Smelling Garlic, and Flowers

Just about the first thing I think about on a Thursday morning is “what am I going to write about in the CSA newsletter today?” Writing to you is the first thing I do on these mornings, and I like to get started while my head is still a bit sleepy and dreamy. But this morning, I had a somewhat different first thought. It was, “do I smell garlic?” Unfortunately, I’ve been asking myself that question a lot over the last few weeks. And the answer has consistently been “yes.” I wish I could say that my best friend has been visiting and cooking all sorts of delicious dishes with garlic scapes and green garlic. But that’s not it. That unmistakable garlic odor has been coming from me. It’s on my skin, under my fingernails, even in my sweat. We have had garlic in every CSA share so far this year. That means I’ve been harvesting lots of fresh, juicy garlic. After being coated with garlic juice, it takes about a week of showers to be free of the smell. And then I harvest garlic again. Though I like garlic, I’m feeling ready to move on.

Luckily, there are some new smells just coming into their prime on the farm right now, and they can all be found in the CSA garden. For those of you who are new to the CSA, the CSA garden is the entry way to the farm. It is full of herbs and flowers that are available for you to harvest whenever you like. The farm crew spent some of this past week weeding the flowers and cutting down the oregano, thyme, and chives that were flowering and making seed. (We have to cut them down when they seed so that they can grow back with delicious, tender shoots.) All those cuttings are laying about in the paths and on the farm road right now, so sometimes, when I can get past the smell of garlic, I’m overcome with the delicious smell of thyme, my favorite.

Whether or not you are tiring of garlic, you should come out and fill your nostrils with the other smells the farm has to offer. Cut some herbs for the sautéed kohlrabi recipe on the back of the newsletter, smell the flowers, snip some of the very first blooms in the CSA garden. To find the garden, follow the trail to the farm in the back, northeast corner of Troy Gardens. You will know you are there when you see the deer fence and the tractor. Open the gate and go in, the herbs and flowers will be right in front of you. I will put some clippers in a bucket, near the rain gauge, for your use. Take a look around, breathe deeply, and leave with a bouquet. Please, just make sure to secure the gate on your way out. The deer like the smell of herbs and flowers as well. But they will not do their harvesting neatly and with consideration for the others who may come later. It’s best to just leave them poking their snouts through the fence.

I’m looking forward to the end of the spring garlic. Maybe next week my first morning thought will be, “is that a fresh flower bouquet I smell? Or is it that little bunch of thyme drying on my windowsill?”

If I was disappointed last week because I could not put any brand new items in your share, I sure am making up for it this week! The only repeat vegetable in your share today is the broccoli. And while you have already seen plenty of lettuce and sprouts in previous weeks, today there are fancy new varieties of each of those favorites to spice things up. I have to say the crew had fun harvesting and packing this share!

I won’t spend much time on the broccoli and cauliflower because I think most folks know what to do with these two popular vegetables. But I suspect the kohlrabi is another story. Aside from being completely gorgeous in that shockingly unique kind of way, kohlrabi is surprisingly juicy and sweet. As soon as you taste it, you will recognize its close kinship to broccoli; they are both in the brassica family. In fact, I distained growing kohlrabi for a long time just because I thought I could get more flavor from a broccoli stem, and I do love a fresh broccoli stem. Now that I have seen the physical beauty of the kohlrabi up close and bitten into its crisp, juicy, freshly-skinned flesh, I understand that I was wrong. The lovely kohlrabi will be added to our official planting schedule on the basis of this harvest.

But how to eat it? Be sure to try it freshly peeled and raw as a snack or as a replacement for raw carrot in your lunch. Then use it grated as a base for you coleslaw or an add-in to your salad, also raw. Finally cube it and use it in soup or (continued on the back)
(continued from “In the Bag”)  

stir fry or any way you would use broccoli. In this delivery you have the biggest, bestest kohlrabi of the year. But you will get to try some more in a couple of weeks when those that are left in the field have a chance to catch up.

