



In the Share

Green and Yellow Beans, 1 bag
Eggplant, 2 pieces
Scallions, 1 bunch
Summer Squash, 5 pieces
Cucumber, 3 pieces
Lettuce, 1 head
Kale, 1 bunch
Fresh Garlic, 1 head
Choice of Herb, 1 bunch

As we were putting the share together this week, I was a little disappointed that it was not quite as bountiful as it has been for most of July. I was quickly reminded by interns and worker shares that some members likely have a few more vegetables in their refrigerators than they have been able to eat lately and that they will appreciate a somewhat lighter share. I hope that is true. Think of it as a little break before the onset of tomatoes!

Scallions and eggplant are the only new items. In a typical year you will have seen scallions several times by now. I always plan for one late planting of scallions that overwinters and is ready for early spring harvest. But that planting never made it to the field last fall, so we have had to wait until now when the spring-planted scallions are finally ready. I know most folks like to have them raw in all kinds of salads. As I am not especially fond of raw onion flavor, I tend to cook them lightly. This week I would likely sauté them with the garlic, summer squash, and some fresh basil as a side dish. But you could also combine them with the lettuce and cucumbers for a yummy summer salad.

Eggplant will not be totally new for the few of you who chose eggplant over broccoli or cauliflower last week, but I am still considering it a new item! These long and thin eggplants are a

(continued on the back)

Claire's Comments

Field Trip

I grew up thinking of a field trip as a day away from school where we did fun things like visit the Boston Science Museum or Old Sturbridge Village. I never did see a field. Now that I am grown, "field trip" has taken on a much more literal meaning. As you may recall we do a series of formal farming classes for our interns and also for the Agroecology 699 class that we are co-teaching through the UW this summer. As part of this class series we take a trip to an actual field each year. This year we visited Vermont Valley Community Farm.

Most of you have likely heard of Vermont Valley and some of you may even have been members of their CSA. They grow vegetables on 32 acres and are delivering 1200 CSA shares this year to about 2000 Madison area families. We chose to visit their farm because we wanted to see an operation that was significantly bigger than ours. Vermont Valley is just about 10 times bigger both in land used and shares delivered, so we learned a lot about the larger end of "small scale."

The biggest difference had to be the level of mechanization. They had multiple tractors and more tractor-drawn equipment than we had the time to see as well as many interesting pieces of equipment for their wash shed - everything from a huge salad mix washer to digital weigh out table with multiple stations. They had several buildings to house their equipment and also a machine shop for when things need fixing. With our little tractor and hanging balance scale, it was clear to us we were on a different kind of farm. We did, however, see many of the same black crates most CSA's in the area use for harvest and packing which helped us feel at home.

In addition to their machine and wash sheds, we also toured their hoop-houses and fields. Once we got into the actual production end of the farm, Dave (Barb and Dave Perkins are the farmers/owners of Vermont Valley) emphasized the importance of irrigation on their farm several times. Dave is an old friend of both Jake and myself, and he knows we have no irrigation at Troy. He believes we can double or triple our harvest by adding water to our system. Neither Jake nor I have much experience with irrigation, but we hope Dave is right! We have wanted to add irrigation to our farm for several years, and we expect we will be able to do so soon. If you thought this year was a good year for cauliflower, who knows what could happen when we add some water to the mix!

On the way home, Jake and I talked over what we had learned and started up our old debate about whether or not we should try to find more land to farm at or around Troy. It is a hard question that Jake and I tend to disagree on, which make for interesting conversations. As much as I respect Dave and Barb for size and quality of their CSA, I have no desire to even approach the level of mechanization required to run their farm. If nothing else, I don't want to spend that much time fixing equipment. Still, seeing a farm like theirs does make us question how much more we could do. As we continue this conversation, you will be hearing more about how our field trip is influencing our own home fields!

Recipe

This recipe comes from CSA member Jamie Annear-Feyrer. It uses several of the vegetables in your share this week including the kale! See Jamie's tips and comments below.

Pasta with Beans and Greens

from Cooking Light 2007 Annual Recipes

Here's a recipe I just made tonight with kale, green beans, and garlic from our CSA share. I've always had a hard time figuring out what to do with kale to make it taste good...this is definitely my new favorite kale recipe!

- 8 oz. uncooked cavatappi (I imagine any pasta would work fine)
- 2 cups (1-inch) cut green beans (about 12 oz)
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3 cups milk
- 3/4 cup (3 oz) Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 3 cups coarsely chopped spinach (about 3 oz, or use more kale if you don't have spinach)
- 3 cups coarsely chopped kale (about 4 oz)
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh mint (I used dried instead)

1. Cook pasta according to package directions. Add beans halfway through cooking time. Drain well.
2. Melt butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add flour, stirring with a whisk. Gradually add milk; cook until slightly thick and bubbly (about 8 minutes), stirring constantly with a whisk. Add Parmesan cheese, salt, black pepper, crushed red pepper, and garlic, stirring until cheese melts. Keep warm.
3. Combine pasta mixture, spinach, kale, and mint in a large bowl. Stir in milk mixture, tossing gently to coat. Garnish with more fresh parmesan.



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(continued from "In the Share")

Japanese type that is much less bitter than typical globe eggplants. Those of you who do not generally like eggplant may get a fun surprise with these. Our farm intern Alex loves them so much she doubted they would see the inside of her refrigerator before they saw the dinner plate. She suggests sautéing garlic and some chilies in peanut oil and then adding the eggplant (cut into coins or half coins). She emphasized that you should keep the pan uncovered and use high heat to sweat some water out of the eggplant and let that water evaporate. When the eggplant are cooked but not rubbery, add some soy sauce and fresh ginger and serve with rice.

This may be the last lettuce salad opportunity until fall. The lettuce at the farm is officially done this week. You will find that it is not as perfectly sweet as it was in the spring, but its flavor is good and will be made better with the addition of the cucumbers (who are themselves not as pretty as they are delicious!)

You have another pound and a quarter of beans today. If you have had your fill of fresh beans (is that possible?!), you can freeze them by steaming them for 2 minutes, plunging them into cold water to stop the cooking, patting them dry with a towel and bagging them for the freezer. But before you do that, try them with the kale in the recipe on the left!

Next week: sweet onions, carrots, red cabbage, salsa basket, beans, and possibly the first tomatoes!

Troy Community Farm

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