

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for June 12th & 13th

1 bunch Red Russian kale
1 bunch mizuna
1 bunch big bok choy
½ # salad greens
garlic scapes
cilantro
dill
1 bunch Pink Beauty radishes

Large box additions

1 bunch collard greens
1 small Romaine lettuce

Local Roots Farm News

Welcome to Local Roots Farm's sixth season of Community Supported Agriculture. As always, our off-season has been full of ups and downs, big projects, and new challenges and joys. Jason and I have made a permanent move out to the farm, after a seat-of-the-pants kitchen remodel that we tried to squeeze in between a three-week trip to Italy and the start of our spring planting. We are doing a lot less driving now, although we still come into Seattle several times a week to deliver veggies, sell at the farmers market, and visit our families. Living at the end of a half-mile long driveway is pretty different than living two blocks off Broadway, where we've been for the last twelve years. For one thing, we are spending a lot less on lattes!

Spring recap

We had the mildest winter weather we've seen in several years, which allowed lots of our crops to survive the winter. We were able to start our April farmers markets with a nice array of kale, chard, beets, leeks, and assorted other things that we had planted last fall. Now all that stuff has bolted and flowered, and made way for this year's crops. The downside of the temperate winter has been the worst pest pressure we've ever seen. We usually expect some early season losses due to slugs, but this year we've also had some ground dwelling cutworms which laid waste to large swathes of our earliest brassicas, and a critter called a wireworm, which tunnels into the stem of medium-size lettuce plants, causing them to wilt and topple right at the soil line. It's been shocking and distressing to see whole plantings of broccoli and chard seedlings wiped out, but we have planted more than ever this year and are confident that we'll quickly put these losses behind us.

By this point in the season, almost all of our major crops are already in the field and growing. We hope to have our earliest harvests ever for carrots and beets, and our garlic, potatoes, tomatoes, and squash are all looking great. In other good news, we accomplished some major infrastructure improvements this spring, including building an elevated "farm pad" to store our equipment and vehicles during flood season, some new and improved greenhouses, a permanent irrigation line buried under our driveway, and an almost new 10'x10' walk-in refrigerator. We also managed to get 20 tons of limestone spread on our main fields, which will help balance our naturally acidic soil and provide better fertility for years to come.

We have an outstanding crew of workers on the farm this year, including several who are returning for the second (or third!) season with us. On the whole, it's been a great spring so far. Now the fun begins! Welcome to vegetable season in the Pacific Northwest! ~Siri, Jason, Felix, and crew

Ideas and info for this week's produce

*****Notes on vegetable storage*****

There are two main enemies of vegetable freshness: excess moisture and lack of humidity. The best environment for all leafy green veggies and most root veggies is in the refrigerator in a tightly sealed container. A plastic bag works fine, or any container with a lid that seals. If you just stick your vegetables in a drawer without a bag or other container, they will rapidly wilt.

Some reusable bags are better than others. Look for thick plastic, or tightly woven cloth. The main idea is to keep moisture from evaporating from your greens.

Salad greens – We always recommend that you rinse lettuce and salad greens as soon as possible after picking up your produce. Once refreshed in cold water for about 10 minutes and then drained, they will keep in the fridge for 3-5 days in a closed salad spinner or plastic bag.

Recipe – Salad for supper

- Marinate pre-cooked beans (chickpeas, navy beans or black-eyed peas work well) in a dressing of olive oil, balsamic vinegar, crushed garlic, salt, pepper, and dried basil. Thoroughly coat beans and let stand for up to an hour.
- Wash and dry salad greens and toss with beans and dressing.
- You can also add leftover chicken or fish or grilled veggies (like garlic scapes!).

Kale – Kale and its relatives thrive in our bio-region. Kale is a versatile and super-healthy vegetable that all of us on the farm eat almost every day. This particular variety is very tender and only takes about 10 minutes to cook. It's also great in a salad, shredded in thin strips.

Dill & Cilantro – We had hoped that these herbs would mature at slightly different dates, but they are both ready this week, so it's an herb-y week. Dill would be very nice with both the bok choy (coleslaw, perhaps?) and the radishes. Cilantro is also nice with radishes, as a crunchy topping for beans and rice, tacos, or lentil soup.

Garlic Scapes – These are a special spring treat! Scapes have a mild garlic flavor, and can be used any way that you would use regular garlic. They are less pungent, so you can use more. The whole curly stem part is edible – brush with olive oil and grill them whole, or chop in to pieces and add to stir-fry, soup, or roasted veggies.