

In the Bag

Bok Choy, 3 heads
Green Garlic, 1 bunch
Radishes, 1 bunch
Pea Shoots, 1 bunch
Scallions, 1 bunch
Lettuce, 1 head
Choice of Spouts, 1 bag

I have the say the farm is looking good this spring, and producing some good-looking food. I am especially proud of the bok choy. The variety this week is Mei Qing Choi. It is a beautiful pale green color with juicy ribs and tender leaves. And most importantly, it is delicious. Use it in the recipe on the back, or in a stir-fry, or even in place of lettuce on your sandwich or salad. It is mild and delicious.

The green garlic and scallions look quite similar to each other, but there will be no mistaking the flat-leafed green garlic once you get it close to your nose. Use it anywhere you would use clove garlic, but cut it as you would scallions – all the way up to and including the green leaves. Green garlic is especially good in omelets.

Everything else in your share will make a great salad. The lettuce is perfect at this time of year – sweet and crisp. The spouts will add a nutty touch, the radishes a spicy zing, and of course the scallions will provide the required onion flavor. And don't forget the pea shoots! Cut them into your salad stem and all. They foretell the advent of pea pods with their delicious sweetness.

If sandwiches are more your style, try a sliced radish sandwich with either tahini (sesame paste-like peanut butter but made with sesame seeds) or a mild cheese, lettuce, and pea shoots. It makes a yummy lunch at the farm!

Next week look for kale, lettuce mix, more radishes and green garlic, and possibly leeks!

Claire's Comments

A Good Morning

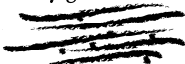
I woke up with an unusually calm feeling this morning. Typically on the first CSA pick-up day of the year, I am all a knot of anxiety over what is left to prepare and how I will possibly be ready in time. But this year I heard my neighbors across the street (who also happen to be CSA members) head off to work on their bikes at 4:00 AM and instead of jumping up to write this newsletter I actually stayed in bed a bit longer and savored my feeling of calm. I started reading a new book. Reading in the very early morning while listening to the birds wake up is one of my most favorite things, and quite rare this time of year.

Last night my book club discussed Michael Pollen's *The Omnivore's Dilemma* in great detail. It is a fabulous read for any of you who have not yet picked it up. We had one of our most lively discussions yet, noting areas of agreement as well as doubt and disappointment. In his book Pollen asks us to look carefully at what we eat, where it comes from, how it feeds us, and what it costs both us and the world. He gave us a lot to chew on.

This morning I moved on to our next book on food. This one is *Five Quarters of the Orange* by Joanne Harris. In some ways this novel addresses the same questions as Pollen's non-fiction treatise, but in such a different style. Harris has a story to tell, a story about a family and a moment in history. And she delivers it to us wrapped in delicious descriptions of food. Beginning this book was a perfect way to begin both this day and this CSA season. It was perfect because it reminded me that our CSA has both a serious and somewhat political side that is all about good, clean, local food and its virtues for our bodies, our local economy, and our greater community (much as Pollen addresses in his book) and a purely sensual, totally indulgent side that is all about freshness and flavors and unique creations (more Harris's territory).

This morning Harris reminded me to appreciate and savor, even just to notice, that the bok choy in your share today is the best Troy has ever grown. And this is the only taste of this variety you will have this whole season! It is worth taking time to enjoy. I was happy to be reminded that the food I grow is not just political but delicious as well.

We, together, are entering the 6th CSA season at Troy Community Farm. I want to welcome the 40 new members who will eat regularly from this farm for the first time this year, as well as the 70 members who have been eating our food for anywhere from 1 to 5 years already. If the loveliness of the farm today is any indication of what is in store for us, we have an exceptional season ahead, full of beautiful, clean food. I know my appetite and my taste buds are ready! I hope yours are too!



Logistical Questions and Answers

Farm Pick-up:

Q: If I get to choose my own vegetables from the piles, how do I know what and how much to take?

A: The name and quantity of each vegetable is listed on the front of the newsletter (1 bunch, 1 bag, 3 pieces, etc.) Also, the vegetables are displayed in the same order that they are listed in the newsletter. This arrangement will help you identify any mysterious veggies. Sometimes there will be multiple varieties of a particular vegetable to choose from, but you will still take only one of that vegetable. For instance, there may be red and green lettuce in the pile; you choose one or the other. Also, someone will always be behind the stand to help you. Just ask.

Q: What do I pack my vegetables in?

A: That is up to you. Bring a bag or a box to take your vegetables home in. But don't worry if you forget a tote on occasion. The farm will have some extra bags in the truck for you to use.

Q: What if I forget to come to the pick-up some week?

A: There is a back-up plan for folks who pick up at the farm. I set any unclaimed boxes on my front porch for the night. You can come by to get yours anytime between 7:00 PM on Thursday and 6:00 AM on Friday. At 6:00 AM on Friday I pack the leftovers into bigger boxes for Shirley (a follow CSA member) to pickup and use in the free Friday meal at St. Mark's Lutheran Church. My porch is at 1814 Sheridan Drive, about a mile from the farm.

Regent Street Market Pick-up:

Q: Do I get to choose my own vegetables?

A: Sadly, no. The bags at Regent Street will be pre-packed for you. But you can peek inside before you choose one to make sure you get the red or green lettuce that you like best.

Q: What if I forget to come to the pick-up some week?

A: The market will make sure that your vegetables are used. They may go home with an employee or volunteer or be given to the food pantry.

All Pick-ups:

Q: I signed up for eggs. How do I get them?

A: Eggs will be in a separate stack, with your name on the carton. Remember to pick them up and add them to your bag.

Q: What if I am out of town some Thursdays?

A: Have a friend or neighbor pick up your vegetables instead. You can ask your friend to deliver the food to you, or just have her/him eat it if you will be gone for a while and won't be able to use it. If you cannot find someone to come to the pick-up, please try to let me know ahead of time and I won't harvest your share that week.

More Questions? Please ask in person or send me an e-mail.

Recipe

While harvesting (and tasting!) all this beautiful bok choy on Wednesday, our intern Eva Denny decided that the very best recipe recommendation to CSA members would be to eat the bok choy raw. It is true that its very mild flavor is quite delicious raw and would be a great addition to salads. But there surely is no shortage of salad makings in the share this week! So Eva found this compromise recipe for us. It could be served as a main dish over rice or as a cold salad.

Bok Choy with Ginger Vinaigrette

- 1 pound bok choy
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce or tamari
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 green garlic stalk, finely chopped to the first leaf
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger, finely chopped or grated

Separate bok choy leaves and rinse under cold water to clean. Place in steamer and steam until stalks and are soft when pierced.

Combine vinegar, mustard, tamari, sugar, garlic, and ginger, and mix well.

After bok choy is steamed you have two options:

1. Chop up bok choy into bit size pieces while still warm and pour the ginger vinaigrette over.
2. Plunge steamed bok choy into cold water to crisp it back up. Drain and cool. Then chop and pour ginger vinaigrette over.

Makes 4 - 1-cup servings

Troy Community Farm

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