



# Urban Roots

Volume 4, Issue 7  
14 July 2005

## In the Bag

Green or Yellow Beans, 1 bag  
Summer Squash, 2 or 3 pieces  
Beets, 1 bunch  
Fennel, 2 bulbs  
Radishes, 1 bunch  
Batavian Lettuce, 1 head  
Salad Greens or Dill, 1 bunch

You have my very favorite vegetable in your share this week: **Green Beans!** I love them so much that I don't even mind picking them, bent over for hours. While you are not likely to finish eating these on the way home they way you might with peas, their flavor, both raw and cooked, is exquisite. Last year we had a bumper crop of beans and I was able to eat them by the plateful for dinner. One night I would have them steamed with a little butter. Another night I would have them sautéed with garlic and tamari. Every night I had them, I was happy. The yellow beans, and the purple beans you will see in a few weeks, are also delicious, but the greens are hands-down my all time favorite vegetable ever. Enjoy!

The two other new items this week, beets and fennel, conveniently go together in the recipe on the back. I must admit that neither of these is on my favorites list. But Kevin was so excited about this beet and fennel salad, that he may get me to change my mind. The **beets** are gorgeous and can be eaten greens and all. The root can be cooked according to the recipe on the back, and the greens can be eaten like chard or kale. **Fennel** is a popular Italian vegetable with a distinct anise flavor. Chop the bulb and eat it in salads.

The only confusing item this week is the choice of **salad greens** or **dill**. The greens are arugula (spicy and nutty), muzina (mildly spicy), and totsoi (like bok choy). All of these should be added to your salads or used on sandwiches. The dill can be used in dressings or even with your green beans.

Next week look for cabbage and scallions, maybe garlic and salsa baskets.

## Claire's Comments

### Ups and Downs

It's been an up and down week at the farm. We got a splash of rain on Tuesday night. I woke up to the sound of it and dared to hope that it would be a substantial soaker. But no. It was barely a tenth of an inch, the kind of rain that darkens the soil surface and leaves inches of bone-dry dust underneath. Still even that little bit of moisture is better than nothing, it did make weeding a tad easier on Wednesday. Meanwhile, I've actually started to set up sprinklers on some crops to keep them alive. I've never ever done that before. It is really dry out there.

While we wait for some real rain, we are looking for things to keep our spirits up. We found one in the harvest of our first cherry tomatoes on Friday. After we went through and finished trellising the entire crop, we did the harvest. Four whole pints, not much. But the fruits are huge and sweet and beautiful. And the plants look great now that they are all pruned and tied up to their supports. I'm still hoping that this will be our very best tomato season ever. We are just starting to see pink fruits in the main crop of slicers.

We also did a little weeding in the CSA garden this week. It made us smile to see all those blooms. And the herbs are doing well also. The sage is huge, the chives are lush and green, the anise hyssop is just starting to flower and will soon be ready to go into your tea, the purple basil is perfect, and even the thyme and oregano will soon be ready for fresh tomato sauce. But the best part of weeding the garden was seeing the bees.

As some of you know, we have two bee hives at the farm. They are in the very back corner where the bees can come and go as they please without much interference from us. The tall hive is named Edna, after Edna St. Vincent Millay; and the short one is Emily, after Emily Dickinson. As we work, we are always on the look out for bees from our hives. We want to know that they are alive and well, even when we don't get to visit them in the hives very often. We also want to know that they are out pollinating our vegetables. Fruits like tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and squash that have been pollinated by bees tend to be bigger and more lush than fruits that have not been pollinated. So we do what we can to attract them into the field, like planting cutting flowers and flowering cover crops like buckwheat. The bees were buzzing all over the CSA garden on Wednesday and we were so pleased.

Really, you can tell, I'm grasping a bit for little items of joy right now. Overall, we carry a great worry and sadness at the farm these days. Seeing the damage caused by the insects and the dry soil is taking its toll. So we are concentrating on the first sweet tomatoes, the lovely tireless bees, and the knowledge that no two weeks at the farm are ever the same. Next week is bound to be better!

# Beet and Fennel Salad

*Adapted by farm intern Kevin Coleman from  
Chris and Juli at Two Onion Farm.*

*When I wondered aloud what I would tell you all to do with beets and fennel, Kevin said that he and his wife Jesse have made this salad three times in the last two weeks. They love it! I hope you do too.*

1 bunch of beets  
1 fennel bulb, thinly sliced (or two if you like)  
chopped pecans or roasted pine nuts

1 tsp Dijon mustard  
¼ cup olive oil (extra virgin is best)  
2-3 Tbsp balsamic vinegar  
salt and pepper to taste

Cook beets (leave skin on, cut off leaves, but keep the root tip and an inch of the stems attached). Steam (or boil) for about 30 minutes. The beets are done when they are tender when pierced. Cooked beets will peel easily, just allow them to cool for a few minutes, chop off the remaining stem, and use your thumbs to slip the skin right off.

Slice or chop the beets into bite-sized pieces.

Mix the mustard, oil vinegar, salt and pepper together to make the dressing.

Stir together the beets fennel, nuts and dressing. Refrigerate and serve chilled. Yum!

## Upcoming Events

### Savor the Summer Festival

At Troy Gardens

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

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, a raffle, a free cookbook, and plenty of fun and fresh air for everyone.

## Needed: CSA Representative to the FTG Board

As many of you know, Troy Community Farm is unique in that it is a project of a non-profit organization known as the Friends of Troy Gardens or FTG. FTG was originally established in 2001 with the mission of stewarding the 31 acres that make up Troy Gardens. Since then the work of FTG has grown and now includes the original community gardens that were on this site; the natural areas trails, edible landscaping, and prairie; two youth programs; the farm; and the upcoming co-housing development. FTG has a board of directors which oversees all these projects and makes important long-term decisions for the site. There are two seats on the board for representation from the farm. Barbara Fraser (a founding CSA member) has filled one of these seats for the last three years, but resigned over the winter. We miss her, and now both our seats are open.

**If you are interested in representing the farm on the FTG board; if you want to help the Troy Gardens grow and prosper as both a valuable local resource and a national model of sustainable development; and if you want to work with a group of fun, energetic, and passionate board members, please let me know.** I'll answer your questions and invite you to the next board meeting where can meet the board and see how things go!

### Troy Community Farm

Claire Strader  
1814 Sheridan Drive  
Madison, WI 54704

Phone: 442-6760 e-mail: claires@chorus.net

**Send newsletter comments,  
suggestions, and recipe ideas to:  
Liz and Marcia Campbell, Editors  
mcatoncampbe@wisc.edu**