

In the Bag

Butternut Squash, 1 piece
Sweet or Yellow Potatoes, 1 bag
Leeks, 1 bunch
Beets or Carrots, 1 bag
Brussels Sprouts, 1 bag
Kale, 1 bunch
Choice of Herb, 1 bunch
Garlic, 1 bulb
Choice of Fall Decoration, TBA

You have in your bag the last of the Troy vegetables for the year. I think, all in all, it has been a pretty bountiful season. Maybe a month-long drought followed by non-stop rain works for us. Still, with luck, I will *not* have the opportunity to try out that system again next year!

It's hard to say what I would do with the share this week. My tendency would be to squirrel it away and make it last as long as possible. But in the end I would eat it in order of least storability. That means kale first. I might sauté some leeks and garlic in olive oil and then add the washed, stemmed, and chopped kale with tamar and vinegar to make my favorite kale dish. Or I might cube some potatoes (yellow or sweet), boil them until tender, and then sauté them in butter with the leeks and garlic. When the potatoes start to brown, I would add the chopped kale, a bit of water, and some salt. Cover the pot and let the kale steam. Then serve hot.

Brussels Sprouts would be next. Remember a couple weeks ago when I put out a call for tips on how to help those who don't love Brussels sprouts find a way to eat them with at least some pleasure? Renee (who is a worker share on the farm) came to the harvest the following Wednesday excited to share how she converted from a Brussels sprout hater to a lover. She feels it is key to roast them rather than boil or steam them. She tosses the raw

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Claire's Comments

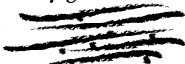
Winter Work

It's a natural and understandable assumption, but I want to dispel the notion that farmers don't have much to do in the winter. Finally free of the harvest and the daily chores of keeping the vegetables growing, winter is when we do all the work we neglected in the summer! Both Jake and I are very much looking forward to planting garlic and putting the farm to rest this week. Then we will move inside to the sprout room and our computers where we will begin "farming season 2008," though it is still the fall of 2007. After ordering seeds, and restocking supplies, this winter will be an especially important planning season. It will be the first winter that Jake has worked on the farm, and thus the first time that we get to plan together.

A few weeks ago Bob Gragson, the new Executive Director for Troy Gardens, arrived and immediately set to work getting to know our organization and sharing his own extensive non-profit experience and expertise with us. One day he sent out an article titled "50 Million Farmers" (one of Richard Heinberg's *Museletter* articles). I read it over tea one morning and was inspired. The article is mostly about how it will become more and more difficult for us to feed ourselves as oil and water and skilled farmers become rare in our world. Heinberg's solutions to this problem involve eating locally, growing food with fewer inputs, and training more farmers. Of course, we at Troy are already working on all those things. But the article made me wonder if what we already do will be enough when resources become truly tight. So, I came up with an idea.

This winter Jake and I will be working on a long-term plan for the farm with three main goals. The first is improving both the quality and quantity of our vegetables so that we may be able to feed more people one day. The second is improving our training programs for interns, worker shares, and high school youth such that participants both learn valuable food production skills and contribute to increased productivity on the farm. And the third is to filter the first two goals through the lens of long-term sustainability so that we minimize outside inputs and maximize self-sufficiency. It is a tall order, which is exactly why it is a long-term plan. Once we have all the ideas out on the table, we will analyze them for environmental sustainability. (Where does our mulch come from? How is it grown? Can we produce our own? Etc.) And finally we will organize all the information into a comprehensive chart and establish a timeline for changes. Exciting!

Every winter I work on improving our systems, adding new vegetables to the shares, and better educating our interns, but never before have I undertook to examine and record the many variables that go into making these improvements. Both Jake and I like to have solid plans so that we are more likely to be successful with implementation, so this project is perfect for us. It will be the bulk of our winter work when we are not growing and selling more sprouts, ordering seeds, repairing equipment, designing new market signs, and all the other odds and ends that piled up over the farming season. I think we might sleep a little later into the dark, cold mornings as well!



