

In the Share

Green Beans, 1 bag
Cucumbers, 2 pieces
Fennel, 1 bulb
Beets, 1 bunch
Scallions, 1 bunch
Summer Squash, 4 pieces
Eggplant, 1 piece
Choice of Herb, 1 bunch

It's about time to add some green beans to the extra broccoli and peas you may have stashed away in your freezer! We had a huge, beautiful harvest of this crop this week. When they are coming on strong, there is nothing better than these long, skinny, tender beans. Even so, it may be hard to go through almost 2 pounds of them in one week. If you do end up freezing some, they will be great in the potpie recipe that I developed this winter and will share with you in a fall newsletter. (Summer just doesn't seem right for potpie.)

Along with your green beans, most of you will have either yellow or dragon's tongue beans as well. It's fun to grow a selection of more unusual beans to complement the green "haricot verts" that are my standard for a high quality bean. From what I heard at the pickup last week, many of you are already devotees of the yellow bean. The dragon's tongue may be less familiar. They are the flat beans with purple and white streaks. Jake is a great fan of the dragon's tongue and can usually be caught snacking straight from the plant at harvest time. If you want to cook them, you can do so just as you would the green beans. Even better, cook them together for a beautiful and delicious dish.

We harvested the first of the eggplant this week. As you may recall, the eggplant was set back a bit early on in the season when the hard rains smashed the row cover down onto the crop and damaged the growing points. While they bounced

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Claire's Comments

Field Trip

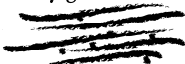
My first exposure to the term "field trip" was in grade school when my class traveled by school bus from Southamptn, Massachusetts to Old Sturbridge Village where we saw the lives of our New England predecessors reenacted in the present day. I didn't know that a school bus could travel on the highway and take me over an hour from home. It was eye opening to see this familiar everyday transportation tool in such an exotic setting so far from the back roads that lead to my small town school. I'm guessing my teachers hoped I would get more out of the day than the thrill of the trip, and I did, but the memory of that juxtaposition of what is so known and common in such a new and uncommon setting has definitely stuck with me.

This week we took a farm field trip, to an actual field. As part of our intern program we caravanned three cars (not nearly so exciting as the school bus unfortunately) and twelve Troy staff and interns to Angelic Organics in Caledonia, Illinois. Angelic is a CSA farm that grows many of the same crops we grow. They grow organically; they serve a CSA; they have interns and education programs; and even with all those basic similarities I had the feeling of being in an exotic land. Probably the most significant difference between our farms is the size. While our farm is a total of 5 acres, Angelic is 70. While we serve 115 members, Angelic serves about 1300. This basic difference in size leads to many other differences in terms of equipment, infrastructure, and even crops.

Our mighty, 45 horse power, Case tractor with mower and tiller is insignificant indeed next to Angelic's long line of at least seven tractors of various sizes and their accompanying implements. While I have absolutely no desire to take on more tractors and all the maintenance and fuel costs required to keep them running, I was pretty jealous of their on-farm cooler, covered wash shed, and spacious greenhouse. I was also jealous of their ability to fallow almost two thirds of their land every year. Ground that comes out of fallow and into crops is significantly less weedy and more fertile than land that is cropped continuously. Because our farm is so small, we can only fallow our ground one out of every eight years. I try to make up for some of that intensive cropping by growing spring green manures on land that will not be used until fall, and getting land that has been harvested seeded to winter cover as soon as possible, but it would be so much easier with more fallow ground!

After we visited the buildings and equipment at Angelic, we walked briefly along the edge of their long and lush fields. We saw some of the same crops we grow including broccoli and cabbage, garlic and onions. But even these familiar items looked different. It was interesting to see

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Recipe

Deb Lease has been a CSA member at the farm for three years and a worker share for the last two of those years. She has a great deal of both professional and personal cooking experience and is always ready with delicious ideas for all our most unusual vegetables. What follows is a recipe for how she intends to use her fennel and beets this week!

