



In the Share

Beans, 1 bag
Red Cabbage, 1 head
Sweet Onions, 1 bag
Sweet Peppers, 2 pieces
Carrots, 1 bunch
Summer Squash, 3 pieces
Eggplant, 2 pieces
Choice of Herb, 1 bunch
Garlic, 1 head
Tomatoes, TBA
Cherry Tomatoes, members 41 - 95

Today marks the official end of our summer bean season. It has been a long and fruitful harvest and we have all been eating many delicious beans, but this week's will be the last...for now. There are two more plantings in the field, which should come on sometime in September, if all goes well. Meanwhile, we at the farm are taking a much-deserved break from the relentless bean harvest. While it will be a pleasure to see the beans come back, the farm crew will not miss them too much for now. We hope you enjoy this week's batch, so that you will not miss them too much either!

The beans have smoothly handed off the "relentless harvest" baton to the tomatoes. Where we once harvested beans for hours, we now harvest and sort tomatoes for hours. As I mentioned last week, there is widespread "late blight" fright emanating out from the northeast (which has been unusually cold and wet this year and thus a perfect playground for blight) and spreading into Wisconsin this summer. I hear of more and more farms and gardens where the blight has hit and the tomatoes are dead and done. While we have disease spreading in our

(continued on the back)

Claire's Comments

Tomato Bosses, 2009

Every season there comes a week when the tomatoes take charge. One week the plants are full of promising green orbs. The next there is red dripping from very vine, demanding attention, threatening to drop to the ground and burst into a messy soup if ignored. This was the week the tomatoes transformed themselves from just another crop to the boss of us all.

I remember just a couple of weeks ago when the very first fruits started to ripen. Jake and I looked out at the field and groaned and hung our heads, suddenly heavy with the knowledge of what was to come. The interns looked at us and wondered at our reaction. At the time they were still innocent of the demands of the tomato kingdom. Now that the joy of the first ripe fruit is past, they are beginning to understand how ruthless the tomato bosses can be. We harvest and haul and sort, careful not to slip on the fallen fruits that have started to rot and stink in the aisles, careful not to carry disease from the early varieties to the late ones. We work hard to keep the plants happy and to keep the fruits coming even though they have already filled all our crates and taxed our patience with their all-or-nothing ripening habit.

I wasn't really sure it would happen this year. It has been much cooler than tomatoes like. The plants are smaller and slower to ripen fruit than usual. And I keep hearing so much about the early arrival of the late blight. For a while there I was wondering if we ever reach the point of being overwhelmed with tomatoes. It happened on Tuesday.

I was holding it together pretty well until then. We had spread the harvest out over several days in an effort to prevent both overtaxing the crew and spreading disease through the whole crop. This approach seemed to be working. Then the truck filled up with tomatoes and we ran out of crates and still the crew was bringing in more fruits from the field. We had to call a halt to the harvest with one whole bed of tomatoes still to go. We will have to get to those on Friday...

The good and bad news is that the tomatoes will one day die. Whether from early blight, late blight, some type of wilt or, if it is a good year, from an October frost, they will die. There is no way to stop this natural process. It happens every year. Every year we try to hold it off, and every year we cannot help but smile when the tomatoes are finally taken down by forces more powerful than they, and we are freed from their relentless harvest schedule.

Meanwhile we pick and haul and sort and pack, and we are grateful for this bounty, as demanding as it is. No matter how many we put up for use later in the year, nothing can compare to the fresh tomatoes of August. They are well worth the stink of fallen fruit clinging to our shoes. So, we conform ourselves to the needs of this crop and enjoy its beauty and flavor as long as it commands us.

Recipe

My partner Sarah makes this soup every year when we get into the heat of tomato season. Last year she even made a few extra batches and froze them so that we could enjoy roasted tomatoes as winter "fast food."

Notes on how she deviates from the recipe (and makes it easier) are at the end. I also included the recipe for dumplings that we prefer to the garnish suggested in the recipe. It is a perfect meal for using up a lot of tomatoes!

