



In the Share

Pie Pumpkin, 1 piece
Acorn Squash, 1 piece
Brussels Sprouts, 1 bag
Yellow Potatoes, 1 bag
Leeks, 1 bunch
Beets, 1 bunch
Hot Peppers, 7 pieces
Kale, 1 bunch
Popcorn, 1 bunch
Garlic, 1 head

Acorn squash is one of those perennial favorites. Whenever we have them at the market, almost everyone talks about how much they love to bake them in the oven with brown sugar and butter. To me it sounds as good as pie, but without the crust! If you want a crusty pie, you also have an actual pie pumpkin to use. Sometimes when I am feeling impatient, I will quarter the pumpkin, scoop out the seeds and steam the pieces in my large soup kettle to prep it for pureeing. For me the steaming is generally a little faster. I must confess, however, I am not a big fan of pumpkin pie. I prefer pumpkin pie squares! See the recipe on the back.

The popcorn is the only other new item in the share this week. We just finished harvesting and stripping these cobs late last week, so they are not yet fully dried and ready for popping. We tied them into bundles for you so that you can hang them as a fall decoration while they dry completely. You may have yellow, white, blue or red cobs in your bundle. They should be ready for popping right around Thanksgiving. (They will also last indefinitely, so there is no need to hurry when Thanksgiving comes.) When you are ready to pop, just strip the dried kernels from the cob with your thumbs. I will warn you that your thumbs may get scratched or otherwise toughened up in the process! Once the kernels are free, pop them as you normally would.

(continued on the back)

Claire's Comments

The Countdown

We have entered the "countdown" season at the farm. This is the time of year when we say things like: "this is our last pepper harvest" or, "only two more rows of sweet potatoes to dig", and "it is time to mow down the beans and get in the last cover crops for the year." Naturally, all this counting down coincides with the upcoming final CSA delivery. As you will recall from last week's newsletter, next week is the last official pickup of the season, and the following week (10/22) will be a bonus pickup that is completely coordinated and carried out by the farm interns.

Yesterday while we were digging sweet potatoes, Jake told me that he and his wife Kat calculated that we have only 6 more regular workdays at the farm this fall. After that we will still have to plant garlic, move the tractor into storage, generally put things to bed, and build our new greenhouse, but still, only 6 more regular days! For a while there in September when the sun was shining and it felt like summer had finally arrived, I developed a reckless hope that maybe I could make it through the fall without putting on my coveralls and freezing my hands in the cold vegetable wash water. I was not in the countdown mindset then. But when the weather turned and we started coming to work with the knowledge that we would leave wet and cold, I quickly pulled on my coveralls and was grateful for them. I also started counting up the tasks left to do and plotting out how we would get them done in the little time left before the snow flies.

If you make it back to the farm these days (since we have not yet had frost, the flowers are still blooming and hoping you will come by to cut them), you will see that it is mostly covered with what looks like young, green grass. Really what you are seeing are our winter cover crops. These crops (rye, oats, peas, vetch, clover, and some buckwheat) will hold the soil in place for the winter while also building fertility and improving soil structure. Getting these crops established is one of the most important jobs of the fall. By some stroke of luck we were able to get most of them seeded before those three inches of rain a few weeks back. We have not been able to till or seed since in all the rain that followed, but the cover crops are looking lovely and lush while getting the ground ready for next year's vegetables. One task done!

Another important countdown task is to finish the root crop harvest – potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, and beets. Our plan is to finish the sweet potatoes on Friday, the potatoes and carrots on Monday, and the beets on Tuesday. It is always a close call as to whether or not we will get all these storage crops out of the ground in time, but we have always made it in the past...

Finally we are also making ristras (hot pepper strings) for your share next week and packing up squash to protect it from the freeze that is supposed to come on Saturday. We bottle honey over the weekend and pack the storage shares early next week. By next Thursday we will have made it through the countdown or not. Like I said, we have always made it in the past! And after the countdown, the winter begins. Jake and I have big plans for this winter, but I will tell you about those next week.