Beet & Fennel Salad

from Deborah Lease

1 bunch beets	1 head fennel
2 grapefruit	½ cup olive oil
2 avocados	

1. Roast beets by tossing them in a little oil and placing them in a shallow roasting pan with a little water at the bottom. Cover and roast at 375 or so for an hour or until a knife pierces them easily.

Note: Once it gets really beety around our house, I do this step as soon as I walk in the door with beets so they are in the fridge ready to rock. You can also stick them in with whatever else you happen to be baking – scones, cookies, pizza, whatever. Beets aren't picky about the temperature; you just need to adjust the cooking time...

2. Supreme the grapefruit: Using a sharp knife cut the end off the grapefruit so that the flesh is just exposed. Then run the knife down the sides of the grapefruit, peeling off the skin entirely, including the white pith. Cut out the segments of the grapefruit and put them in your salad bowl. Squeeze the remaining juices into a separate bowl.
3. Slice avocados and toss with grapefruit sections.
4. Remove fronds of fennel and reserve for another use. Using a mandoline or a very sharp knife, thinly slice the fennel bulb, avoiding the core, and add to the grapefruit and avocado.
5. When the beets are done cooking, allow them to cool enough that they can be handled and rub the skins off with a dishtowel that you are not very attached to, or paper towels. Slice into wedges and add to the grapefruit mixture.
6. Whisk olive oil into the reserved grapefruit juice, starting with a quarter cup and adding on to taste. Season with salt and pepper and use to dress your salad.

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that they do not mulch their garlic. And their onions are planted in clumps rather than individually the way we grow them. Here I was seeing the school bus in a foreign land once again. We chose Angelic Organics as the site of our field trip for just that reason. We wanted to see a farm with some basic similarities to ours that does things in a very different way. We succeeded.

Every time I see a large farm with lots of equipment for weeding and planting and washing, I ask myself again: Do I really want to work on such a small scale, doing so many things by hand? It usually does not take me long to come to conclusion that I do. I truly enjoy the work of perfecting this small, intensive hand-scale farm that produces so much food. Field trips like the one we had this week open me up to new ideas that I will think about trying in our own unique system, and also reaffirms my contentment to get back on the bus headed home.

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back from that event with strength and grace, they have not been so successful in warding off the potato beetles that came to visit soon there after. Just as their name suggests, potato beetles love to eat potatoes. They can defoliate a plant down to the bare, skeletal stems in a matter of days. What you might not guess from their name is that they love eggplant even more. That row cover that smashed the eggplant in the rain was on the crop to protect it from the potato beetles. When the edges lifted up in the wind that accompanied the storms, the beetles moved right in and started eating. Now that the fruit is ripening and we are getting our turn at the table, the crop is not looking so good. Yow will likely find some blemishes on your eggplant as a result.

While my favorite way to eat eggplant is in ratatouille, roasted eggplant is not far behind. So, I will wait a bit longer for the tomatoes and peppers before I taste my first ratatouille of the season and instead roast the eggplant (either on the grill or in the oven) with these first summer squash, the scallions, and a little fresh basil thrown in when the roasting is done. First, slice the eggplant into rounds. Most of you will have the long, skinny Japanese eggplant which are far more tender and less bitter than the globe eggplant and you will not need to sweat them. If you did get a fatter, rounder globe eggplant, slice it, salt it, and let it sit in a colander to draw out some of the more bitter juice before you use it. Slice the summer squash and scallions either into rounds or sticks as well. Toss the whole lot with olive oil and a bit of salt and put them in the oven to roast until they are tender and starting to dry out a bit on the edges. When done, toss the whole mélange with cooked pasta and top with chopped, fresh basil, parsley or chives. If you have some garlic, I would roast that with the vegetables as well.

I'm going to leave the beets and fennel to Deb's recipe at the left. You will likely get another bulb of fennel next week, so if any of you have a favorite fennel recipe please send it in for those of us who have not yet come to love the licorice flavor of this unique vegetable.

Along with the fennel, next week will also bring a brief return of lettuce and radishes, likely some cabbage and kale or collards, as well as the first sweet onions and fresh garlic of the season.



Troy Community Farm

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