

CSA Share Week 8:

1 head of lettuce
1.5 pounds heirloom tomatoes
1 bunch broccolini
1 pound Marvel of Piedmont beans
Eggplant, beets, basil and zucchini for trade

1 bunch Swiss chard
1 green pepper
2 cucumbers



About the Produce/Recipe Ideas:

This week's beautiful **Marvel of Piedmont beans** are a new one for us--similar to "Dragon's tongue" beans you may have seen at the farmers market. They are stringless, juicy and sweet raw: more like a green bean than Romano beans (which take more time to cook). So, you can treat them as you would a green bean: steamed, blanched, or sauteed they will taste great. Sadly, the gorgeous purple color will fade away. If you have a bit more patience, I like my beans stewed in a sauce of fresh tomatoes and garlic like this:

[Stewed Beans with Tomatoes and Garlic](#)

This week's **Swiss Chard** is young and tender and will cook faster than is typical. You can also enjoy the stems! Just chop them up and saute before the greens, like you would onions. Last night I simmered some chopped garlic and red pepper flakes in a few tablespoons of olive oil, then sauteed the chard stems for a few minutes until softened. (Add some **chopped green peppers** with the stems if you want). I then tossed in the chopped chard leaves with about 1 cup of chicken stock, and let that gently simmer for about 7-8 minutes, stirring occasionally. Season with a pinch of salt and it's ready to serve.

CSA member Mindy passed on this great recipe for a **Swiss Chard casserole**. You could use some chopped fresh **tomatoes** and **basil** (if you have some from last week or trade for some) to make it even better:

[Cheesy Tortellini Casserole with Chard](#)

I'm embarrassed to admit that before I started growing vegetables for a living, I didn't know that **green peppers** are just unripe red, orange, or yellow peppers. For some of you, I probably just blew your mind. Others are saying, duh! Anyway, while you enjoy these big, fat green peppers rest assured that our incredibly sweet colored peppers are just a few weeks away.

News from the Farm

If you've visited the farm then you've probably met our 2 pet sheep, Helga and Bilbo Baggins. We got them from a farmer friend in Ellensburg who raises sheep for meat. Lucky for them, our beloved Helga and Bilbo won't be ending up on anyone's dinner plate!

Helga and Bilbo were "bummer" lambs. Sometimes a mother sheep will reject a baby lamb, or literally forget which lamb is which in a litter. In this case, these orphan babies don't have a mom to get milk from, so they try to bum a meal from any mother sheep they can find, hence the nickname "bummer" lambs. We got them when they were just a few days old because the farmer didn't have time to take care of 2 bummer lambs. For their first 8 weeks of life, we had to bottle feed them up to 4 times a day to keep them healthy and happy. Because we were literally the hands that fed them, Helga and especially Bilbo are much friendlier than your average sheep around humans, as you can see from this photo taken last summer.

Photo credit goes to the amazing Scott Haydon.



Icelandic sheep produce more wool than any other breed, so they are the only sheep that need shearing twice a year. This spring we were late to get the shearer out to the farm, and they were so matted with wool that it had already partially felted on their bodies! We have kept their fleeces in garbage bags in hopes that someday we'll have enough free time to get the wool cleaned and spun into yarn so I can knit an Icelandic sweater.

That red hut in the photo is our "sheep-mobile". Our Australian shepherd Perla is useless as a herding dog, so we lure the sheep into the hut with some grain and lock them in, then drive them to a new paddock with the tractor. Right now they are mowing down the grass ahead of the flock of chickens.

Multi-species grazing is recommended to keep a pasture thriving and to keep the animals healthy. Parasites that hatch in sheep manure can cause health problems for sheep. By running the chickens through after the sheep have grazed, the hens peck at those insects and prevent the spread of disease.