



## In the Share

Butternut Squash, 1 piece  
Yellow Potatoes, 1 bag  
Onions, 1 bag  
Carrots, 1 bag  
Sweet Potatoes, 1 bag  
Salad Mix, 1 bag  
Garlic, 2 heads  
Ristra, 1 string  
1 Jack-o-lantern or 3 Gourds

When I walked outside on Wednesday morning to load the truck and get ready to go to the farm, it was raining. It was not a hard steady rain. But it was cold and wet enough to make for a miserable morning of working outdoors. Moreover, we had to pack potatoes and sweet potatoes and onions all of which should be kept dry for packing. Since we had already harvested most everything that we needed earlier in the week, I formed what I thought was a brilliant idea: We would do the pack out and finish making the ristras in the warm and dry sprout room. It was crowded and we sure brought enough dirt into the room to make for a difficult clean up, but we finished all our work and we stayed happily warm and dry!

Many of you who read this newsletter before you pick up your share will wonder what a ristra is. It is a string of hot peppers meant to be hung and dried for use throughout the winter. The particular peppers on your string are super chilies and they are the hottest peppers we grow. As they hang in your kitchen their color will deepen and they will shrivel and dry. Use them cautiously whenever you need a hot pepper.

Sweet potatoes are another new item this week. Unfortunately they are much smaller and many fewer than we had hoped. I tried a new provider of sweet potato slips this spring and was

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## Claire's Comments

### Winter Work

It has been a cold and wet fall. Though the spirit of the crew is still positive and "can do," we are getting tired of bundling up to the point of near immobility in our warm and waterproof clothing. I myself much prefer to sweat than to shiver, but even I am ready to welcome the winter and the corresponding move indoors.

For me winter is the season to catch up on all the administrative work that has fallen through the cracks over the summer, and also to get ahead on projects for the next year. The usual list includes seed orders, CSA and farm planning, intern applications and interviews, etc. There is also a substantial list of new projects that will demand attention this year, not the least of which is our new passive solar greenhouse.

We are in the very final stages of getting a building permit for this greenhouse, which will be the first of its kind in Madison. As some of you know I have been working on getting a greenhouse at Troy pretty much since the day I was hired in 2001. It has been a rough road, but we are finally close to actually breaking ground. (Many thanks to CSA member Ann Freiwald for taking charge and leading us through the complicated and mysterious city building approvals!) The plan is to have the greenhouse done and functioning by the end of 2009. That means Jake and I and our crew of builders and volunteers will be building throughout the fall and winter. The whole process is both exciting and terrifying. For now I am trying to focus on the exciting part of being able to grow vital starts for the farm (and beyond) in a real greenhouse. I'm hoping that focus will be enough get me through the many unknown and terrifying parts!

Madison FarmWorks is another project that will grow and develop this winter. In the spring we started a new business of designing, installing, and maintaining urban "farms" at Madison homes and businesses. The idea is that we can help people to turn their lawns into food while also creating a beautiful landscape. Our first farm was at the Madison Squash Workshop on the westside. Of course squash the food was a natural choice (along with other vegetables) at the entrance to a club for squash the sport! Among other projects, we also transformed a westside front yard into multiple raised beds for vegetables, fruits, flowers, and herbs, and met with Jessica Doyle about starting a FarmWorks farm at the governor's mansion (a project we hope will happen in 2010.) Megan Cain is the FarmWorks project manager, and she and I will use the winter to build on what we learned to expand and improve the business for next year.

Along those same lines, I am hoping to expand our CSA into residential lawns in 2011. That means some of the food you receive through the Troy Community Farm CSA could be grown in your or your neighbors yard! I am very excited about this idea. Growing food in lawns not only expands our growing area but also opens up new possibilities for organic insect and disease control. (Believe it or not it is harder for potato beetles to find the potato plants in your yard!) There are many issues to work out with this project, but as you certainly understand by now, that is exactly what the winter is for!

## Laurel's Farm to Table

### Sweet Potatoes

*Sweet Potatoes aren't potatoes at all, but the true storage root of a member of the morning glory family native to South America. They are also not yams, though often labeled as such in the U.S. They contain starches that convert easily to natural sugars, thus making them sweet. They pair well with oranges, pineapple, apples, pecans, butter, cream, brown sugar, maple syrup, and rich meats such as pork or duck. They also work nicely with herbs and spices (see below for ideas). They can be roasted, boiled, steamed, or fried.*

**To Store:** Leave unwashed and store in a cool (55-60), dark, dry place for several weeks. Do NOT refrigerate or wash. Excess moisture will cause spoilage.

#### To Prepare:

**Chips:** Peel sweet potatoes. Use the peeler to cut long thin strips lengthwise. Heat 2" deep peanut oil to 370 degrees using a frying thermometer. Carefully drop chips into the oil; don't overcrowd. Fry until crispy. Remove from oil and drain on paper towels. Sprinkle immediately with salt and any other seasonings (cumin or chili powder would be tasty).

**Roasted Whole:** The starches in sweet potatoes take a long time to convert to sugars, so it is recommended that you start them in a cold oven. This is the sweetest way to prepare them. Scrub them clean, poke them a few times with a fork, rub them with a little oil, and bake on a foil-lined baking sheet. Put them in the oven and then turn it to 400 degrees and bake for 45 minutes or so, until a knife will insert easily. Excellent mashed.

**Roasted & Seasoned:** Peel potatoes and dice or otherwise cut into same-size shapes. Toss with a little peanut or canola oil and your seasoning of choice. Try Cajun spices, or the minced (or dried) herbs rosemary, thyme, and parsley with a little minced garlic, or teriyaki sauce, or the spices cumin, cayenne, and coriander. Don't forget the salt and pepper. Roast on a sheet pan at 350 for 20-30 minutes, 'til browned and crisp on the outside and tender on the inside. Great as is, or add nuts, greens, dried fruit or other ingredients for a unique side dish or salad.

Try steaming diced potatoes and **pureeing** for use in soufflés, soups, or as a filling for burritos or casseroles.

## Next Year!

### First CSA pickup for 2010 - Thursday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>

Claire will send the 2010 CSA brochure in January. Look for it in your e-mail. The early bird sign up deadline will be 1 March 2010. Returning members who sign up by the deadline will pay the 2009 new member price of \$540 (instead of the higher 2010 price) and you are guaranteed a spot!  
It's worth it to sign up early!

(continued from "In the Share")

very disappointed in their quality. Then we had a cold summer, which did nothing to help the tropical sweet potato thrive. The result of this sad sweet potato year is in your small sweet potato bag. Next year I will be returning to my original slip provider and with good weather we will be back to the two or three heavy shares of large sweet potatoes we are used to! When you get your sweet potatoes home, they will likely be a little wet/sweaty in the plastic. Take them out and use them right away or let them dry in the open air before storing them. Do not leave them in the plastic or they will rot!

Same with the yellow potatoes. They have not had much of a chance to dry and cure between being dug and packed, so they too will likely be a bit sweaty in the plastic bag. Take them out and let them dry with the sweet potatoes or else use them right away.

Everything else in your share should be pretty familiar and straightforward by now. And all these items (with the exception of the salad mix which should be used within the week) will keep well until you are ready to use them. You have a full three pounds of onions (usually we deliver two pounds at a time), and two heads of garlic, as well as some extra weight in the potato bag. We are hoping that some of these foods will keep you fed from the farm for a few weeks beyond the end of the CSA season!

**Bonus Week Next Week:** acorn squash, leeks, kale, Brussels sprouts, carrots, garlic, and more. There will not be any eggs for the bonus week.

## Troy Community Farm

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