

## In the Bag

Butternut Squash, 1 piece  
Yellow Potatoes, 1 bag  
Leeks, 1 bunch  
Carrots, 1 bunch  
Popcorn, 1 bunch  
Sweet Peppers, 5 pieces  
Choice of Sprouts, 1 bag  
Choice of Herb, 1 bunch  
Garlic, 2 small bulbs

This is truly a fall share! Oh, except for the peppers! It is crazy to have peppers on 11 October. We harvested them hard on Wednesday because these are the last you will get for the year. With the cold temperatures that seem to be in place for good now, the peppers will not be able to size any more fruit. Which is okay, because it has been a bountiful pepper harvest all in all. In fact, I was wondering if you might be getting sick of peppers. If you are, just chop them up and put them in your freezer for the winter (when peppers at the store are flown in from Israel and cost a small fortune). Then pull them out in January for your omelets and pizzas and pasta sauces. A little farm goodness in the dead of winter is sure to provide some inner warmth.

So, as I was saying, except for the peppers, this share is all about fall – good hardy foods that will keep well and fill you up. The butternut you have this week is probably the best keeper of all the squashes you have seen during the season. Don't be worried about leaving it on your counter or in your pantry for months before you cut into it. Whenever you cut it open, it will be as sweet and deliciously smooth as it is today.

Same with the potatoes and leeks, except those will be happier kept in the fridge. Just make sure they are in some kind of plastic or other somewhat airtight container and keep them cool. The leeks  
(continued on the back)

## Claire's Comments

### Sprouts

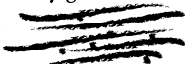
Sprouts are back this week in a celebration of a huge milestone in our burgeoning sprout business. When we started growing sprouts last year, Maggie and I entered into it with the thought that it would be a good way to diversify our product line and extend our production through the winter. Since sprouts are grown indoors and have such a short growing cycle (from 2 to 7 days), we reasoned that they would be the perfect crop for us – fast, requiring little space, and protected from the usual unpredictability of the weather. Sprouts also had the added benefit of being a completely untapped market in Madison. Though Jake and I have had some trials as we increased production and improved our systems this year, most of those initial thoughts on sprouts have proven to be true.

Then, a little while back, we found out that sprouts are not considered an agricultural item, but rather a regulated food that requires a state license to produce. After many phone calls and some refinements to our system, we finally had a visit from the state inspector last week. Jake and I were nervous as we met her, dressed in her lab coat, hardhat, and accessory flashlight. While I am not a stranger to inspections (having been inspected every year as part of our organic certification), I am used to the inspector showing up with mud boots and a straw hat, not a lab coat. After two hours of questioning and a thorough look at our facility, the inspector smiled, wished us luck, and signed our brand new license. We proudly posted it on our pegboard and promptly started this week's batch of sprouts.

With our license prominently displayed, we are ready to really make things happen with the sprout business this winter. And thanks to our business benefactor, Joan Collins, we are well positioned to do so. Joan started her own business (Joan Collins Publicity) 40 years ago with little more than a desk. In celebration of her 40<sup>th</sup> year business anniversary, she decided to grant \$40,000 to women and girls starting their own businesses – her own version of local microfinance. Her goal was to provide just the right support at the just the right time to help these women and girls create their own successful businesses. Maggie and I were truly inspired by Joan's story and applied for one of the \$5,000 grants for our new sprout business. Right around the holidays we found out that we had been chosen! It was my best holiday gift!

Since then Maggie has moved on to work on affordable housing and Jake has stepped in to work with me on the farm and the sprouts. With Joan's help, we have already installed new sprout sinks, designed new labels (which some of you will see today), and introduced new sprouts (the leafy mixes you saw a few weeks back). Next we are looking at further increasing our production with new rolling sprouting racks. As soon as the CSA season is over, we will be knocking on doors with sprout samples in the hopes of expanding our distribution to more area groceries and restaurants. We are looking forward to a productive and lucrative winter!

Keep your eyes open for Troy sprouts in your local store this winter! Eating sprouts is not only good for you; it's also good for your CSA farm!



