



In the Share

Spinach, 1 bag
Green Garlic, 1 bunch
Salad Mix, 1 bag
Lettuce, 1 head
Choice of Herb, 1 bunch
Choice of Spouts, 1 bag

After last week's bountiful start to the season, this week's share feels a little light. I was hoping to have some broccoli for you today, but it is still not quite ready. I expect it will be ready next week! Bok choy was also on the original plan for today, but the flea beetles found it and feasted on those tender leaves faster than we could cut them. Alas, these early season crops are always so hard to predict. The weather and the insects are never quite the same from one spring to the next. The good news is that the peas are flowering and should be appearing in your shares in the next few weeks along with some early kohlrabi.

Meanwhile, salads are still the star of the show. We had a celebratory lunch at the farm on Tuesday to thank all the students who came out from Shabazz High School twice a week this spring to learn and work. Salad with three types of lettuce, radishes, and sprouts was the main feature. We also had cookies. One student explained how she had to pass on the cookies until she had seconds on the salad – she loved the salad so much! Our intern Jade brought some dill weed (it has truly become a weed in her garden and is much further along than ours at the farm) and we cut that into the salad as well. It was so delicious, I tried cutting chives and oregano into my salad at home. I highly recommend all these herbs as salad additions.

The salad mix is some of the best we have ever grown. You will find about two thirds of the mix is sweet lettuce greens and one third is spicy mustard greens. This wonderful combination of flavors can

(continued on the back)

Claire's Comments

How's the Farm?

Now that the first vegetables of the season are coming from the field, I hear this question more and more from friends and family and customers and CSA members alike. Coming from these folks who have a strong connection to their food and their farmers, this question is not an idle invitation to small talk, but rather a serious inquiry into the state of their food supply for the immediate future. As a farmer who is constantly worrying over the next most dramatic threat to the crops, I sometimes struggle to provide both an honest and upbeat answer to this question, something more than "fine." The truth is that no matter how outstanding the fields look today, the weather or a woodchuck or broken tiller can completely change the scene tomorrow. But that is true of all our lives all the time, right? We never know what might come next. Best to enjoy the spinach while we have it!

I am delighted to report with all honesty and joy that the farm has never, in all the last eight years it has been a farm, looked better. That's not to say that we have not had better years for broccoli or bok choy or cucumbers. It is simply to say that never before have we been so on top of all the many factors that we farmers actually can control. Both the greenhouse and field planting schedules have been very smooth. We plant many crops multiple times throughout the year so that we can provide a regular supply of things like radishes and green beans; and most all those plantings have been seeded and transplanted in a timely manner – which is rare. At the same time that the spring planting push is going well, we have also been able to get back into most every section and weed it before the weeds have a chance to negatively affect the crop – which is extremely rare.

As an example of how things are going, I offer the field tour list: Every Monday we do a field tour with our interns where we examine each crop and determine our work priorities for the week. We make a list of those priorities. Things we have to do every week like harvest and plant do not get put on the list. It is more the maintenance tasks like weeding and mulching and trellising that we record and prioritize. Last year we had a running joke that our field tour list was a record of all the things we would never have time for. This year, so far, we have crossed off most every item on our list by the end of Friday each week. Incredibly, we are almost at the point where we can weed a crop just about as soon as it germinates. And the onions (which are so hard to keep clean because they do so little to shade out the weeds) have been weeded no less than three times already this year! Never before have I had to wonder what we could possibly weed next.

How's the farm? It's great! The food is great. The crew is great! We are having an incredible start to the year and you will soon be eating of the summer bounty we have been preparing for.

Greenhouse Fundraiser



Troy Gardens Night at The Roman Candle Pizzeria

1054 Williamson St., Madison

June 19 & 20

4:00pm- 8:00pm

Proceeds will be donated to Community GroundWorks at Troy Gardens

Community GroundWorks at Troy Gardens is a nonprofit organization responsible for the development, management, and stewardship of 26 acres known as Troy Gardens on the north side of Madison. Troy Gardens is composed of a community garden, an organic CSA farm, restored natural areas, an edible forest and a large Kids' Garden. Community GroundWorks promotes healthy communities and personal well-being through education, growing wholesome and organic food for local tables, and nurturing a relationship between people and the land.



Come enjoy some delicious food (including a special Troy Gardens salad!) and help us raise money for our new passive solar greenhouse.

Chives



Oregano



Sage



(continued from "In the Share")

stand on its own topped with some shredded parmesan and a few sprouts. Or, if it is too spicy for you, you can add some head lettuce and sweeten it up. While I love to eat it, I must admit, that I struggle with growing salad mix. I can never seem to keep the flea beetles from eating holes in the mustards or to harvest the baby lettuces before the weeds take over. I am happy to say that this crop is growing better than usual this spring, so I expect you will be seeing it again soon.

Spinach too is especially good this year. The leaves are thick and juicy. And the flavor is deliciously sweet due to the cool nights we have been having. I want to let you in on a secret that not a lot of people know about local spinach – the best, sweetest part of the plant is the stem. Taste the stem and the leaf side by side and see for yourself. I always include the stems when I make my very favorite spring salad: Rip up spinach leaves and stems into bite-sized pieces. Sauté scallions or long, thin slices of onion in olive oil. Pour the hot onions over the spinach and top with crumbled feta cheese and kalamata olives. I can eat a half-pound of spinach a night that way and need little else to feel satisfied. The spinach harvest is just starting, and if this cool weather keeps up, you will likely have spinach in your share for two or three weeks to come.

The green garlic will be familiar to you from last week. I have been using it to make salad dressing: Mince one green garlic from the root to the leaf. Add 1/3 olive oil, 1/3 vinegar (I like apple cider or balsamic), and 1/3 tamari (similar to soy sauce, but not as salty). Finally add a few dashes of sesame oil and shake. When my friends Shirl and Kate come for dinner and ask for the "house dressing," this is the dressing they mean. It is very simple and very yummy. Whenever they come, I try to make a little extra so that I can send them home with a bottle.

Over the winter I received a message from a CSA member asking that I help to identify the herbs that you get in your shares each week. I know it can be hard to learn some of the fresh herbs, especially when they are no longer attached to the plants by the time you get them!, so I have included drawings of the three herb choices for this week to the left. Over the next few weeks I will put together a sheet with all the herbs you will see this summer. When it is done I will include it in this newsletter so that you will have it for reference at home.

Troy Community Farm

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