



In the Bag

Green, Yellow, or Purple Beans, 1 bag
Sweet Onions, 1 bunch
Fennel, 1 large and 1 small bulb
Red or Green Leaf Lettuce, 1 head
Beets, 1 bunch
Cilantro, 1 bunch
Garlic, 1 head

The highlight of the share this week is **green beans!** Those few beans you brought home last week were just a sample. This time you have enough for a real meal. At the moment, green beans are my most favorite food from the farm. Yes, even more prized than the little sungold cherry tomatoes that are just starting to ripen. I love them.

Last night I also found out that I'm actually rather picky about my beans. I have only ever grown the French filet or "haricot vert" varieties. These types are known for their unsurpassed tenderness and flavor. So, I guess I'm spoiled. Last night a gardener friend of mine served beans freshly harvested from her garden. They were *not* the French beans I am so loyal to. When I saw them in the bowl all thick and round and beany, I was worried. In the end they were good enough for me to finish my portion and then some, but they did not compare to the beans you will have for dinner this week. Some day soon I will serve my friend beans from the farm and, I suspect, convert her to the French beans as well.

Many of you will also have **yellow or purple beans** in your bag. I grow these other colors mostly for fun. They add interest to a meal and offer an opportunity for comparison. Beware though, the purple beans will turn green when cooked. Then you will know them from the French beans because they will be more stout. The yellow beans will be easier to compare because they will maintain their color.

(continued on the back)

Claire's Comments

I first wrote this piece on beans in 2002, Troy's first year for the CSA. I've brought it back a couple of times since then, with some seasonal updates, because I'm still so in love with this vegetable. For those of you who have read it before, it will not be quite as fresh as the beans in your bag. Rather, I hope it is more like a special dish you eat just once a year.

Why grow green beans?

I often ask myself this question as I am stooped over the row, picking bean after bean for hours. Search through the leaves, find the beans, visually sort out the ones that are too small, sort out the ones that are too big and toss them on the ground, pick the rest one-by-one. Next plant. I have a lot of time to think as I make my way down the row, bean-by-bean, plant-by-plant. Thinking or talking with a fellow bean picker helps take my mind off the ache in my back. And moving my eyes and hands as fast as possible helps move me forward to when I can stand up straight again. While picking beans this week, I couldn't help but think about what I was doing and why I bother.

I started by remembering picking beans when I was growing up. I didn't much like it then either. My parents did not grow a very large garden, but they often had tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers and green beans. And they were smart enough to make sure that the kids did the green bean harvest. I remember moving slowing down the row with my paper bag scraping along the ground as it filled with beans, my sister next to me on her own row. "Can we stop when we get half a bag?" "Can we stop when we get to the end of this row?" My mom or dad always said we could stop when we finished the job, keep picking. I cannot recall for sure, but I don't think that we always did the most thorough job on the beans. We liked the part where we got to sit on the porch and snap the ends a whole lot better. And even after all that work, we still managed to love the eating of green beans.

I still love eating beans. That is definitely part of why I grow them. I would not be able to tolerate the amount of work that goes into them if I did not love them. And my favorite way to eat them is still steamed with a little butter. YUM. I could eat a dinner plate full. So, I grow them because I like to eat them. I also grow them because other folks like to eat them. We have many CSA members and market customers who are unfailingly loyal to our beans. Still I am always hoping to win more converts. So, at market I sample them out to customer after customer. And many a one have to buy them after that taste. Last year one woman said she already had a bag full of beans in her fridge, but she still wanted ours because they were so good! She made my back feel instantly better with that one comment.

In the end I guess it's really that simple: Grow green beans because they are so good. I hope you enjoy your beans this week. We are still on just our very first planting, so there will be many more beans to come!

(continued from "In the Bag")

If you want something more than steamed beans served with butter and salt this week, try this: Sauté some **fresh garlic** from your share in olive oil. Add the beans and lightly cook. Add tamari and toasted sesame seeds just before the beans are done and do a final toss. Serve alone or with rice. When beans are in season, I'm happy to have this dish for dinner every night!

The **sweet onions** are a variety called Ailsa Craig. These are early onions, meant to be eaten fresh. They are not for storage, so don't try to hold on to them. There will be more onions coming in a few weeks! Sauté these with your beans or, even better, caramelize them. Slice them into strips and roast them in the oven with butter or olive oil. Then serve them on a sandwich with fresh mozzarella, tomato, and basil. Delicious.

This is the last of the **fennel** for the year. I've included a recipe for beet and fennel salad below. It was a real favorite last summer. But if you have another plan for your fennel, you can always just cook up the **beets** on their own (see the salad recipe for directions). Though I am not a big fan of either beets or **cilantro**, it turns out I really like them together. I just cube the cooked beets and coat them with olive oil, roasted garlic, and chopped cilantro. It's another great cold salad. Be sure to use the beet greens (which are really lovely right now) also. You can use them as you would chard or kale.

Coming soon: More freshly harvested garlic, cherry tomatoes, salad tomatoes, salsa baskets, eggplant, and potatoes. Summer is here!

Upcoming Events

Community Mosaic Project

Saturday, 22 July, 10 AM to 1 PM

Wednesday, 26 July, 5:30 to 8:30 PM

Local artists Marcia Yapp, Megan Cain, and Diana Slowiak will lead children, adults, and seniors through a multi-step workshop to create mosaic art pieces for the land. The mosaic pieces will remain on the land for current and future generations to enjoy. No experience necessary. Participants must be able to attend both parts of the workshop. Please register in advance by contacting Dana at dana@troygardens.org or 240-0409.

Recipes

Salad Dressing from Jacque Pepin's *Fast Food My Way*

Whether you are looking forward to seeing the last leaf of lettuce in your share, or dreading the day the salads stop coming, try this dressing recipe submitted by CSA member Lydia Zepeda for a new twist on a your many spring and summer salads.

1/4 cup cream
salt
pepper
1 1/2 tsp. red wine vinegar

Whisk cream, salt and pepper in salad bowl about 15 seconds until somewhat thickened. Add vinegar and blend. Add greens and toss. Yum! Sound rich? Think again! It is fewer than half the calories of oil dressing (200 vs. 480). Use half and half if like (only 80 calories).

Beet and Fennel Salad

Kevin Coleman was an intern on the farm in 2005. When I wondered what I was going to suggest that the CSA members do with beets and fennel last year (not two of my favorites at the time) he gave me this recipe that he adapted from Chris and Juli at Two Onion Farm and said that it was so good he and his wife Jesse ate it three times in the space of two weeks.

1 bunch of beets
1 fennel bulb, thinly sliced (or two)
chopped pecans or roasted pine nuts
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
1/4 cup olive oil
2-3 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
salt and pepper to taste

Cook beets (leave skin on, cut off leaves, but keep the root time 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.

Troy Community Farm

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