

## In the Bag

Spinach, 1 bag  
Bok Choy, 2 heads  
Green Garlic, 1 bunch  
Kale, 1 bunch  
Choice of Spouts, 1 bag/box  
Lettuce, 1 head  
Choice of Herb, 1 bunch

It is a week of greens! That means a week of salads and stir fries plumped full with the incredible quantities of rain we have been getting. Our belated spring has finally arrived, just as we were expecting summer.

I must admit that I have been starved for spring spinach. We seeded spinach in the late summer last year with the intent of overwintering it for spring harvest. But with all the heavy rains that fell in August, the crop washed away before it could germinate. We seeded spinach again the very day we plowed the fields in April, and it is ready to eat at last. As you will see, there are some long, hardy stems on the spinach leaves. We included those on purpose! We did a taste test in the field as we do every year, and once again came to the conclusion that the stem is the most flavorful part of the plant. However, it can be difficult to fit a whole spinach leaf and stem into your mouth and maintain any kind of dignity at the dinner table. So, my advice is to tear the leaf in a couple of pieces and detach it from the stem. Then sauté some onions or scallions in more olive oil than you would normally use. When the onions are tender and sweet, pour them and the oil onto the raw spinach and stems and add some kalamata olives and crumbled feta cheese. I will eat this salad as a meal as often as I can before the spring spinach goes to seed, and never tire of it. Bok choy is not as favored of a green for me as spinach, but it cannot be beat in stir fry. First I

(continued on the back)

## Claire's Comments

### Rain

I will not surprise any of you by talking about the rain this week. When the crew left the farm on Friday, we emptied the 1.5 inches of rain that had fallen into our rain gauge on Thursday and Friday. By Monday we had another 5.5 inches to empty. Seven inches of rain in a week is more than any farm needs.

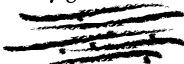
Many of you will have heard about all the flooding and damage the incredible rains have caused throughout southern Wisconsin. Towns and farms that were under water last August are flooded all over again. I've heard of farms that could not harvest at all last week because of the rain. And of others that watched their entire tomato field drown. In comparison, we have fared pretty well at Troy. There were puddles of standing water in the field, but no plants were drowned and not too much soil was washed away.

The worst that has happened so far is that the growing points on most of our peppers and eggplant were broken off in the downpours. We had these crops covered to keep them warm and protected. But when the sheets of rain came crashing down, the weight pressing on the row cover and thus on the tender plant shoots broke off most of the tips. I'm not sure what will happen with those plants now. It is possible that they will send up side shoots in much the same way a tomato will. It is also possible that they will just sit there and die. I have hope that when we look at them again next week, we will see new growth rather than death.

Some effects of the rain we will not see for a little while yet. We had just seeded all our dry beans, edamame, corn, summer squash, and cucumbers right before the heavy rains. In another week or so we will know if these crops were able to germinate, or if the seeds just rotted in the saturated soil. These crops are already delayed because we could not plant them in the cold of May. I'm hoping I am not planting them again in late June.

Weeds are another slower to materialize effect of the rain. All the moisture in the soil helps many weed seeds to germinate and take hold quickly. There are areas of our field today that have a sickly green haze of tiny weeds that are growing and spreading like an unwelcome infestation of mold. Because they are still so small, they would not be difficult to kill at this stage. But with the soil this wet, our tools caked with mud and we do more unintentional weed transplanting than we do weed killing. The whole crew is anxious to nip this new generation of weeds in the bud, because if we not get them now they will get bigger and harder to stop and will also start to compete with our crops.

What we need now is a good week of warm sun. But as I am writing, the thunder is crashing and the lightning flashing. I'm not looking forward to emptying the rain gauge again tomorrow...



