

In the Bag

Salsa Basket, 1 bag
Summer Squash, 3 pieces
Beets, 1 bunch
Scallions, 1 bunch
Red Peppers, 1 large and 3 small
Garlic, 1 bulb
Cherry Tomatoes (for members 46
to 91 this week), 1 bag
Corn, 3 small ears
Slicer Tomatoes, TBA

The tomatillo salsa is back this week. I have been pleased to see that it is just as popular this year as it has been in past years! It really is surprisingly good – one of those foods where the combination of ingredients is so much better than the individuals on their own. As a quick refresher, make the salsa by first husking and cleaning the tomatillos. Then put them in the blender (or salsa maker) with the cilantro, chopped garlic, hot pepper (to taste), and a dash of salt. Chop the onion separately and mix it in for a bit more texture. Serve chilled with chips, burritos, enchiladas, etc. If you are feeling up for experimentation, add some fresh tomatoes and/or red peppers.

Oh my, the red peppers! When I went out to the field on Wednesday morning to harvest the hot peppers for your salsa, I was surprised to see plant after plant laden with colorful sweet peppers. I was planning on including peppers in your share again next week, but clearly they could not wait. It took me about 1.5 hours to harvest the 450 first quality peppers in your shares, plus several buckets of “farmer food” (those with blemishes or spots of rot). If you run out of ways to use your peppers (roast them and serve them with olives and cheese, include them in salsa or tomato sauce, stuff them

(continued on the back)

Claire's Comments

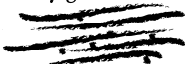
Rain: Week Two

Was there a time when it was hot and sunny day after day? A time when I left the windows rolled down on the farm truck overnight without fear that my butt would soak up rainwater from the seat the next morning? A time when I was kicking myself for not figuring out and installing an irrigation system at the farm? I feel sure there was a time like that. And I think it was only two or three weeks ago. How times have changed!

Those things for which we can thank the rain:

- The beautiful peppers in your shares. Only a few weeks ago the peppers were languishing on the plants, desperate for the calcium that was locked in the dry soil. Though our soil is rich in calcium, the peppers and tomatoes cannot access it without water. And without it they get “blossom end rot,” which looks just like it sounds and lands most of them in the compost.
- The lush new growth on the basil. With the hot, dry weather, every last basil plant on the farm was bolting to seed and turning bitter. It was almost impossible to harvest the few stems we needed for our wholesale account with Willy Street Co-op. The rain has brought on a flush of tender new growth that will show up in your shares next week as a pesto-sized bouquet of basil!
- Newly germinated salad mix, cilantro, beets, and carrots. It has been difficult to get these fall crops to germinate in the dry heat. With the rain, they are finally up and I have hope they will do well.
- The opportunity to plant winter cover crops. At last we have been able to till up sections of the field that grew the early peas, broccoli, garlic, beans, etc. When the soil is as dry as it was, it cannot be worked without losing a great deal of organic matter and damaging the soil structure. In between the rains (because the soil also cannot be worked when it is too wet as it will turn to compacted clods of concrete) we finally tilled down those crops and now we are ready to seed rye for the winter. In addition to looking perfectly beautiful, the rye will hold nutrients and the soil itself in place for the 2008 crops. When we till down the rye in the spring, the nutrients and organic matter that the rye adds to the soil will feed next year's eggplant, corn, celeriac, and all those other crops we hope will do better next time around!

In addition to the many positive turns the rain has brought, I must mention one drawback: it is no fun to work in the rain. To be true, some of us handle it better than others. Good rain gear helps, as does an extra set of dry clothes. But even with those things, some of us can take the cold and wet better than others. As it happens, Jake is a cold and wet kind of guy. I do better in the sunny heat. While both of us prefer those nice and warm but breezy days, we luckily have the other ends of the spectrum covered as well. So, we can help each other through. That support and some good rain gear have us focusing on the positives about the rain!



