

In the Share

Carrots, 1 bag
Onions, 1 bag
Italian Peppers, 2 long fruits
Bell Peppers, 1 large or 2 small
Salsa Basket, 1 bag
Summer Squash, 3 pieces
Choice of Herb, 1 bunch
Garlic, 1 head
Slicing Tomatoes, TBA
Cherry Tomatoes, members 6 - 37

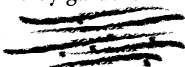
With the peppers and tomatoes it is hard to overlook the vibrant red of this share. Then there are the multi-colored carrots and the squashes. Summer food is so pretty.

No one will be surprised to hear that it is the peppers I am most excited about this week. Now that the beans are gone for a time, I will be eating as many peppers as I can get my hands on! The long thinner-walled red peppers are the Italian frying peppers also known as the "corno di toro" (bull's horn) type. The particular variety you have is a new one I tried out last year called Carmen. Jake and I agreed that the Carmen outperformed any other Italian pepper we have grown, so we now have an entire 100-foot long bed planted to this variety alone. This week we harvested just shy of 500 peppers from that bed! But not only is the Carmen productive, it is also beautiful and delicious. It is equally good for roasting, sautéing, or even eating raw in salad or dipped in humus. I am especially partial to roasting, so I included a simple recipe for roasted red pepper sauce on the back.

In addition to the Carmen's you will also have either one large red or orange bell pepper or two small red peppers. The large bells could be any one of about five bell types that we grow. Bell's can be difficult to mature in our more northern climate, so I use several varieties each year in the hopes that a

(continued on the back)

troy gardens



Claire's Comments

Harvest Ebb and Flow

Our Executive Director, Bob Gragson, is in the process of redesigning our website. In order to assist him, he asked that I think about ideas for the farm pages. That assignment brought me to some other farm websites, and in the course of my research, I could not help but stop to read some of their newsletters. I was struck by how severely some farms have been affected by the record-breaking spring rains. On several farms, shares have been significantly smaller than expected and some events were even cancelled due to the lack of harvest. The sympathy I felt for those farmers and farm members only intensified the gratitude I feel for how abundant our CSA shares have been this year. Often enough we delivered larger than usual quantities of particular vegetables in the hopes that you would have enough to put up for winter. As we harvested closer to a ton of tomatoes this week (a total which somehow still grew larger than the week before), and our truck filled up with crate after crate of beautiful fruits, Jake turned to me and said, "This is truly another embarrassment of riches." In the face of the farming struggles we have heard about this season, I had to agree.

While we definitely struggle with excessive and poorly timed rains, the bigger issue at our farm is lengthy dry spells. Some of you may remember 2007's arid July, or the drought of 2005 that actually brought me to tears during one especially sparse CSA harvest. We do not have irrigation at Troy and have never had a way to supply our crops with the water they require to grow. We are lucky enough to have wonderful soil that both drains off excessive water efficiently and retains scarce water as long as possible. But no soil is wonderful enough to keep plants productive after a month without rain or irrigation. This morning's brief shower notwithstanding, we are coming up on just about a month without rain.

Most anyone at the farm can tell you that I have a tendency to worry. Jake, who is a pretty good worrier himself, can confirm that fact. While we have an embarrassment of riches when it comes to tomatoes, peppers, salsa, and summer squash right now, some of you may have noticed the lack of greens for the past couple of weeks. Others of you will wonder where the beans and cucumbers went. Jake and I are worried about those absences also. As ridiculous as it might sound in a year when some farms are still recovering from flooding, many of our crops are starting to suffer from the lack of water. We need rain.

As CSA farmers, we do our best to hold the boat steady in the ebb and flow of the harvest, hoping to provide you with enough and not too much throughout the season. We are now entering a time when it will be harder to keep it all balanced. Still, with some rain and more of the warm days and cool nights we have had lately, we hope to keep our worries to ourselves and enjoy smooth sailing through October.

