

In the Bag

Green Cabbage, 1 head
Sugar Snap Peas, 1 bag
Kohlrabi, 1 bulb
Broccoli, 1 bundle
Cauliflower, 1 head
Snow Peas, 1 bag
Summer Squash, 1 piece
Batavian Lettuce, 1 head
Basil, 1 bunch

It's the year of the cole crops! This week you have four representatives of the brassica family in your share: broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and kohlrabi. We were not originally planning to harvest cauliflower and cabbage just yet, but then there they were looking perfect and beautiful and ready to eat!

One of the many good things about cole crops (from my perspective) is that most folks are familiar with them and know just how they like to eat them. The obvious exception this week is the kohlrabi. Honestly, I had never eaten a kohlrabi before I grew one myself. I was looking for new vegetables to add to the CSA shares and kohlrabi seemed like it would be easy to grow. Moreover I thought I could time it to come in early when I might be short on other crops. It worked out just like that last year. I was happy with the ease and the timing, but the flavor was not much more exciting to me than a broccoli stem. Jake has done a good job showing me the greater virtues of the kohlrabi this year. Even I agree that it is juicy and nutty and an excellent addition to salads. For a full description of this unique vegetable, see Jake's kohlrabi treatise on the back. I expect you will see two more kohlrabi next week, so enjoy this one now!

Here come the peas! You have a full pound of the snow peas (that same Sumo variety I told you
(continued on the back)

Claire's Comments

SOL Agriculture as Basic as the Sun

I was so excited to introduce this new acronym last week. SOL. Sustainable. Organic. Local. At the time, the only other connection I was making with SOL was with the Spanish word for sun. Perfect. I have since discovered a problem. When Maggie read the article, the first thing she connected with SOL was "shit out of luck." Drat! I know I tend to live hidden away and covered in dirt most of the time, but even I have heard of that. Maybe we could add the A to the end and make it SOLA? Or make sure to pronounce it "soul" (as I do in my head) rather than S.O.L.? If you have any ideas on how to solve this problem, please let me know!

Meanwhile, the concept stands. Sustainable, Organic, and Local, as equal parts of a healthy food system. I don't want any of those things to be lost. The more difficult question is how to know your food fits in.

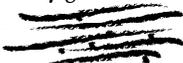
Local. You can know your food is local if you buy it from the farmer who grew it and ask how far she drove to bring it to you. Then you can decide if 1 hour away is local or four or five hours. It's up to you. One point here is to make sure the farmer behind the table actually grew the food. In WI we are lucky. Most of our markets do not allow farmers to buy in food and resell it, but some do. It's a good thing to ask about if you wonder. Buying local in a grocery store is great also. Usually local crops will be identified with who grew them and where the farm is located.

Organic. This one is harder to get it. I've sold next to "almost organic" growers at markets for years. When I ask more about their growing practices, I usually find out that "almost organic" is not actually organic at all. Lots of growers want to be able to say they are organic and truly believe that their growing practices are good and healthy. Often enough they do not realize the chemical fertilizer they have been using for years is not okay. They might mean well, they just have not learned enough about what organic really is. I myself always look for "certified organic." That means that the farmer has reported their growing practices and inputs to a third party who has then inspected the farm and certified it as organic. As a fellow certified organic grower, I feel I can really trust that certification. To be fair, I do sometimes buy from non-certified folks that I know well and have talked carefully with about their growing practices. Grass is Greener (who supplies our eggs) is one of those farms. But for me this kind of arrangement is rare.

Sustainable. This adjective is the very hardest for me. There are so many things that go into it: worker health, financial stability, frequency and types of tillage, limiting off-farm inputs, etc. There is no list of definite rules to refer to. The organic standards impose things like crop rotations and they encourage beneficial insect and animal habitats, but those are only pieces of sustainable. Just like local and organic are pieces of sustainable (in my opinion). There are so many things to consider here, I think I will be struggling with this one for a while.

SOL, SOLA, organic and more, organic plus. Whatever it is in the end, I think it is great that more and more of us are thinking seriously about what and where we eat. I'm grateful to Michael Pollen and Mark Schlosser for giving me so much to chew on these last couple of months.

(This article was continued from 6/21/07.)



Jake's Kohlrabi Testament

OK, I'll admit it: I am a kohlrabi lover, and I've been looking forward to this day since way back in late March, when Claire and I tucked the little kohlrabi seeds into their greenhouse flats. Maybe it's my tendency to root for the underdog. Or perhaps I gravitate to its rather bizarre shape (I've heard it described as some kind of organic green or purple *Sputnik*). Or maybe I'm fondly remembering my very first summer on a vegetable farm six years ago. My fellow interns and I passed the hours by trying to decide what profession each veggie best represented, and we unanimously decided that kohlrabi was a high school science teacher (the only other unanimous one was cilantro as the used car salesman). Mostly, though, I just love the way kohlrabi taste, and this year's are particularly delicious: big, crunchy, juicy, and sweet, with almost a nutty flavor. The simplest way to eat these beauties (and by far my favorite) is to remove the leaves, peel away the tough skin and eat them raw, like you would an apple. Kohlrabies are excellent grated into salads or sliced on sandwiches. Diced kohlrabi can also be steamed, put in soups, or used as a radish replacement. Hope you like them half as much as I do!



(continued from "In the Bag")

about last week) and another full pound the sugar snaps. I don't think we have ever delivered a full pound of sugar snaps in one week before. The peas are doing well! Eat these up in your salads, stir fries, and snacks. There will be more next week: the first shell peas and either more snows or sugar snaps.

There will also likely be more summer squash next week. I know it is a tease to give you just one today, but the crop is only starting to come in. There will be more. If you don't want to lose this one in your stir fry, try it sautéed with some garlic and a few of the fresh basil leaves. Yummy.

At last I have come through with the basil. It is not a huge bunch today, maybe not quite enough for pesto. But it is enough to have on sandwiches and in your salads. There will be more soon enough.

Friday we will do our first harvest of green beans. The crop looks beautiful. The beans are long and thin and plants are still setting more flowers. Green beans are one of my top five vegetable loves. I'm hoping to include them in your shares next week! You can also look forward to chard, collards, kale, more salad mix, and beets in the near future.

Recipes

Martha Davis Kipcak's Sugar Snap Peas

Marcia Caton Campbell sent this along in anticipation of the pound of snap peas in your share this week: "Here's a recipe that I got from Martha Davis Kipcak, who is the head of Slow Food Wisconsin and the director of the Kitchen Table Project of Afterglow Farm in the Milwaukee area. She served these at a meeting that I attended last week, and the group essentially fought over them until they were gone!"

1 lb. sugar snap peas
1-2 tsp. toasted sesame oil
2-3 tsp. black sesame seeds
sea salt

Sauté the peas in the sesame oil over medium-high heat for 1-2 minutes. Don't overcook - peas should be crunchy. Sprinkle/toss with sesame seeds. Add sea salt to taste. Enjoy!

Kohl – slaw

Modified from a recipe by A. Doncsecz and published in Vegetarian Gourmet in the Spring 1994. Jake recommends that you try your kohlrabi in this recipe if peeling it and eating it like an apple is not quite your style. The combination of juicy kohlrabi and crisp cabbage is excellent.

1 large kohlrabi
2 cups finely shredded cabbage
1 small red onion, diced
1 sweet apple, cored and diced
½ cup currants
2 tsp. olive oil
¼ cup apple cider

Combine first five ingredients in a large bowl. Gently toss in oil and cider. Cover and refrigerate a few hours to blend flavors. Toss before serving. Six servings.

Troy Community Farm

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