## Recipe

*I love this soup. I wish I could remember which cookbook provided the recipe, but I cannot. For me it only exists as a photocopy in my cookbook cupboard. It is easy and delicious and an excellent way to use some of the butternut squashes you have been bringing home this fall.*

*There is a note on the side of my photocopy saying, "In the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy, the blending of squash, Parmesan, and fresh sage is a classic combination." Classic and delicious. Perhaps in Italy their sage stays leafy and vibrant all winter. Here, ours does not. So, when I need to, I use dried sage instead of fresh. I've also made up big batches of this soup and frozen it for use on those cold winter nights when I need a quick and satisfying meal.*

### Butternut Squash with Parmesan

2 Tbs. unsalted butter	2 Tbs. grated Parmesan cheese
1 large Spanish onion, chopped	3 fresh sage leaves, diced
2 celery stalks, chopped	1 tsp. kosher salt
6 cups vegetable stock	¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
1 (3-inch) piece of Parmesan rind	¼ tsp. ground black pepper
2 bay leaves	1/8 tsp. cayenne
3 pounds butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and chopped into 1-inch cubes	¼ cup chopped fresh parsley

1. Melt the butter in a large stockpot over medium heat. Add the onion and celery and sweat until tender, about 4 minutes.
2. Add the stock (I use Better than Bouillon and water), Parmesan rind, and bay leaves and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, partially cover, and simmer for 15 minutes.
3. Add the squash and simmer, uncovered for 20 minutes, until the squash is tender.
4. Remove the Parmesan rind and bay leaves; reserve for another use.
5. Puree about one quarter of the soup in a food processor or blender until smooth. (I love smooth soups, so I puree the whole batch with a hand blender right in the pot.)
6. Return the puree to the pot and stir in the grated Parmesan, sage, salt, nutmeg, pepper, and cayenne. Simmer for 2 minutes to heat through.
7. To serve, ladle the soup into bowls and top with chopped parsley.
8. Makes 10 cups.

## Final Pickup

**THE LAST CSA PICKUP WILL BE  
NEXT WEEK ON 18 OCTOBER.**

Your last share will likely include: butternut squash; sweet potatoes; leeks; carrots or beets; Brussels sprouts; kale or chard; a Jack-o-lantern, ristra, or gourds; sprouts; herbs; and garlic.

(continued from "In the Bag")

will not keep as long as the potatoes, but you definitely have a few weeks to use them up. My favorite is potato leek soup, of course (another yummy pureed soup), but I will also use leeks anywhere I would use onions. As you know, our onion harvest was quite lacking this season, but the leeks have been bountiful. So, leeks have been replacing quite a few onions in my kitchen, including in the butternut squash soup recipe to the left.

It's the popcorn bundle that really enhances the fall flavor this week. Don't mistake that decorative trio of corncobs simply for a fall wall hanging. Those kernels are meant for popping! However, they are not quite ready to pop today. They do need a few weeks out in the open air (on your front door or wall or even just on your counter) to dry down some more. Once they are fully dry, the kernels will be somewhat easier to rub off the cobs. Then you can pop them in the usual way in your air popper, in some oil in a pot on the stovetop, or even in your microwave. The yellow, red, and blue kernels will all pop to white, but do have very slightly different flavors. Sarah and I are still eating some popcorn that she grew in her garden in 2006 and it is shockingly delicious every time we pop a new batch.

Since you started getting garlic every week back in July, I know you won't believe me when I say that garlic is a good fall crop also. But really, it fits the bill in terms of being an excellent keeper. If you are not a particular garlic lover, you may have a small pile of garlic bulbs on our counter right now, still waiting to be used. And they look great right?! In addition to using garlic in many every-day dishes, you can roast your garlic and use it as a spread on bread. Just cut the bulb in half around the equator and put it in the oven to roast for 15 minutes or so. It is done when the garlic cloves are soft and easily mush out of their skin when pinched at the bottom.

If you still have too much garlic, you could consider planting it. Remember those garlic scapes you got in your share back in June? In addition to being edible, they make a lovely, elegant flower. Take a head of garlic, separate out the cloves leaving on the papers, and plant them in your garden beds with the root side down. The greens will be some of the first sprouts you see in the spring and the scapes will come up some time in June. After the plant dies back in mid or late July, you can dig up the new garlic heads that will have formed in the ground and plant them again! If you are interested in this route, plan to plant your garlic a little later in the month. It has to be cold enough so that the cloves do not sprout yet this fall. I plan to plant mine the week of October 22<sup>nd</sup>.



**Troy Community Farm**

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