



In the Share

Cherry Tomatoes, members 1-25
Green Beans, 1 bag
Cauliflower, 1 head
Salsa Basket, 1 bag
Cucumbers, 3 pieces
Beets, 1 bunch
Kale, 1 bunch
Summer Squash, 5 pieces
Garlic, 1 head
Parsley, 1 bunch
Tomatoes, 2 small pieces

Claire's Comments

Hygienic Queens

With all the discussion of late blight, I have not had a chance to write about a very exciting queen bee rearing class that I took a couple of weekends ago. I am happy to move on from the depressing to the inspiring this week!

We have had a small apiary at Troy for about seven years. This spring, we received a grant from the Alliant Energy Foundation to double the size of our apiary, hire an Apiary Coordinator intern (Sarah who has been volunteering in the apiary for several years), and to begin a queen-rearing program aimed at producing Wisconsin-hardy, hygienic queens. The queen rearing class was a key step in this process. It was taught by Marla Spivak who is very well known among both beekeepers and bee researchers for her groundbreaking work.

As many of you likely know, there have been many threats to the health of honeybees in recent years, including parasites and diseases not easily explained or countered. We do not use chemical treatments for any of these problems in our hives, and ongoing research is showing that chemicals are likely causing bigger problems than they are curing in apiculture (much like in conventional agriculture). One promising way that beekeepers can start to address some of the health issues in their apiaries is by raising healthy, hygienic queens. Marla Spivak is at the forefront of this work.

The hygienic trait was first discovered in the early 1900's. Bees with this trait can detect defective or diseased larvae in the comb and also remove it before it contaminates other larvae or bees. Though the trait has been known for a long time, no one spent any time trying to test for it or breed it into bees until Spivak started that work in the early 90's. After proving that bees with the hygienic trait are better able to combat any number of diseases and parasites, she is now working on disseminating her research and her breeder queens to commercial bee breeders and beekeepers throughout the country. She is also teaching beekeepers like us how to raise our own hygienic stock.

The reason it is so important to raise queens with this trait is that the queen is the mother of all the bees in a hive. Her only job is to lay eggs, hundreds or thousands of them per day. Her genetic material is passed on to every one of her baby bees, so if she is from hygienic stock, her bees will likely also display that trait and be better able to survive and thrive.

In the queen rearing class we learned how to test for the hygienic trait and thus identify possible breeder queens, how to graft larvae from the breeder queen into queen cups (which involves lifting and moving tiny larvae from the comb with a tiny spatula-like tool), how to get the bees to raise these grafted larvae as queens, how to successfully mate the new queens, and how to introduce them into established hives. I don't blame you if you do not grasp how fascinating it was to learn these procedures and then how exciting it was to actually perform them from these brief sentences, but really it was enthralling.

Sarah and I left the class not only with knowledge and experience, but also with 5 queen cells ready to hatch into new queens. We introduced those queens into mating nucs as soon as we got home. As of today they have all emerged and at least one is mated and laying her own eggs. We will check the others later this week, and off we go onto breeding our own hygienic queens!

**Many thanks to the Alliant Energy Foundation
for making this work possible!**

Beets at last. I hope these large and lovely beets were worth the wait for all the beet lovers out there! I must admit there was a time when I did not like beets. I'm pretty sure the first beet I ate was at the first farm I worked on in Temple, New Hampshire. The farmers had a two-year-old daughter who loved them, so there were plenty of opportunities to include them to my dinner. I did so only rarely. I was not fond of the sweet, earthy flavor. Though I would not now call myself a beet lover, I have come a long way since then. I enjoy them roasted with garlic, just boiled and cooled and added to salad, and of course pickled.

For those of you just beginning a relationship with beets, I recommend the beet soup recipe on the back of the newsletter. It comes from Sara Tedeschi at Dog Hollow Farm. She made it for dinner one night a long time ago when we were neighbors living out by Gays Mills. It was simple to make, could accommodate many vegetable odds and ends, and most importantly was surprisingly delicious. That soup was the turning point in my own relationship with beets.

