

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for August 16th & 17th

1 bunch carrots
1 bunch White Russian kale
2-3 Walla Walla onions
2 small heads cauliflower
3-4 medium bok choy
1 bunch arugula
1 head escarole (NOT LETTUCE!!)
~2/3 pound tomatoes
cucumbers

Large box additions

Extra tomato(es)
1 head lettuce
1 bunch beets

Local Roots Farm News

We (literally) bought the farm!

I've been waiting all season to be able to announce that we have completed the process of purchasing this farm. All the papers are signed, and the sale will be recorded on Wednesdays. Although we've been living and farming here as tenants since we finalized our purchase agreement back in January, it has taken these eight months to get all the necessary work done to actually buy the place. There have been lots of little things that added up to a lot of time, not the least of which was getting financing. We qualified for two different government loan programs that help beginning farmers buy their first farms, one from the Washington State Housing and Finance Commission and one from the USDA. Without programs like these, it would have probably been impossible for us to buy this farm.

I've been superstitiously avoiding talking too much about the progress of our loan approval this season, not wanting to count any chickens before they really hatched. At one point in the spring it seemed possible that the USDA would not have funds for our loan program this year, and then there was the prospect that the federal government would shut down just before our closing date. So much time has passed since we first made the decision to buy the farm that signing the final papers yesterday seemed anticlimactic. On the other hand, the lurking possibility that something would come up to prevent us from being able to stay here is now gone, and it's quite a relief.

We have lots of projects and ideas for improving the farm and the houses, but right now we're still in the thick of the season. This week is the halfway point for the CSA, and we have at least ten weeks to go before we can turn our attention to such things as insulating the house or mouse-proofing the kitchen.

It's been less than five years since we first started farming. I never would have guessed, during our first season, that we'd be the owners of 40 acres in such a short amount of time. We have worked extremely hard to make our farm business successful these last four and a half years, but we've also had a lot of support from friends and family and a decent dose of good luck.

We're very excited about the future prospects for this farm, and we'd love to tell you all about it in person. On September 17th we'll be part of the PCC Farmland Trust farm tour with the farm open for visitors from 10-3. The following weekend, September 24th, is Sno-Valley Tilth' Pig Roast and Country Auction at Jubilee Farm. The party starts at 4, and we'd welcome any of you to visit the farm beforehand. I'll include more details about these events in a future email. Save the date(s)!

Thanks to all of you for your ongoing support as our farm enters its next exciting chapter. ~Siri, Jason, baby Felix, and the whole farm crew~

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Escarole – Please note: this is not lettuce! Every year we have reports of unexpectedly bitter salad made from the green leaves of escarole. Yes, you can make salad from this bitter-sweet chicory, but I would recommend only the inner, light green and white leaves. As a salad, escarole works best as a foil for other strong flavors, such as in the following:

Recipe – Escarole salad with caramelized onions and roasted cauliflower

- Cut escarole in two, separating the tough upper parts of the leaves from the lower light green heart. Reserve upper leaf parts for braising. Slice tender inner leaves into ribbons and place in salad bowl

- Slice one or two sweet onions. Cook in olive oil on medium-low heat until thoroughly browned and soft, about 20 minutes.

- Slice cauliflower about 1/4" thick, toss with a light oil like canola or grapeseed and arrange on a cookie sheet in a single layer. Roast at 375°, turning occasionally, until soft and medium-brown.

- When cauliflower and onions are done cooking, add them to the escarole and toss well. The escarole will slightly wilt and soften.

- Finish by tossing with a lovely vinaigrette dressing.

Tomatoes – Our tomato plants are looking healthy and have pretty good amounts of fruit set. They are ripening more slowly than normal due to the cool nights, but we expect several more weeks of tomatoes for the CSA. This week you'll be getting anywhere from 1 (large) tomato to 5 (small). The weight for each box is roughly the same, so please don't hunt around for the best one. If your tomato(es) are soft, you can eat them now. If they are a bit firm, let them ripen for a day or two on the counter. Don't refrigerate your tomatoes!

Walla Walla onions – Have moved past the fresh green onion stage into dry-ish topless onions. However, they are still very sweet and good for salad, sandwiches, or caramelizing. They won't store very long though, so use them within a couple weeks. Yellow "cooking" onions are coming soon, as well as shallots and more garlic.