Recipes

This recipe comes from CSA members Abbie and Paul Hampton. Abbie says that Paul used to prep at L'Etoile and is a fabulous creator of dishes. I asked for their help with all the summer squash we are getting this season. They sent this suggestion along saying it can be eaten hot or cold. If you need a bit of basil, be sure to stop by the CSA flower and herb garden at the farm and pick some. There are three types of basil right by the rain gauge: sweet (the green basil you are used to), lemon (also green but with a lemon flavor), and purple (a beautiful color and a flavor much like the sweet basil), in that order. I bet any of them would be great in this salad!

Summer Squash and Couscous Salad

1 cup uncooked couscous	basil, chopped
1 – 2 Tbs. olive oil	salt and pepper
3-4 summer squash, cubed	feta cheese, crumbled
2 cloves garlic, minced	

1. Cook the couscous according to the directions and set aside.
2. Heat a pan with 1-2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add minced garlic and squash (and onions or scallions if wanted). Sauté until veggies are tender. Add salt and pepper to taste. Drain excess liquid.
3. Add squash mixture to couscous. Stir in feta and basil and salt and pepper to taste.

Note from Abbie: This recipe can be modified using your favorite herbs, veggies, and cheese. It is a great way to use up any excess things you have from the week before and can also be done with pasta.



Here's another great idea for summer squash and tomatoes. I just love ratatouille and had it for the first time this year at the Savor the Summer Festival is past weekend. It was delicious! I found this basic recipe on the internet. I would suggest substituting fresh basil, oregano, and thyme from the CSA herb garden. And, frankly, I never use parsley in ratatouille. I'm sorry that I cannot provide the eggplant this year. Last year we were swimming in beautiful eggplant. This year the potato beetles (who actually prefer eggplant) devastated the crop before it was mature. I'm hoping next year will be another great year for eggplant!

Ratatouille

2 Tbs. olive oil	3 to 4 summer squash, cut into slices
2 cloves garlic, minced	1 tsp. dried leaf basil
1 large onion, thinly sliced	1/2 tsp. dried leaf oregano
1 small eggplant, cubed	1/4 tsp. dried leaf thyme
2 bell peppers, coarsely chopped	2 Tbs. fresh parsley, chopped
4 large tomatoes, coarsely chopped	

In a 4-quart Dutch oven or saucepan, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add garlic and onions and cook, stirring often, until softened, about 6 to 7 minutes. Add eggplant; stir until coated with oil. Add peppers; stir to combine. Cover and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally to keep vegetables from sticking. Add tomatoes, zucchini, and herbs; mix well. Cover and cook over low heat about 15 minutes, or until eggplant is tender but not too soft. Serves 4.

(continued from "In the Bag")
with lentil dal and/or rice and bake them) you can do what Jake and I and the interns plan to do with all the farmer food: Take out the seeds and cut them up and put them in freezer bags in your freezer for the winter (no blanching or cooking necessary). Peppers are one of those foods that I refuse to buy in the winter, so a frozen pepper is a great treat at that time of year!

I wish I were as excited about the corn as I am about the peppers. I'm really trying to be a corn grower, but I am struggling. I did a trial corn planting last year with some free seed I got from a friend. It was not great, but it gave me hope that I could do better if I put in some effort. I purchased two highly rated varieties of sweet corn this winter and really did put some effort into growing them. The first planting I put in did not germinate. I must have planted it too early, before the soil was warm enough to stir life in the seed. The second planting germinated fine, but the plants were short and stubby and produced only these tiny ears of corn, and few enough of them at that. At least the few I sampled at harvest were sweet and yummy. That's some small consolation. I will try again next year. My goal is to have 6 large, lovely, sweet ears of corn for each share next year. That should be possible...

As promised, those of you who did not have cherry tomatoes in your share last week, have them this week. Enjoy!

Help

WE NEED PLASTIC HANDLE BAGS!

You know, the ones you get at the store and then stash in your junk drawer or perhaps stuff neatly somewhere near your recycling. Bring them in to us and we will hand them back out to you when you forget to bring your own bag to the delivery!

Thanks!

Troy Community Farm

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