Laurel's Farm to Table

Kale

Kale is another member of the cabbage family. In fact, it is the oldest member, resembling wild cabbage. It is especially high in vitamins A, B, and C and Calcium, as well as antioxidants. At Troy, we grow curly green, curly red, Red Russian, and Lacinato kale.

To Store: Wrap in a damp towel or plastic bag and refrigerate in the drawer. You may also clean as below, blanch for 2 minutes, shock in ice water, drain, dry, and freeze.

To Clean: Rinse thoroughly, dry, remove leafy greens from thick stem, and discard stems. Chop into bite size pieces or julienne in thin strips.

To Prepare:

Since kale has a similar flavor profile as other cabbage family members, it will pair with similar flavors: onions, leeks, root vegetables, red wine, butter, lemon juice, sage, thyme, caraway, dill, fennel, horseradish, apples, chestnuts, sour cream, and/or bacon/ham. You may boil, steam, braise, or sauté kale, tossing with one of the flavor complements above.

For example, cook off a couple of pieces of bacon and remove from pan. Pour off all but 2 TB of the fat and add garlic and onions. Sauté 'til translucent. Add cleaned, chopped kale and sauté 10-15 minutes. Toss again with chopped bacon and a little red wine vinegar.

Kale can be eaten raw. Toss cleaned, cut kale with a simple vinaigrette of olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Wait a few minutes and see how the leaves turn dark green and shiny. This is the acid in the lemon juice "cooking" the kale. You may substitute another acid such as lime or orange juice, or vinegars. Make a salad with tomatoes and olives (or your favorite salad items) to complete the dish.

Kale Chips: Clean kale and chop into bite size pieces. Toss with a bit of olive oil and salt, and lay in a single layer on a sheet pan. Roast in the oven at 350 degrees for 10-15 minutes, until crispy but not too brown.

Sesame Kale: Steam kale 3-5 minutes. Sauté garlic and ginger in a little olive oil. Cool and add a touch of toasted sesame oil. Toss with steamed kale and sprinkle with toasted sesame seeds. May be eaten hot or cold.

Try adding kale during the last 10 minutes or so of soup and stew recipes, such as the potato leek soup from last week.

(continued from "In the Share")

As you know, we have had a real struggle with potatoes this year. We were surprised by the quality of the red potatoes we harvested a few weeks ago. And now we are delighted that these yellow potatoes are even better. You have over two pounds in your share today and you will have another two pounds next week. Jake and I agree that we want to do more potatoes next year, with the goal of doubling the number of weeks that you find them in your shares! This is one of the crops where regular irrigation will make a big difference.

It has been a long time since you have had greens in your shares. This week you have both kale and some of the best beet greens we have ever grown. Sauté them together with onions, garlic, olive oil, and tamari and also check out Laurel's suggestions for kale on the left.

Next week: Jack-o-lantern or gourds, onions, sweet potatoes, potatoes, carrots, butternut squash, Brussels sprouts and (maybe!) broccoli.

Recipe

This recipe comes from my partner Sarah's family. I am looking forward to Sarah making these on one of these cold fall evenings.

Pumpkin Pie Squares

Topping:

1 cup boxed cake mix 1 tsp. cinnamon
½ cup white sugar ¾ stick butter

Crust:

Remainder of cake mix
1 stick butter, melted
1 egg

Filling:

2 cups (or more) pumpkin puree
1 tsp. vanilla
½ cup white sugar 1 tsp. cinnamon
½ cup brown sugar ½ tsp. nutmeg
3 eggs ½ tsp. cloves

Mix the dry topping ingredients together and cut in the butter to make course crumbs. Set aside. Mix the crust ingredients together and pour this batter into the bottom of a greased 9" square pan. Make the pumpkin puree by baking the pumpkin, scooping out the flesh, and then mashing it in a blender or cuisinart. Mix the filling ingredients together and pour on top of the crust layer in the pan. Sprinkle the topping on last. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes (or so). Serve with freshly whipped cream!

Troy Community Farm

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