

In the Bag

Red Cabbage, 1 head
Green & Yellow Beans, 1 bag
Fennel, 2 bulbs
Lettuce, 1 head
Summer Squash, 2 pieces
Beets, 1 bunch
Cucumber, 1 piece
Fresh Garlic, 1 bulb
Choice of Herb, 1 bunch

The year of the brassica continues with these lovely red cabbages. We've been watching them mature in the field for several weeks now, looking forward to harvest day. My suggestion is to eat them raw in your salads for the next few weeks. They store well, so just keep your cabbage in plastic and cut off just what you need for each meal. I prefer my red cabbage raw because it is so beautiful and tasty that way. When cooked it turns an unusual shade of blue-grey.

Fennel is new this week as well. This vegetable is usually one of the more contentious CSA offerings. Some folks love it. Others cannot imagine what they will ever do with it. It has an anise flavor similar to black licorice and a texture similar to celery. Many folks like to eat it raw in salads. Sierra, our young farm stand volunteer, loves raw fennel as a snack. (In truth she likes most things raw!) So, break off a stem and give it a try while you take a look at the two fennel recipes on the back.

This is your second delivery of beets. All you beet lovers will be happy to hear that this is the best beet year we have ever had. The bulbs are large and juicy and the greens are equally beautiful and delicious. I just learned yesterday that beet greens are our worker share Jenny's favorite vegetable. She said that she does not always want
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Claire's Comments

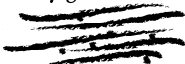
Rain

It has been 10 days since our last rain. I remember that rain. While I was certainly not feeling desperate for water at the time, it was a welcome surprise. The weather radio had not predicted any showers or storms. But there it was all of a sudden, a downpour that caught us in the winter squash struggling to uproot the last of the tall weeds. As the crew gathered in the hoophouse to escape the raindrops and think about where their raingear could be, I actually considered sending everyone home. The sky was dark and the rain was coming down hard. It's a good thing that I waited, because 10 minutes later the sky lightened and the rain stopped and the sun came back out. As we left the hoophouse and returned to the weeds, our wet clothes quickly dried in the sun.

We got almost a half-inch of rain in those few minutes a couple of Mondays ago. We have had only a few teasing raindrops since then. I'm starting to feel desperate. Most every day this week rain has been in the forecast. The last two nights in particular the weather radio said "showers and storms likely." It reported a 70% chance. As I was falling asleep last night, I heard some light rain coming down. "Finally," I thought. In an effort to encourage a real storm, I didn't get up to shut any windows, not even those in the truck, but to no avail. The light rain stopped and it was a peaceful night. I hear there is still a small chance of storms this morning, but it is not looking likely from where I sit. I'm starting to think that our intern Eva's suggestion of rain dances is really the only real option we have left.

The good news is that the lack of rain will not seriously damage the crops that are already established. The tomatoes and peppers should be fine, as will the kale, chard, summer squash and such. It's the fall crops that I am worried about. The crops that we don't even have in the ground yet. Lately Jake has been asking about planting a lot. He is as anxious as I am to get the fall spinach, carrots, herbs, radishes, salad mix and such in the ground. But if we till the soil when it is this dry, much of it will just blow away. And if we put those tender seeds into that dry soil, they will just sit there and die without the moisture they need to germinate and grow.

We need some rain. It has been an excellent growing season so far and I have every reason to expect that it will continue. It's just that we need that one-inch of gently falling, soaking rain every Wednesday or Saturday night like we had at the beginning of the year. It's not so much to ask. I'm willing to dance if necessary!



Recipes

Dan Meyer and Amy Rood sent in this recipe saying "Last year, we found that many people were left scratching their heads at what to do with fennel. We find that it's a bit too strong when raw, but we love it roasted. This recipe is great served with a steak. For the vegetarians, it would go well with any pasta dish. It is from Ina Garten and the Food Network."

Roasted Fennel with Parmesan

2 large fennel bulbs
1/4 c. olive oil
1/2 tsp. kosher salt
1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
Parmesan shavings

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Remove the stems of the fennel and slice the bulb in half lengthwise. With the cut side down, slice the bulb vertically into 1/2-inch-thick slices, cutting right through the core. Spread the fennel slices on a baking sheet, coat with olive oil, salt, and pepper and toss with your hands.

Roast the fennel slices for about 1 hour, turning them once after 30 minutes, until the edges are crisp and brown. Remove from the oven and cover with Parmesan shavings.



Adapted by 2005 farm intern Kevin Coleman from Chris and Juli at Two Onion Farm. The summer Kevin worked on the farm, Kevin reported that he and his wife made this salad three times in two weeks. They love it. I hope you do too.

Beet and Fennel Salad

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

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



Please send me your favorite recipes at the e-mail address below!!! I will include them in the newsletter when the appropriate vegetables are available in the share. I am especially looking for recipes with beets, summer squash, cabbage, kale, and chard, though all recipes are thoroughly appreciated.

(continued from "In the Bag")

the beetroot, but the greens hold a permanent place of honor on her plate. I was genuinely surprised to hear this from someone who I know loves chard and kale so dearly. She explained that while they are similar to other greens, the beet greens are simply better. Be sure to try them for yourself. Cook them as you would any other green.

We harvested most of our garlic on Monday, approximately 4000 heads. It was a long day of pulling the bulbs, washing off the dirt, and then laying them out in the hoop house for drying and curing. When you go back to the farm to harvest flowers, you should take a look in the hoop house. 4000 white garlic heads all in one place is quite a site to see. The garlic in your share was pulled and cleaned a couple of days later, so it is still "green." When you break it open you will find that the skins around the cloves are still thick and soft. As the garlic dries, those skins will turn the papery texture you are used to. Meanwhile, you have in your share the freshest mature garlic of the season. Enjoy!



(Garlic Harvest Crew)

The big news this week is that we harvested the first tomatoes! Unfortunately, it was not enough to include them in your shares, but I think you can expect to bring some home next week. The plants are gorgeous and laden with fruit. I have my fingers crossed for a truly bountiful tomato season.

I am also looking forward to the first tomatillo harvest. We have peppers, cilantro, onions, and garlic all ready to go into your salsa baskets. Now we just need the tomatillos. Soon!

Troy Community Farm

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