



July 7, 2004

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# Fair Share Farm CSA Newsletter

## This Week's Share:

### Full Share:

Green, purple, or dragon tongue beans

Swiss chard

Eggplant

1 hybrid tomato & 1 heirloom tomato

cherry tomatoes

Cucumbers

Cipollini onions

Genovese basil

### Partial Share:

Green, purple, or dragon tongue beans

1 hybrid tomato & 1 heirloom tomato

Cucumbers

Baby squash mix or medium squash

Cipollini onions

Genovese basil

**Next week:** look for more tomatoes, cucumbers, summer squash, and beans. New will be garlic chives.

## Heirlooms

What a beautiful week it has been. This is perfect vegetable growing weather: an inch of rainfall per week, plenty of sunshine, and warm temperatures. The plants in the fields are growing luxuriantly—producing well and looking healthy and happy. The tomatoes, even those in the wettest spot, are producing in what is starting to look like a bumper year for many crops.

Although we do not miss them, those hot temperatures that we have yet to see are important for summer vegetables. Temperatures in the 70s at night stimulate ripening in tomatoes, melons, and okra to name a few. That's partly why most of the produce grown in the U.S. is grown in the Central Valley of California.

Garlic is also one of those crops grown in the Central Valley. A single variety accounts for most of the garlic sold in grocery stores. That's not for lack of alternatives.

Like all vegetables, the number of garlic varieties are limitless. Heirloom vegetables, grown by our ancestors and improved upon by each generation, tend to have better flavor and more "personality" than hybridized varieties. You've already tasted a few heirlooms: dragon tongue beans, currant cherry tomatoes, and green pattypan squash. The Seed Savers Exchange, a non-profit organization in Iowa that promotes heirloom varieties (check them out at [www.seedsavers.org](http://www.seedsavers.org)), currently maintains over 24,000 varieties of fruits and vegetables, including 200 types of garlic.

Unfortunately as is often more than not, agribusiness chose shelf-life and yield over flavor and personality. The re-

sult: one variety of garlic at the grocery store. We grew nine varieties of garlic this year. We harvested all but one type on Monday. After a few weeks of curing, they should begin showing up in your shares. Check in then for Tom's rundown on varieties and culinary uses.

Speaking of Tom. The two of us write the newsletter each week much in the same way as we farm. We split up responsibilities for writing, but make the big decisions together. I write the front page and handle the CSA business notices; Tom writes the back page with all the veggie info and recipes. Tom is the cook in our household and I am very lucky for it. He's one of those people who can create a recipe on the spot and it's delicious. I hope you all enjoy his recipes as much as we do.

## Core meeting July 24th

All members are invited to the mid-season core group meeting on Saturday, July 24th at 4 pm at the farm. Topics to discuss will include an end-of-the-season CSA dinner, a mid-season member survey, and others. Bring your own ideas for making the CSA better.

The core group meetings are open to all members. Members who are responsible for a core job are exempt from the farm work requirement. We are looking for one member or a group of members who would be interested in organizing the end-of-the-season dinner. This would include finding a location, tableware, etc. as well as organizing a set-up and clean-up crew. If this sounds like the job for you, come to the core meeting.

## Calendar

July 14th — CSA Distribution, Crossroads Market

July 17th— CSA Distribution, Fair Share Farm

## Recipes

We try to come up with recipes that use as many ingredients in your share (or last few shares) as possible. However, simple is often best when it comes to cooking, and when at the same time you match a vegetable with a classically complementary herb or flavor, you are eating at a fine dining level.

### **Beans with Summer Savory**

As simple as the title. Steam green purple or Roma (Dragon Tongue) beans for 5 minutes, or until desired tenderness. Add butter, chopped summer savory, salt and pepper to taste, and serve while hot.

### **Glazed Carrots with Ginger Root**

This is a hot version of the carrot/ginger salad recipe we gave you in an earlier newsletter, and tastes very different.

- ◆ 3 to 4 medium carrots, unpeeled and chopped
- ◆ 2 tablespoons sugar
- ◆ 1 tablespoon butter
- ◆ 1/4 cup water
- ◆ 1 tablespoon peeled and chopped ginger root
- ◆ Salt and pepper to taste

Put carrots, water, butter and sugar into a saucepan, bring to boil, cover, and simmer on low heat for approximately 10 minutes. Remove lid, add ginger root, salt and pepper. Keep cooking with lid off until carrots are tender and glazed, and the liquid is evaporated. Add a little water if necessary to keep carrots from burning.

## Your Share Items

Over the course of July, the summer vegetables will be flowing in... tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, melons, even corn. Other new veges that you'll receive include onions, garlic, potatoes, okra, and maybe even a little celery. With each of these items we (especially Rebecca), put a lot of thought into which varieties to plant and when. Here's a primer on tomato selection.

### **Tomatoes (Part 1)**

When picking tomato varieties one of the main things we select for is taste. However, while seed catalogs are pretty true in their descriptions, we Show-Me stagers need to try them for ourselves.

Other things we select for are days to maturity, disease/pest resistance, and growing characteristics. By having different ripening times, we can have some early tomatoes for you, but not have all the tomatoes come at once. The disease/pest resistance is very important, for obvious reasons.

The growing characteristics of tomatoes are also quite important. Some are "indeterminate," meaning

they grow like a vine, and will get taller all season long. These types need to be trellised, a time consuming process. Determinate varieties act more like a bush, and take less work. Some plants have a lot of leaves, protecting the fruits from sun scald. Some are more resistant to cracking, so we don't have to compost as much of the harvest.

Which brings us to the first tomatoes of the season. In order to address all of these factors, we grow two main types of tomatoes—hybrids and heirlooms. The hybrids, which are the result of a sort of "matchmaking," crossing two tomato varieties to produce one that has characteristics superior to the other two combined, can offer excellent growing characteristics, but may be short on taste.

Heirlooms, in all of their unique forms—red, black, pink, white, striped, pleated—are usually big on taste, but can crack, be susceptible to disease, or otherwise hard to grow.

So, to make sure we have enough tomatoes for you, and have some both early in the season and late, we grow all of the above. The first ones in your share are mainly hybrids that we are

testing for taste. There are a couple heirlooms, however, that ripened early, to our surprise. Here's a hybrid rundown. In Part 2 we'll talk about heirlooms.

### **Golden Girl**

We picked this variety to have some color in the share, and because the catalog said it had excellent taste (sweet and tangy). We agree.

### **Jet Star**

A friend of Rebecca's father used to grow tomatoes commercially in Missouri, and swore by Jet Star. We think local recommendations are a good place to start. It's a low acid red tomato (don't can with it) that is resistant to cracking, has good foliage cover, disease resistance and a nice taste.

### **Celebrity**

Another red tomato, this one was suggested by our neighbor Ralph Brock. It is purported to have all the good characterizes of a hybrid, and excellent taste. The 1984 All-American winner.

So, now that you know what (and how) we think, let us know what you think. We're growing these tomatoes for you. We can, and will, try new varieties each year, in order to select tomatoes that we can consistently grow well, and that have the best taste.

### **Tomato Pointers**

Some of the tomatoes you will receive won't be completely ripe. Use these ripening and storage tips.

◆ Tomatoes will ripen properly and develop good flavor and aroma if kept at room temperature, between 55° F and 70° F. Keep

out of direct sunlight.

◆ Never refrigerate a tomato that is not fully red or ripe! Cold temperatures destroy flavor and stop the ripening process.

◆ Once fully ripe, a tomato can be refrigerated, but only for a few days; any longer results in flavor deterioration.

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