

In the Share

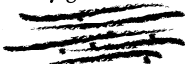
Carrots, 1 bag
Salsa Basket, 1 bag
Scallions, 1 bunch
Italian Peppers, 2 long fruits
Lipstick Peppers, 2 small fruits
Bell Peppers, 2 medium fruits
Summer Squash, 3 pieces
Roma Tomatoes, 1 bag
Choice of Herb, 1 bunch
Garlic, 1 head
Slicing Tomatoes, TBA
Cherry Tomatoes, members 38-99

The slicing tomatoes have finally slowed down, just as we knew they would. We harvested only about 600 pounds this week, down from close to 1300 pounds last week. As the plants are getting tired, they are also having a hard time producing the blemish-free fruits we have come to expect, so you will see more second quality tomatoes in your share today. Luckily, the seconds taste just as good as the firsts, they just don't look as pretty.

As an unexpected surprise the romas and cherry tomatoes actually doubled their production this week. You will have at least three varieties of tomatoes in your roma bag. The smallest red ones are a variety called Juliet. They are smooth and glossy and beautiful. The yellow ones are Golden Rave (which tied for second in our taste test); the firm orange ones with pointy tips are Wonder Light; and the red ones with the pointy tips are the official Romas. I can still remember one day in college when my housemate made a pasta sauce from fresh romas. I could not believe how good it was compared to the tomatoes from a can that I was used to. This multi-colored bag will make a beautiful and delicious sauce sautéed with some garlic and basil. Or roast the romas with some red

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troy gardens



Claire's Comments

Kitchen Garden

I started farming as an apprentice at New Field Farm when I was fresh out of college. I knew I had plenty of other options with my degree in Philosophy (right?), but one of the most important things I learned in school was that I wanted to live a life that involved physically producing some of the basic necessities I needed to keep myself alive – food, clothing, shelter, that sort of thing. I learned to knit as a distraction from studying for finals one year, and have a long line of sweaters, socks, and other items to show for it. I took a woodworking class (which was pretty hard to find in Wellesley College's liberal arts offerings) but didn't have much aptitude for the hard and exacting lines that were required with wood. So I went back to making clothes and quilts with the sewing machine my mother taught me to use when I was still young enough to transform my old pajamas into doll clothes. I felt like I had a pretty good handle on fiber at that point (except for the wood) and was anxious to learn something about food. I really only planned to learn enough to grow my own garden, but somehow I got hooked on growing food on the larger scale.

I'm still hooked on the farming scale, but I'm also finally learning the decidedly different and satisfying pleasures of the garden. When my partner Sarah moved in a couple years ago, she brought with her a store of gardening tools and know-how. She convinced me to strip off the sod from a portion of the backyard and to put in a garden. We decided to focus on crops that I did not already grow at the farm, so we started out with 40 asparagus crowns and 50 strawberry plants. (My farmer side might have come out a bit in deciding those numbers.) When I had extra onion starts after planting out the 5000 onions we grew at the farm this year, Sarah and I also put about 100 of those in the backyard garden. Then we weeded and watched, marveling at the beauty and vigor of our little plants. The asparagus and strawberries will not be ready for harvesting until next year, but I pulled up the onions this past weekend.

Harvesting onions from my own backyard was great! You would think I get plenty of the harvest thrill from the farm, but there is something very different about harvesting food that grew in your own yard for use in your own kitchen. Though the tasks are much the same as they are at the farm, at home it is much more pleasure than work.

This experience could not have come at a better time for me. One of the projects our staff will be working on this winter is developing a business where we will plan, install, and even maintain kitchen gardens at people's homes. I am so excited to help people grow some of their own food in their own space. If even a farmer can get a thrill out of harvesting onions in her backyard, just imagine what that could be like for someone who has never grown food before. Our plan is to tailor the gardens to people's specific needs, be that canning tomatoes or freezing strawberries or harvesting fresh salad or always having herbs. I still need plenty of help when it comes to the woodworking/shelter part of that basic necessity list from college, but meanwhile I am loving my work with the food piece through the CSA, my own garden, and now the new kitchen garden business.