Roasted Tomato Soup

Recipe adapted from The Essential Eating Well Cookbook as published in the Willy Street Co-op Reader.

- 8-10 ripe tomatoes cut in half
- 1 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 3 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 3 Tbs. chopped fresh basil
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 3 fresh basil leaves, cut into ribbons
- Fruity olive oil, plain yogurt, or garlic croutons – garnish

Preheat broiler or grill. Lightly oil a baking sheet with sides. Spread tomatoes, cut side down, in a single layer on a baking sheet. Broil or grill until skins are well blistered, about 10 minutes. When tomatoes are cool, slip off the skins and coarsely chop the tomato flesh. Heat olive oil in a 2-quart pot over medium-low heat. Add onions and cook about five minutes. Add garlic and continue to cook until the onions are soft. Combine tomatoes and onion mixture in a food processor or blender and process until smooth, and then return vegetables to pot. Add broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer about five minutes. Remove soup from heat and stir in chopped basil and salt and pepper to taste. Cover soup and refrigerate at least two hours. To serve garnish each bowl with a swirl of olive oil or yogurt or crouton and ribbons of basil.

Sarah's Notes:

- Don't bother to skin the tomatoes. The skins will get chopped up when you puree the soup anyway.
- Use one of those hand-held blenders that you just stick in the soup while it is still on the stove to puree. It is super easy and leaves enough chunks to make a great texture. In our house we call it "the tool."
- I have never refrigerated this soup. I always serve it fresh and hot from the stove.

Dumplings:

Mix together: 1 1/2 cups flour, 1 Tbs. baking powder, 1/2 tsp. salt. Cut in: 3 Tbs. butter. Add to make dough soft: 2/3 cup water or milk. Drop by teaspoons into soup after it is pureed. Cover tightly and cook 15 minutes. Thin soup with water if too thick.

(continued from "In the Share")

tomatoes, it still does not appear to be the late blight we keep hearing so much about. I am not sure how long our luck will hold, so I am doing my best to keep up my spirits about sorting so many countless tomatoes, knowing they may be gone sooner than later. There are many seconds in this week's share, so it is the perfect time for the roasted tomato soup – see the recipe on the left.

In fact this is a good week for roasting over all! One of my favorite dishes is roasted eggplant, peppers, onions, and garlic over pasta. I slice the eggplant into rounds, the onions and peppers into strips, and the garlic just into quarter cloves. Then I put it all on a cookie sheet with some olive oil and roast it in the oven until the juices are released and the vegetables begin to brown. I also turn everything over at least once in the process. Then I serve the roasted vegetables over pasta with salt, pepper, fresh basil or parsley, and grated Parmesan sprinkled on top. It is easy and delicious. The only drawback to roasting is turning on the oven, but with the cool temperature this week, turning on the oven may not be such a drawback after all!

Red peppers are one of my all-time favorite foods. They are so sweet and yummy I never tire of them. Since these are just the very first ones, I would be tempted to eat them raw in a simple salad of chopped red cabbage, grated carrots, and vinaigrette. Once we have a few more, I will share my new and improved roasted red pepper sauce recipe, which is one of my favorite ways to eat this favorite vegetable.

The sweet onion variety this week is Ailsa Craig. Two weeks ago you had White Wing, which was a white variety. The Ailsa Craig are yellow, but should be almost as sweet. Remember sweet onions do not keep well, so do not hesitate to use these up! You will have more onions in your share in a couple of weeks.

Carrots are back again today, and just as sweet and beautiful as they were the first time. This variety is Bolero and is definitely our very favorite. They germinate well, grow long, pretty roots, and also have sturdy tops for bunching. In a couple of weeks we will be harvesting the first of the Mokum and I am very interested to see how they compare.

Next week: Salsa, beets, scallions, chard, and more red peppers and tomatoes.