



Urban Roots

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In the Bag

Acorn or Spaghetti Squash, 1 piece
Sweet Peppers, 2 or 3 pieces
Cucumber, 1 piece
Carrots, 1 bag
Salsa Basket, 1 bag
Scallions, 1 bunch
Green Beans, 1 bag
Roma Tomatoes, 1 bag
Slicing Tomatoes, 5 pieces

This week's winter squash is a choice between two very different varieties. **Acorn squash** seems to be the more familiar of the two. While I've never tried it myself (because I really never eat acorns), I hear the best way to prepare these is baked with a little butter and brown sugar. The **spaghettis** seem to be more of a mystery to folks. But I really like these, so I can tell you from first hand experience that the best way to eat them is with the same sauce you like on regular spaghetti. To cook the squash, cut it in half the long way and steam it in a big pot. When you can easily pierce the skin with a fork, it is done. Scoop out the flesh with a big spoon. It will come out in long spaghetti-like strands. Top with pesto or marinara sauce and enjoy with some good garlic bread. Yum.

You can make your own fresh marinara to go with your spaghetti squash if you sauté some of the **scallions** (chopped) in a little olive oil, add the **sweet peppers** (chopped) and let it all wilt just a bit. Then add the **romas** (yellow and red and orange all chopped together) and let them cook down uncovered. Add some basil or thyme at the end along with some salt and pepper and serve over your cooked spaghetti squash.

Green beans would be the perfect side dish! I know I told you last week was the last you would see of green beans. I'm

(continued on the back)

Claire's Comments

Dollars and Pounds

As the farm has grown over the last few years, Maggie (the Assistant Farm Manager) has taken on more responsibilities both in and out of the field. This year, when we decided to add the Sunday Northside Market to our Tuesday Eastside Market and our Thursday farm stand obligations each week, Maggie and I developed a rotating schedule for which of us would do each market. It has been great for me not to have to be at every market every week. And it has also been interesting to hear Maggie's perspectives on delights and frustrations of direct marketing.

To be honest our conversations have been more about frustrations than delights lately. While all our markets started out booming in June and July, especially the new Northside Market, our sales took a severe downturn in August and September. It is so disheartening for us to harvest, go to market, set up our display, and then just stand there with nothing to do. The customers just are not coming out to shop. We've been trying to figure out why. Too hot? Too much food coming from home gardens? A perception that local food costs too much?

A few weeks ago Maggie told me a story about a woman who came to the market for tomatoes. She went through several combinations of our fruits to find three pieces that would cost her as little as possible. She ended up with a half pound costing \$1.25. A little while later she came back to the stand asking for a refund. She said that she found three tomatoes down the way for \$.75 and that ours were too expensive. And really she could probably get them for even less if she went to the grocery store. Maggie handed her money back and later we started to think about why folks should buy our local, organic tomatoes over any other.

It wasn't too hard to come up with reasons. First ours are certified organic (simply, that means clean, no chemicals, only food). We had the only organic tomatoes at the market that day. Second, we know that ours taste better than any tomato she could find at the grocery store. Ours were ripened on the vine, not gassed with ethylene to make them red on the way to market. Third we know that our tomatoes were grown in a system that supports healthy soil, healthy farm workers, and a healthy local economy. But those things are pretty hard to see sitting on our market display. For many folks it really comes down to price alone.

I went home after our discussion in the field that day and found the latest issue of *Growing for Market* in my mailbox. This periodical is full of information and articles for (mostly) small-scale, (mostly) organic growers. The cover story was titled "Are supermarkets cheaper than farmers' markets?" Tired of being told that their prices were too high, the authors did a study to compare their produce prices to those at the supermarket. They found that when they compared dollars and pounds, their market prices came in cheaper than even Wal-Mart on the majority of items. And that was just dollars and pounds. Quality and organic status were not even considered. (See the September 2005 issue of *Growing for Market* for the whole story.)