Cauliflower is another new vegetable this week. Usually our cauliflower comes on much

(continued on the back)

Recipes

Beet Soup

from Sara Tedeschi at Dog Hollow Farm
taken from MACSAC's Asparagus to Zucchini cookbook

1 bunch or 4 large beets 1 large onion
1 large potato salt and pepper to taste
other vegetables: celery, plain yogurt
kale, chard, spinach, carrots, etc.

Wash all vegetables and cut into chunks. Place vegetables in a large steamer over boiling water; steam until very soft. Using the water from the steamer, and any other stock or water as needed, blend cooked vegetables until very smooth and thick. Return to the pot; heat gently to avoid sticking. Add salt and pepper. Serve each bowl with a generous portion of yogurt in center of soup. Makes 4-6 servings.

Sesame Kale Salad

from Doug Wubben at Drumlin Community Farm
taken from MACSAC's Asparagus to Zucchini cookbook

1 bunch fresh kale 1 clove garlic, minced
2 Tbs. soy sauce or tamari 2 tsp. honey
2 Tbs. toasted sesame oil 1 Tbs. apple cider vinegar
1 Tbs. toasted sesame seeds dash of black pepper to taste

Separate kale leaves from stems. Chop stems and greens. Steam stems a couple of minutes, then add the greens and steam until just tender. Drain: let kale cool enough to handle it. Squeeze out as much water as possible. Place in a serving bowl. Mix the remaining ingredients in another bowl; add to greens. Mix, chill, and serve. Makes 4-6 servings.

Adapted from *Extending the Table: A World Community Cookbook*, by Joetta Hendrich Schlabach.

Please keep this salsa recipe on hand! You will be seeing more salsa baskets throughout the summer.

Fresh Salsa Verde

from Troy Community Farm

All ingredients are in the "salsa basket" in your share, except for the salt.

- Remove the husks from and wash the tomatillos.
- Put tomatillos, garlic, cilantro, and hot pepper in a food processor or blender. [Note on the hot pepper: Be careful! Add it a little at a time so as not to go too far. Include the seeds for extra heat.]
- Blend on low until ingredients are combined.
- Chop the onion separately and add it to the mix with a dash of salt.

Salsa ingredients will store well in the fridge for up to a week. Once you make the salsa, it is best if eaten within a few days.

(continued from "In the Share")

earlier in July, but it is quite late this year, no doubt due to our unusual weather. Even so, it is lovely. It can be added to the beet soup recipe (along with the kale), steamed on its own as a side dish, or even just cut up raw and served with dip. Cauliflower has such a mild flavor, it goes especially well in spicy curries with summer or winter squash. It is also one of my favorite ingredients in potpie.

Garlic is also new this week. We did our garlic harvest last week Monday. Throughout the spring the garlic looked to be the very best crop we have ever had: large, healthy plants in weed-free beds. We were excited to see what the harvest would bring. It brought quite a bit of disappointment, unfortunately. Many of the garlic plants had soft stems that meant the beginning of rot down in the center of the bulbs. The garlic cloves themselves seem fine, but the heads will not last long with that rot at their core. I have never seen anything like it, and can only attribute it to the extremely wet year we have had. I have heard similar garlic reports from other growers, as well. We will be distributing the most questionable heads with this first delivery; so do not plan to hold on to these for long. Use this garlic up! There will be more coming, hopefully without such questionable storability.

You also have the very first tomatoes in your share: just two small tomatoes for everyone. As you are all well informed on the state of the tomatoes I will not go into that further except to say, we have not yet seen any late blight in the field. This first harvest is always a bit rough looking, but I expect we will start to see some lovely fruits in the next couple of weeks.

Cherry tomatoes are also coming on. We never get enough of these at one time for every member, so we distribute them in order according to the CSA cross off sheet. This week the first 25 members on the sheet get the sungolds. If you are not in that crowd, don't worry; your turn will come up soon.

Pease remember to wash your tomatoes before eating!

Summer squash, cucumbers, and beans are all slowing down. But the tomatillos (and thus the salsa) are going strong. See the formal salsa recipe on the left.

Next week: Carrots! Sweet onions! Also tomatoes and cabbage. We might also have more eggplant and/or the first sweet red peppers.

Troy Community Farm

Claire Strader • 442-6760 • claire@troygardens.org

www.communitygroundworks.org