## Recipe

*Most every year I include this recipe in the newsletter that accompanies our first kale harvest. Maggie Anderson and Ryah Nabielski created it in 2003 when they were interns on the farm and set on helping CSA members enjoy the mysteries of kale. Over the years many members have reported how much they love it. On one occasion this recipe even circulated back to me from someone new to the farm suggesting that I include it with one of the kale shares. Little did he know it came from Troy originally! The one update I will include this year is that when Maggie is feeling pressed for time, she will sometimes use Annie's Goddess dressing as a quick replacement for the sauce below.*

### Joyous Kale

3 Tbs. tahini  
2 Tbs. olive oil  
3 Tbs. lemon juice  
3 Tbs. soy sauce or tamari  
3 cloves garlic or 2 stalks green garlic, chopped  
Lots of Kale, washed and chopped  
1/4 cup sunflower or sesame seeds

Mix tahini, olive oil, lemon juice, tamari, and garlic. Combine this sauce with the chopped kale in a hot frying pan or wok. (Use more kale than you think you need. It may seem like a lot now, but will become much smaller once it wilts.) Cook for about 5 to 10 minutes or until kale is thoroughly wilted. You may need to add a small bit of water and cover your pan to steam the kale. Toss in seeds. Serve hot (perhaps over rice) or cold.

## Woodchuck News

There were two woodchuck sightings at the farm this week. The first was on Tuesday morning when Jake and I both saw a furry creature about the size of a fat cat scramble under the farm shed. The whole crew quickly grabbed hoes and tried to flush it out. Emma actually poked the woodchuck with her hoe several times, but it would not budge. Emma has a particular vendetta against the woodchuck because it sat under the picnic table and ate the brim of her hat one day while we were in the field. We think the woodchuck was especially wary of coming out from under the shed to meet her.

That very same night Greg (a CSA member who also lives in the Troy co-housing community with Jake) knocked on Jake's door to report that he just spotted two woodchucks scuttling out under the farm fence and across the path to their den with mouths full of lettuce. Greg's dog also spotted the woodchucks and felt an instinctual urge to protect the crop, or maybe just to chase. From the report, we are sure the dog instilled a fear of the lettuce protection gods in all woodchuck kind.

Meanwhile, live traps are set and stocked with lettuce and peanut butter. Until we can relocate the growing woodchuck clan, our battle over the rights to the lettuce continues...

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start out with a little sautéed green garlic and onion as usual. Then I brown some tofu cubes in the same pan. I believe chicken would work as well. While the tofu is cooking, I wash and chop the bok choy so that I have separate piles of stems and leaves. Add the stems to the pan before the leaves so that they have a little more time to cook. Finally add the leaves with some tamari or soy sauce and a bit of sesame oil. When the leaves are wilted, toss in some toasted sesame seeds and serve over rice. You could also add the kale to this dish if you wish.

I love the first kale of the season. We keep it protected under row cover from the day it is planted until the day of the first harvest, so it is tender and clean and certainly the very best kale of the year (with the possible exception of the late fall kale that has been sweetened by the frost.) My favorite way to eat it is with tamari and vinegar. Start out with the onions and garlic in olive oil as usual. Then add the washed, chopped kale with some of the clean wash water still clinging to the leaves. Add several dashes of tamari and your favorite vinegar and cover the pan. Let the kale wilt thoroughly - undercooked kale can be a bit tough. Mix the kale in the pan a few times as it cooks and serve it with rice or as a side dish with any meal. All the kale I froze in the fall and ate all winter long is just about gone, so I am excited that the new crop is ready to go!

This green garlic will be the last for the season. But don't worry, there is rarely a garlic shortage on this farm. Next week you will have garlic scapes instead. As you will see the green garlic is quite a bit more mature than it was last week. If you have some large stems in your bunch, take a minute to slice them open lengthwise when you use them and look for a tough core. The garlic is just starting to form its "hard neck" and it is best to remove it before chopping and using.

I'm kicking myself for not writing about the herbs last week. I know some of you probably went home wondering what to do with them. I wanted to tell you that if you cannot use them all in their fresh form, just string them up in your kitchen to dry. I hang mine upside down over my counter as I gather them through the summer and use them all year long. Thyme, oregano, and basil go into my tomato sauces; sage goes into my winter squash dishes; dill goes in with my potatoes; mint is great for tea and taboli; etc. The only herbs I don't dry are chives. I have not had luck drying those so I clip them into my salads or onto potato dishes. Most of these herbs can also be combined fresh with garlic, oil, and vinegar to make delicious salad dressings. Lettuce, sprouts, and fresh herbed dressing will be another main meal item for me this week!

Next week you can expect more spinach, lettuce and sprouts. Radishes will also be back. New items should include garlic scapes and possibly some broccoli.

## Troy Community Farm

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