



In the Share

Snow & Snap Peas, 1 bag
Broccoli, 1 bunch
Radishes, 1 bunch
Salad Mix, 1 bag
Garlic Scapes, 1 bunch
Lettuce, 1 head
Choice of Herb, 1 bunch

It's a feast week! The broccoli plants pulled through and provided over a pound of broccoli for each of you. There are peas, both snow and sugar snap. More lettuce and some salad mix as well. It's our best share so far this year!

Those of you who chose the broccoli last week will know that it is tender and sweet and perfect for steaming. Jake and some of the interns have even been sampling it raw from the plant. While raw broccoli is not a favorite of mine, if I were to eat it that way, this particular harvest is the one I would choose. I do prefer it cooked however. Last week I sampled my first head of the year, lightly steamed and served with pasta and a red sauce made from last year's canned tomatoes. Maybe it was because I have not tasted fresh broccoli since last summer, but I could hardly believe how good that broccoli was. There is something about this basic, common vegetable that is so much more exciting and delicious when it is local and in season.

The peas come through this week also. I told the picking crew that we needed 90 pounds of peas in order to give all the members a fair taste. They came back with over 100 pounds! So, you have a half-pound of snow peas and a quarter-pound of snap peas in your share. In order to save both time and bags, both types of peas are bagged together.

The long, flat peas are the snows. They are a variety called Sumo which I picked up from a seed catalogue a few years back while searching for a
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Claire's Comments

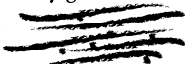
Weeds

This year we are having a series of formal classes for our interns at Troy. The classes are designed to enhance the hands-on learning that interns get in the field. This past week we had a class on weeds and weed control. As part of the class, Jake asked why weeds might be bad on a farm. The interns quickly answered that the weeds can steal valuable nutrients and water from the crops, that they can shade the crops, and harbor disease, and generally inhibit crop growth. After all that was out, someone added, "weeds are bad for morale." How true.

One of the effects of all the rain from early June was to germinate a huge number of weeds. Weed seeds are always in the soil and they do not get washed away the way some crop seeds can. As a result, we have been facing a farm full of weeds. Over the winter Jake and I spent some time going through our practices at the farm in an effort to improve our systems, our fertility, and various other aspects of the business. One of the things we focused on was better weed control. We decided that whenever possible we would have a small crew weeding most of the time, no matter the other tasks we had on the list for the day. For the most part we have followed through with that decision, and we have some pretty clean onions and early broccoli to show for it.

The farm is far from the weed-free paradise I had envisioned, however. And the part about weeds being bad for the morale of the farmers is sometimes even more important than the negative effects they can have on the crops. It's just no fun to see that the peppers and eggplant we weeded two weeks ago need to be weeded again. We did our due diligence. We weeded the crop at the right time when the weeds were small and fragile. Why should not have to weed it again so soon? Because that's just how it is. The weeds are always there no matter how much harvesting or tomato trellising or even mulching might try to take priority.

It's a good thing that my favorite job on the farm happens to be weeding! Over the years I have found precious few folks who agree with me, but still I think there is no other farm task that is so straightforward and has such a huge impact. After the harvest yesterday the whole crew focused on weeding and totally cleaned up our first three plantings of green beans. The beans are in a section of the farm that we walk through several times a day on our way to other tasks. While we had weeded the paths earlier in the month, it did not take long for the weeds to come back with the rain and it was depressing to see that weedy section so many times each day. Now it is so clean that we can even see the tiny little beans that are forming on the plants and the whole farm seems brighter and happier! Green beans also happen to be one of my favorite crops, and after that weeding I think we will be harvesting the first delicious beans soon.



Recipe

Here is another recipe from Audrey. She adapted this one from the CSA recipe cookbook as a way to use up some radishes.

Radish Salad

From Audrey Trainor

- 1 ½ cups radishes, thinly sliced
- ½ cup celery
- 1 green onion, thinly sliced
- 1 cucumber, diced (kind of chunky-style)
- ¼ cup tahini
- ¼ tsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. soy sauce or tamari
- 2 tsp. water (more or less for desired thickness)
- 1 cup sliced almonds

Chop all vegetables and mix in a salad bowl. In a separate cup, mix sauce ingredients. Pour the sauce over veggies and mix well. Add almonds, stirring again. Serve.

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Woodchuck News

The end of last week was a busy one on the woodchuck front. On Thursday I got a call from our Natural Areas Coordinator (and CSA member) Christie. She told me that she just found a dead woodchuck in front of the farm shed. While we were both happy with this news, we wondered what had happened. Later that day our Troy neighbor Todd stopped by the CSA pickup. He walks his dog Riley around Troy Gardens most every day and told us that Riley had caught and snapped the neck of the woodchuck in question in a matter of minutes on their walk that morning. That's two woodchucks brought down by dogs this year. I have to say I'm feeling somewhat grateful for the doggy instincts right now.

Todd also reported that Riley found another woodchuck in the live trap that we set behind the shed. We removed woodchuck number three from the scene the next morning.

On Monday I was feeling like maybe we were done with our woodchuck problems. Three woodchucks all caught around the scene of their unauthorized harvesting, how many more could there be? Apparently there are at least four. Our worker share Peter spotted a woodchuck leaving the farm yesterday, and when I went out to take a look at the lettuce, sure enough there were fresh woodchuck teeth marks on several of the heads.

The live traps are set again. The lettuce is staying under the row cover. And the woodchuck saga continues...

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sweeter snow pea that also produced well and was easy to pick. Sumo fit the bill perfectly. But by the next year the catalogue had discontinued the seed. Luckily I had some left over, which I planted out and grew for seed myself. Now I grow out this seed every year and have built up a backstock that will keep us in Sumo peas for years to come! If you don't just eat them all raw from the bag, try them in your salad or in a stir fry with the broccoli and garlic scapes and sliced radishes.

The sugar snap peas are the shorter, fatter ones in your bag. Just like the snows, these should be eaten whole (pod and all!) and are delicious raw. This variety is called Sugar Ann, which in my experience is the earliest pea there is. Unfortunately the vines are not especially productive, so there is only a taste of these in your share. I recommend that you enjoy them well, because it is unlikely there will be more snap peas from Troy this year. As an early crop, the Sugar Anns don't last long. Usually we have a main crop of Sugar Snaps that comes in after the Anns, but the Snaps did not germinate this spring. They insist that the soil and the temperature be just right and this especially long and cold spring was not to their standards, so they just rotted in the ground. Their absence will be sorely felt by all of us in the next couple of weeks I'm sure.

Salad mix is new this week. It is a combination of three lettuces and some spicy mustards. Most of you will notice the fine-leaved purple mustard in your bag. It's a new one that I'm trying this year. It grew well, is pretty, and has a good bite. I hope you like it. You will find that the salad mix still has a fair bit of moisture on it from our washing procedure. After a while, this moisture will start to rot the leaves if they stay in the plastic bag too long, so my suggestion is to finish off the salad mix before you dig into your lettuce.

The new herb this week is cilantro. More than any other herb (or perhaps even any other vegetable) cilantro seems to be one of those love it or hate it kind of foods. Those of you who hate it will not likely be convinced to try it out in your spring rolls (the dish that finally brought me around to cilantro) and those of you who love it probably already know of three things you want to do with it this week, so there is not much more for me to add. For those of you who don't know cilantro at all, you might recognize its flavor as an essential ingredient in most salsas.

Next week we will have more peas, broccoli, and lettuce. New items could be kohlrabi and/or cabbage and basil.

Troy Community Farm

Claire Strader • 442-6760 • farmer@troygardens.org