



Urban Roots

Volume 4, Issue 12
18 August 2005

In the Bag

Melon, 1 piece
Salsa Basket, 1 bag
Green Beans, 1 bag
Sweet Peppers, 1 large & 1 small
Carrots, 1 bunch
Roma Tomatoes, 1 bag
Cherry Tomatoes, 1 bag
Cilantro, 1 bag
Slicing Tomatoes, 4 to 6 pieces
Garlic, 1 piece

This is definitely the last week for **melon**. I'm still in awe of how many fruits we were able to harvest from these plants. And almost all of the ones I tasted were delicious. I hope that has been true for all of you also. I know what a drag it is to cut into a beautiful melon only to find that it is overripe or mealy or lacking flavor. I also know it happens (even with our melons sometimes!) We've done our best to select the best, sweetest melons for you this week. I hope that shows up in your kitchen.

It's a **salsa basket** week again. You may have noticed that these are an every other week item. Our tomatillos are not producing quite as well as I would expect this year, maybe they too are suffering in this dry season. So we pick them every two weeks and get just enough for you. You won't find cilantro in your salsa bag this week however. Instead we gave you a whole bunch thinking you could add as much of it as you like to your salsa.

You have **green beans** again this week (with some **purple beans** added to many of your bags for fun!) This particular planting we are picking from is such a joy. Lots of lovely, delicious beans. But after this week, it will be a little while before you see them again. The next planting coming on does not look to be in quite as good of shape as this one.

(continued on the back)

Claire's Comments

Singing in the Beans

I think I write about green beans every year. They are definitely one of my favorite vegetables. When they are in season, and we are picking them like mad, and we have too many to be able to sell them all, I'll eat them every day. By the plateful.

Honestly, it takes this level of love for a vegetable in order to go through what we go through for these delicious green pods. It's not the tilling or the planting or the cleaning that causes the trouble. It's the picking. We stoop over those rows picking bean after bean for hours: Search through the leaves, find the beans, visually sort out the ones that are too small and leave them on the plant, sort out the ones that are too big and toss them on the ground, pick the rest one by one, or two by two if you are lucky. Next plant. Change position to control the ache in the hamstrings, the pain in the small of the back. Next plant.

When we spend so much time with a vegetable, and with each other in those vegetable rows, we are on the lookout for sources of entertainment and distraction. This year the green bean rows have become our concert hall. It started last week when I came to the field overtired and irritable. I was in a bad mood and I knew that picking beans was not going to help. But still the job needed to be done, and I needed to motivate the crew to do it well.

I decided I should sing. First, I asked if anyone on the crew had a song they would like to sing. I explained about my being in a bad mood, and threatened to sing them a song about lying on a dead lovers grave if no one else spoke up. None of the teenagers in farm and field volunteered, and the interns encouraged me to sing about the grave. So, I did. Even though the song is sad, it did its job of both entertaining and distracting. Next Maggie chimed in with a song about peace. Then I was up again singing about a poor man's house. Then Camilla sang a bit about the girl from Iwagemma in her native Portugese. Next was my favorite lulabye about being anybody you want to be. And finally we all joined in to learn Maggie's peace song. By the end, Maggie and I were collaborating on other songs we could learn, and most importantly my bad mood was gone AND we were done with the beans.

But it wasn't just the one day that turned the beans into the concert hall. Really it was the next bean picking that did that. Part way through, Manny (the Farm & Field crew leader) requested a song. Maggie sang us a bluesy religious piece with a simple tune. Then she and I converted the lyrics to fit the farm and we all (or most of us) learned it and sang a round as we finished picking. Fun.

This past winter I had a goal of learning some songs for just the purpose of keeping us amused during hard jobs. I only finished a couple of them. But now I'm inspired to learn some more this winter. I'll learn to love the beans even more when they mean I get to sing for my supper.

Recipe

(continued from the front)

Sweet peppers and carrots are both new items this week, and I daresay they are the most colorful items we ever have. I love sweet peppers, love to grow them, love to pick them, love to eat them, love to sell them. Same for carrots. Usually all this love contributes to abundant harvests on both these crops. But not this year.

I really don't know what the trouble is for the peppers. They should not mind drought too much. They love the heat. And truly the plants themselves look healthy and vibrant, they just are not producing fruit. The tiny harvest you have in your share this week is all we are getting. Sad. Especially sad because I cannot figure out what the problem is. You can slice these **sweet peppers** for sandwiches and salads or use them in pasta sauce. Unfortunatly there really are not enough of them to stuff, which is another way I love to eat them.

I'm much more clear on the problem with the **carrots**. It's the weeds and the lack of rain. Plain and simple. I made some necessary adjustments in our crop rotation this year, and those modifications landed our carrots in an area that has heavy weed pressure. We've weeded these beds twice and still they are thick with grasses. Very bad. Also, it has been hard for these roots to size without the water they need. But we did manage to bunch some lovely orange, yellow, and even some purple carrots for your bags this week. Enjoy their colorful beauty and do let me know what you think about the flavor differences between the colors. We certainly have formed our own opinions at the bunching table!

Tomatoes and more tomatoes.

Cherry tomatoes, roma tomatoes, and slicing tomatoes again this week. You are all going to get tummy aches from eating so many of these delicious fruits. You should know that the plants are starting to slow down. So, let's enjoy these summer gems while we can.

Coming soon: Winter Squash!!!

It's hard to believe but I think we will start our winter squash harvest next week.

CSA Pick-up Volunteers!

Last week I put out a plea to CSA members to help me out at the farm stand when the Farm & Field youth go back to school. Already all but 2 of the 9 shifts I had open are filled! Thanks so much to all of you who volunteered!

If you are interested in doing a shift at the farm stand there is still time. You would get a chance to meet lots of there CSA members, test your strength hauling full crates of vegetables, and (the best part) fill up your bag with any extras we have left at the end of the pick-up.

I'm still looking for one volunteer for next Thursday the 25th of August, and one for our last delivery on the 20th of October. We meet at the farm stand at 3:30 PM for set up and we should be done with the clean up by 6:45 or 7:00 PM.

Send me a message at claires@chorus.net or call me at 442-6760 to find out more and sign up for a slot!

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