjoy this bunch. It won’t be back until next year.

Spinach is also making it’s last showing for the spring. With proper planning and favorable weather, you will see more spinach in the fall. But for now this is the last of it. One more spinach, feta, garlic, and kalamata olive salad for me!

This is the last of the green garlic for the year as well. In a week or two we will be harvesting the garlic scapes (which are both pretty and flavorful), and after that we will all have to wait patiently for the garlic harvest which will happen in late July.

Least you think everything is on the way out, we do have a couple of first-of-the-season offerings as well. The salad mix is one of those. This harvest is simply gorgeous. It contains six varieties of lettuce, and five varieties of mustard greens including mizuna, arugula, giant red mustard, and tatsoi. The mix is washed and ready to go! Just add radishes and dressing!

Basil is a first as well. These small bunches are good for adding leaves to sandwiches or fresh pasta sauce.

## Claire’s Comments

### Keeping the Harvest Fresh

While I was in Tucson last winter, visiting my friend Dorothée, I had the experience of being on the receiving end of weekly vegetable delivery. Dorothée belongs to something like a CSA and receives a huge box of organic produce on her doorstep each week. I learned a lot about CSA from the other side during my visit, including how difficult it can be to keep some produce fresh until it makes its way into dinner. I certainly have my ideas on how to handle produce storage, and I realized now might be a good time to share those ideas with you. So this week, storage tips.

First off, some foods should be refrigerated and some should not. Those that don’t need to go into the fridge are usually the easiest to handle. Tomatoes, potatoes, garlic, onions, winter squash, sweet potatoes, all these things can just sit on your counter (out of the sun) or in your cupboard until you are ready to use them. Not only *can* they sit out, they *should* sit out. Refrigerated tomatoes quickly lose their flavor and develop an unpleasant texture. And the other warm storage items listed above can actually rot faster in the fridge.

Everything else should go into cold storage as soon as you get it home. When we harvest your vegetables, we cool and wash them right away to remove the field heat and keep them hydrated. This process of cooling and hydrating is called hydrocooling. Once they are clean, cold, and wet they go into crates and into our walk-in cooler. In order to keep the produce moist and fresh we cover the crate with wet towels. At the pick-up site we unpack these crates and display your produce, ready for you to pack and take home. Since we pack everything in bulk, we don’t usually put much into bags unless it’s something like beans or Brussels sprouts. But when you get your vegetables home, it is usually a good idea to make sure they are somehow protected before they go into your fridge.

You do have a few options when it comes to protecting your food from either drying out or sliming out under refrigeration. The easiest way to protect food from drying out is to put the moist vegetable in a plastic bag. It is important that the produce is only moist, not wet, when you put it in plastic. Since the plastic does not breathe, wet food will quickly turn to slime. If you don’t like to use plastic, you can use either damp cloth bags or damp towels on your produce, much like we do at the farm after harvest. Just make sure the food is completely covered with the damp fabric, and make sure the fabric stays damp. The air in the fridge can

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(continued from the front)

dry out your cloth quickly. It is a good idea to moisten the fabric daily by getting it wet, wringing it out, and rewrapping it around your veggies. If you are having more trouble with a particular food drying out, store it in plastic. If sliming is your problem, try the cloth. Either way, clean and reuse your storage bags once you eat the vegetables.

If a vegetable has gotten slimy, there is not much you can do to recover it, other than cutting off the slime. But if a vegetable has gone limp, you can often revive it as long as it is not too far gone. Try hydrating it again by dunking it in cool water. It helps if you trim the stems of lettuce and greens before dunking. Then put the damp or even wet food into plastic and into the fridge.

The idea here is that the limp food will reabsorb the water into its cells. By cutting the stems when possible, you open up the old, healed cuts and allow the plant to take up the water more easily. Some things like celery or carrots you can actually put directly into a bowl of water in your fridge for re-hydration.

Those are some general tips. Here are some more specific ideas for certain foods. Basil can be tough to store. It does not like to be too cold, and it wilts easily. Try standing the stems in a glass of water in the fridge and covering it with a paper bag. Carrots and radishes are so pretty and fresh when they come with the tops on, but those tops do not help them keep. It's a good idea to remove the tops before you put the roots in the fridge. Green beans do not like to be stored wet, they can get "rusty." After we wash them at the farm we always let them dry before we pack them. Same with salad mix. It won't get rusty but it will get slimy. We let it dry some and then pack it in plastic bags with some ventilation holes. Finally some foods just don't store as well as others. Eat those first.

I will include other tips for specific foods as they are delivered. If you have any good ideas that you would like to pass on to other members, let me know and I will put them in the newsletter. I know it is hard to see your beautiful vegetables languish in the fridge until they make it to the plate. I hope these tips help.

## 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.

### Savor the Summer Festival

*Saturday, 6 August, 10:00 am to 4:00 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

## Recipe

### Stir Fried Bok Choy with Cashew Sauce

From Jenny Bonde and Rink DaVee at Shooting Star Farm

1/2 cup raw cashews  
1/4 cup white wine vinegar  
1/4 cup sugar

1/4 cup soy sauce  
1 tablespoon minced ginger  
pinch red pepper flakes

1 1/2 pounds bok choy  
1/4 cup peanut oil

Toast cashews in a dry skillet, tossing frequently, until lightly brown and fragrant. Combine cashews, vinegar, sugar, soy sauce, ginger, red pepper flakes, and 2-4 tablespoon water in a blender or food processor; puree until smooth. Set aside. Wash bok choy stems and leaves well, making sure to rinse away dirt in the ribs. Separate the bok choy leaves from the stalks. Cut stalks into 1-inch pieces and roughly chop the leaves. Heat peanut oil in a larger skillet over high heat until hot but not smoking. Add bok choy stems and cook, stirring often until crisp-tender, 2-3 minutes. Add the leaves and cook until the wilt and turn bright green, another minute or so. Remove to a platter and cover with cashew sauce or serve sauce on the side.

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