2008 CSA Season

You have barely arrived home with your last vegetable share for 2007 and here I am moving on to 2008! It is hard not to look ahead when I already am getting messages from folks who are anxious to sign up for next year's shares. Now that both Physician's Plus and Group Health Cooperative are offering rebates on CSA shares through their health insurance policies, I expect that CSA membership in Madison will soar even beyond the record high levels we saw in 2007. It is so exciting that so many people are being turned on to fresh, local food!

My one concern is making sure that those of you who want to stay with Troy for next year have a spot reserved before I start accepting newcomers. Our 5-acre urban farm can only support 110 CSA members at its full capacity (as it has been doing for the past two years!), so once those spots are full, we have to close our membership. I hope to have the new 2008 CSA brochures done, printed, and out to all of you at the very beginning of the year. But meanwhile, here are some things about next year you may want to know now.

- **Vegetable Share** – The share will be much the same as this year, though the bumper crops for the season are sure to change! Visit www.troygardens.org, click on the community farm link, and find links to photos of all the shares for the past three years! You can also read old newsletters and find recipes you may have misplaced.
- **Egg Share** – We will offer an egg share through Grass is Greener Gardens again. You can choose a weekly or biweekly delivery. The cost should be about the same.
- **Farm Pickup** – The Troy pickup will be much the same as this year: pack your own share, pick your own flowers and herbs, chat with your farmers and neighbors.
- **Westside Pickup** – We hope to change the westside pickup location to the Westside Community Market on Saturday mornings in the Hill Farms DoT parking lot. We will not be using the Regent Street Co-op in 2008, and this farmers' market seems like a good alternative location where you can actually see the farmers each week and we can also sell some extra vegetables and lots of sprouts!
- **Share Price** – The share price for returning members will be \$430. This price is what new members paid in 2007. In 2008 new members will pay around \$450 or \$460.

If you are interested in joining us again next year, please let me know and I will reserve your share of the bounty!



(continued from "In the Bag")

sprouts with olive oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper and then roasts them in the oven until they are tender and just starting to crisp. She is not a fan of the intense Brussels sprout aroma that accompanies the boiled or steamed sprout. Roasting them seems to minimize their distinctive fragrance while enhancing their flavor.

Everything else in the share seems like it will keep indefinitely. So, the next time I got hungry for some Troy food, I would use it all up in one big roasted vegetable meal. You can use just about anything: potatoes, sweet potatoes, squash (minus the skin), beets, carrots, leeks, onions, garlic, even some of those Brussels sprouts. Just cut it all up into bite-sized pieces, toss the mélange with oil, salt, pepper, and some of the herbs you likely have drying in your kitchen from previous shares. I favor thyme myself. But our intern Eva is a big fan of the dried dill. My only advice is to be generous with the garlic, herbs, and salt. Once all the vegetables are coated with oil and herbs, lay them out on cookie sheets in a 350-degree oven and roast until tender on the inside and slightly crispy on the outside. This meal is one of my favorites. I love it hot out of the oven and as cold leftovers. It is a great finish to the farming season.

After that the only item left in your share will be the fall decoration. You have your choice of a jack-o-lantern, three gourds, or a hot pepper ristra. There was a time when we gave every member a jack-o-lantern at the end of the season, but we have had some trouble with that the past couple of years. While they were lovely and mature at the end of August (and who wants a jack-o-lantern in August?) it was hard to keep them from rotting between then and now. We originally harvested about 100 pumpkins. Today there are 29 left for you to choose from. Sad. But the gourds are a good alternative for those who don't want to take up a lot of space with a jack-lantern. And the ristra is great for those who are more interested in having an edible decoration. Just hang the string to dry in your kitchen and pull off the hot peppers to use in cooking whenever you like.

Your next share will arrive on 6/5/08 full of lettuce, spinach, radishes, sprouts, etc. Salad season! I hope to see you then!

Troy Community Farm

Claire Strader • 442-4670 • farmer@troygardens.org