Recipe

I love red peppers. And within all the possibilities for this delicious vegetable, I love roasted red peppers the most. Every pepper season, I roast as many peppers as I can, and at least once or twice I try to imitate a roasted red pepper sauce that I had at a restaurant once upon a time. That restaurant is now out of business, so I have not been able to refer back to the original in quite some time. Still, last night I tried my version of the sauce again and was quite pleased with the results. I served it over penne pasta with a side of fresh tomato wedges drizzled with olive oil and chopped, fresh basil. As soon as I have another handful of peppers I will be making this dish again!

Roasted Red Pepper Sauce

3 to 6 red or orange sweet peppers
1 Tbs. butter
1 Tbs. flour
1 cup milk
½ cup to ¾ cup grated Parmesan cheese
salt and pepper to taste

1. Roast the peppers by setting them whole on a baking sheet under the broiler in your oven. When the first side is blistered and blackened, turn the peppers and put them back under the heat. Continue turning them periodically until all sides are blackened, then remove the peppers and set them on a cutting board to cool. (Some folks put them in a plastic bag to cool. Sarah puts them in a bowl of water. I just leave them out on the counter.) When they have cooled enough to handle, remove the skins. Don't worry too much about getting off every tiny piece of burnt skin: leaving in a few tidbits will add to the flavor. After they are peeled, chop the peppers finely.
2. Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium-low heat. Whisk in the flour and cook, whisking constantly, for 2 minutes. Whisk in the milk and continue cooking, whisking constantly, until the sauce thickens, about 5 minutes. Add the cheese and whisk until it melts. Add the roasted peppers, salt, and pepper and whisk until combined. Remove the sauce from the heat.
3. Serve over your favorite pasta and garnish with sliced cherry tomatoes, chopped basil, or chopped parsley.

A note on my roasting pan:

I have an old pan that I always use for roasting because the process can really bake on the pepper juices and make it hard to clean. When I wash that pan afterwards I don't spend an undue amount of time scrubbing because I know it will just get another blackened crust the next time I roast peppers. I hear that roasting acidic tomatoes on that same pan with actually help to clean it. I have not tried it yet, but I will when I roast some tomatoes for freezing!

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couple of them will do well. We have 200 feet devoted to bells this year, but we only harvested 145 peppers from those beds. While productivity is not a strength of the bells, no other pepper can beat them for thick walls and overall size. They are lovely, easy to work with in the kitchen, and certainly the pepper that will be most familiar to many of you.

The small, smooth, tapered red peppers will be either Lipstick or Apple. These varieties are virtually indistinguishable once picked and tie for my favorite when it comes to flavor. They are the sweetest peppers I have ever had. Most folks are automatically drawn to the large, showy bells but for those of you who choose these smaller more subtle peppers, you will be abundantly rewarded with the best sweet pepper flavor the farm has to offer. In my opinion they are too good to sauté. I would eat them raw or roasted.

In the world of root crops, last year was the year of the beet. This season seems to be shaping up as the year of the carrot. I'm expecting that you will see carrots most every week from now to the end of the CSA pickups. This week you have a combination of Mokum and Rainbow. The Mokum are an early orange carrot. And the Rainbow are a mix of colors from white to yellow to orange. Because it has been so dry for the past month, you will see that many of the carrots look a bit like cheetos, especially at their tips. They develop those strange shapes as they try to force their way deeper into the soil in search of water. Don't worry, their flavor is still all carrot.

The onions are literally a mixed bag today. All of you will have at least one sweet onion (it will be either white or yellow) and one or two red or yellow onions. Most of you will also have a mix of large, medium, small, or very small bulbs. It took a while to wrest these from their dry, weedy seedbeds, so we did not have much time to sort or organize them. There will be more onions in a couple of weeks once the harvest is more fully dried and cured. At that point, you will see more uniformity in your onion bag!

Salsa mix and tomatoes are here to stay for the next two or three weeks. Remember, if you don't have a taste for it right now, you can always save it for winter. Just prepare it as usual, put it in a freezer bag or canning jar, and pop it in the freezer – very simple. The tomatoes too can be easily stored by first roasting them with garlic and herbs, and then freezing them in the same way as the salsa. When winter comes, you will love to pull them out and taste a little bit of summer.