Recipes

These two pepper recipes come from our intern Nicole Craig. Nicole has taken on food as her intensive summer project and has been busy growing it, cooking it, and putting up as much as she can for winter. Her notes and tips are included below.

Roasted Pepper Tart

Pastry:

1 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
pinch of salt
6 Tbs. Butter
3 Tbs. cold water

Filling:

3-4 peppers
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2 Tbs. olive oil
1 cup grated cheese

3 eggs
1/2 – 2/3 cup milk
1 Tbs. chopped basil
salt and pepper

1. Combine flour and salt, rub in the butter until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add the cold water, bringing the mixture together to form a dough.
2. Roll out the dough on a floured surface and use to line an 8-inch round pan. Prick the base with a fork and chill in the refrigerator.
3. Cut the peppers in half lengthwise and arrange in a single layer, skin side up, on a cookie sheet. Mix the garlic and olive oil and brush over the peppers. Cook at 400F for 20 minutes, or until they are beginning to blister and char slightly. Let the peppers cool slightly and thinly slice. Arrange in the base of the pastry, layering with the grated cheese.
4. Beat the egg and milk and add the basil. Season with the salt and pepper and pour over the peppers. Return the tart to the oven for 20-25 minutes, or until set.

Notes:

I use a food processor to make the pastry, combining the salt, flour, and butter first, then adding the water. You can also add in any roasted vegetable - tonight I added tomatoes to a mixture of Italian and bell peppers, which was delicious! This tart is a bit lengthy to make, but the result is definitely worth it. I might go have another slice right now...

Roasted Red Pepper Spread

from the Ball Blue Book

6 lbs (about 8 large) red sweet peppers (I used about 12)
1 lb tomatoes
2 large garlic cloves (I used 6)
1 small white onion
1/2 cup red wine vinegar (I used apple cider vinegar, since that's what we had)

2 Tbs. minced basil
1 Tbs. sugar
1 tsp. coarse salt

1. Roast peppers under a broiler until skin wrinkles and chars in spots. Turn over and roast on other side. Remove, put in a paper bag, close, and let cool 15 minutes.
2. Roast tomatoes, onions, and garlic under the broiler 10-15 minutes. Place tomatoes in a paper bag and seal, let cool. Peel and finely mince onion and garlic (I'd already peeled both...I'm not sure how they'd turn out if you roast them with the peels on). Measure 1/4 c. and set aside (I just used the whole thing). Peel and seed tomatoes and peppers (this part took forever!).
3. Puree vegetables in a food processor or blender, combine with other ingredients in a large pan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring. Reduce heat and simmer until thickened.
4. If canning, ladle into hot half-pint jars, leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Process in a boiling water bath 10 minutes.
Yield: 6 half pints (I had 5 because I think I cooked it down a little too much).

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peppers and garlic and summer squash and serve that mix over pasta with fresh basil. Or spread it on a baguette and melt some cheese over it. I just love summer food.

The surge in cherry tomato production was especially welcome. Today we will finish the second round of these vegetable candies to all of you. That means each of you should have taken home two bags of cherry tomatoes so far this summer. We will start round three at the beginning of the CSA member list again next week. As long as the weather holds steady, everyone should get a third and final bag of cherry tomatoes before frost. You have all been very understanding about this rotating cherry tomato distribution! We have 133 plants, but they just do not produce enough for everyone to have a bag every week, so this orderly rotating approach was the best solution we could come up with. Thanks so much for helping us to make it work!

As you can see in your share, pepper production increased this week as well. Our intern Nicole sent along the two recipes at the left to help you use up these beauties. Peppers will be back next week, but definitely in smaller numbers.

Summer squash is on the decline as well, but should be around for another week or two. CSA member Renee Bauer sent me a summer squash recipe that I just could not squeeze in this week. I will include it next week.

Next week you can also expect onions, carrots, possibly green beans and edamame. Winter squash is on the possible list as well. If we get enough rain today, greens should come back in a few weeks. I am also hoping you will have potatoes in another couple of weeks. We did an experiment and planted them very late this year to avoid the potato beetles. The plants are looking good, and we are anxious to see if the tubers are shaping up as we hoped!

Troy Community Farm

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