Now Maggie and I are hot to replicate the study in Madison next year. We'll see if we have time. Meanwhile we do our best to educate at the farm stand and we love that we have CSA members who already know the value and quality of what they get from us each week. CSA is definitely our favorite form of direct marketing.

Recipes

Cranberry Acorn Squash

from Molly Bartlett at Silver Creek Farm

Acorn squash is a good keeper, so you can wait a few weeks on this one until the fresh cranberries show up at the farmer' market.

1/2 cup fresh cranberries	1 1/2 tablespoons honey or maple syrup
1 small apple, cored and chopped	1 tablespoon melted butter
1/4 cup currants	pinch salt
1/2 cup orange juice or apple cider	2 acorn squash, cut in half, seeds removed

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Combine cranberries, apples, currants, orange juice, honey, butter, and salt in a saucepan. Heat until berries are just tender. Place squash in an ovenproof dish. Fill cavities with fruit. Cover dish and bake until squash is tender, about 35 to 45 minutes.

Prizewinner Green Beans with Tomatoes and Herbs

from Mara Rosenbloom

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil	1 pound green beans, ends clipped, beans cut in half
1 clove garlic, minced	
about 1/4 teaspoon pepper flakes	1 sprig rosemary, leaves torn off the stem
1/2 cup sliced onions	2 medium tomatoes, cut into wedges
2 teaspoons dried oregano	salt to taste or 2 tablespoon salted butter
1/2 teaspoon dried ground thyme	

Heat olive oil in a deep pan over medium heat. Add garlic and pepper flakes; sauté until fragrant. Add onions; sauté until translucent, 3-5 minutes. Add 1/4 cup water, the dried spices, and green beans. Stir, cover, and steam-cook beans until nearly done, 10-15 minutes. Stir in the rosemary and tomatoes. Cook very briefly, until tomatoes are warmed through and beans are done. Season with salt, or if you prefer, melt salted butter over the beans before serving. This recipe won a prize in the 2002 Food for Thought Recipe Contest in Madison, Wisconsin. Makes 4 servings.

In the Bag (continued from the front)

happy to say that I was wrong. While I don't think the flavor on these is quite as good as it was a week ago, they are still pretty darn good. If you don't want to eat them as a side, make them into a meal. Just the other night I had them with tofu and cashews. Again start with the chopped scallions sautéed in olive oil. Add bite sized tofu pieces to brown in the oil. Then add the beans, ends snapped off and beans themselves snapped in half. Add some tamari, just a dash, and let the beans cook just a bit. Finally add some cashew halves. Toss it all together in the pan. Then toss it on your plate with some rice. Delicious. This time I think it really is the last time for the beans.

Other lasts this week include cucumbers, salsa baskets, and roma tomatoes. In the next few weeks look for butternut squash, Brussels sprouts, leeks, one more bag of potatoes, and green tomatoes.

Troy Community Farm

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Upcoming Events

REAP's Seventh Annual

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Food for Thought Festival

"Eating Well, Being Well"

Saturday, 17 September

8:00 am to 1:00 pm

Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

off of the capital square

With the **Friday Night Forum**

Friday, 16 September

7:30 to 9:30 pm

UW Health Services Sciences

Learning Center, 750 Highland Ave.

Joan Dye Gussow, keynote

"Of Pyramids and Parsnips:

Just Eat Food"

Madison's Sixth Annual

Empty Bowls Dinner

Saturday, 1 October

11:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Madison Senior Center

330 West Mifflin Street

Free Meal, \$15 donation for a Handmade Bowl

Local potters create the ceramic bowls, area restaurants donate soup and bread, and volunteers serve the meal. You are invited to choose a bowl for \$15 and enjoy live entertainment!

Proceeds go directly to projects that make fresh foods available to low income households, including MACSAC's Partner Shares Program. Troy Community Farm has several CSA members every year who are assisted by the Partner Shares Program.

**Send newsletter comments, suggestions, and recipe ideas to: Liz and Marcia Campbell, Editors
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