The next exciting item is the bag of peas! Right now the plants are producing well, so you have a full 3/4 of a pound! (Usually I never have enough for more than a half pound of peas per share). If you chose the bag with the long, flat peas, you got the snow peas. If you have the shorter, plumper pods, you have the sugar snap peas. Every year I try to pick a favorite between these two (and the shell pea for that matter) and fail. I am so biased toward whichever one is in my mouth at the time. I love them all. Both the snow and the snap peas are edible podded peas – you can eat the whole thing with no shelling. If you don’t eat them all on your way home, use them raw in salad or add them to your kohlrabi stir fry. If you do eat them all on the way home, and you have other folks that you will be sharing your vegetables with, please be sure to destroy this newsletter before you get home as well. Those who learn that there were peas in the share and that those peas didn’t make it home are sure to be sore. If you read this warning too late, you can console your share-mates with the knowledge that will be more peas over the next few weeks.

Those curly green things with the elegant white pods at the ends are garlic scapes. That’s right, more garlic! These are the seed heads of the hard-neck garlic that we grow. We cut them off in order to encourage the garlic to put it’s energy into the bulbs instead of the seeds. Usually we eat the bulb at the bottom of the garlic, but you can eat these tops as well. Just chop them up and use them as you’ve been using the green garlic. They will be a great addition to your kohlrabi/pea stir fry. And there should be enough to add them to your scrambled eggs as well. You will likely get one more delivery of the garlic scapes next week. Then, sadly, there will be no more garlic until it is time to harvest the mature bulbs – sometime in late July.

The new lettuce this week is some truly lovely romaine. The rain we have had this year is growing some delicious lettuce! The new sprouts are your choice between a four pea mix and a legume mix that includes lentils, a pea, and a garbanzo. Several folks have mentioned that the sprouts are their favorite part of the share so far this year. I’m so glad that folks are enjoying them.

Next week: more peas, green cabbage, fennel, garlic scapes, lettuce or salad mix, and more.

### Upcoming Events

#### Farm Volunteer Days

**Fridays, 7:00 to 11:00 am at Troy Community Farm**

The farm has an open volunteer day every Friday morning. This time is for fun jobs like transplanting (early in the season), mulching, weeding (Claire honestly loves weeding!), and some harvesting of large crops like garlic, onions, and squash (later in the year). Everyone is welcome to join the usual crew of interns, worker shares, and youth in our Farm and Field program whenever they can. We are trying the early morning hours this year at the request of all those who suffered through the afternoon heat last year!

#### Savor the Summer Festival

**Saturday, 12 August, 1:00 am to 4:00 pm at Troy Gardens**

Mark your calendars now for this annual Troy Gardens event! This year we have a Hmong and a huítlacoche cooking demonstration; workshops on dried flower arranging, uses of native plants, mosaic art in the garden, and creating birdhouses; plenty of kid’s activities; and a full day of live music. This will be a great day to spend on the land with friends, family, and lots of fun!

### Recipes

#### Crunchy Red Devils

* A. Donscecz, Vegetarian Gourmet, Spring ’94

- 2 Tbs. apple cider vinegar
- 2 shallots, minced
- 1/4 cup hot red pepper sauce

Whisk together all ingredients except the kohlrabi, with 1/2 cup water. Peel and thinly slice kohlrabi; stir into marinade, coating evenly. Cover and refrigerate 2-3 days, stirring occasionally. Serve cold or at room temperature.

#### Sautéed Kohlrabi

* Oak Ridge Farm, adapted from the Cook’s Garden Cookbook

- 2 kohlrabi
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 3 medium-sized kohlrabi

Grate kohlrabi, place in colander, and sprinkle with salt. Let stand 30 minutes to drain. Heat butter over medium heat, add onions and sauté a few minutes. Stir in kohlrabi, reduce heat to low, cover, and cook 10 minutes. Increase heat to medium and cook 2 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in fresh herbs.

### Troy Community Farm

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Send newsletter comments, suggestions, and recipe ideas to:

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