

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for September 18th & 19th

2# Yellow Finn potatoes
1 small head garlic
1 bunch Red Russian kale
1 head Samantha lettuce
2/3# tomatoes
4 sweet peppers
1 large or 2 small eggplant
1 Red Kuri winter squash
2 ears "Ambrosia" bicolor corn
1 bunch Red Cored Chantenay carrots

Large box additions

1 bunch mustard greens
½# green beans
2 extra sweet peppers

Next week's produce (we think): more tomatoes – more corn – cucumbers – dill – savoy cabbage – turnips – carrots

Local Roots Farm News

So much is happening on the farm right now! We planted a lot more storage crops this year than ever before, and we are now figuring out how to harvest, process, and store all this extra food. Our neighbors at Oxbow Farm graciously lent us their fancy potato digger last weekend, and we had all hands on deck for a couple days picking up potatoes. Up until now, we have always harvested potatoes one bed at a time, only digging them up as we needed them. In effect, we were "storing" them in the field instead of in boxes. There are certain advantages to this system, but it also means a lot of extra work for the harvesters. The mechanical digger undercuts the entire width of the bed and gently shakes the potatoes loose from the soil, leaving them lying on top of the ground for easy gathering. Now, our logistical challenge is how to keep them in a dark, cool, well-ventilated place that is also more or less rodent proof. We don't really know how many potatoes we have to deal with, because right now they are all sitting in the shade of our maple trees in a couple of old galvanized watering troughs. Over the next week or so, we'll be running them through our new root washer and boxing them up for storage....

We have also begun harvesting our winter squash. Some varieties ripen earlier than others, so we are wading through the squash field, hand harvesting the ripe squash in small batches, and bringing them in to cure in our seedling house. With this crazy hot and dry weather, our squash will continue to ripen for at least another few weeks, so we won't know exactly how much squash we produced this year until early October. We also grew a lot of extra carrots, parsnips, beets, celery root, and cabbage this year. We view this year as a dry run for growing and managing these storage crops, and hope we can create the systems needed to extend our CSA season further into the fall, beginning in 2013.

This strange extended summer weather has been a mixed bag for our late summer crops. Leafy greens are suffering, as the warm and dry weather has allowed the flea beetles, cabbage worms, and aphids to run amuck long past their normal time. On the other hand, all of our root crops are growing like crazy, and the corn, peppers, and cucumbers are as happy as could be. Every one of the six seasons that we have been farming the weather has brought different blessings and challenges. It never gets boring!

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Basic Winter Squash info – You'll be receiving winter squash in your CSA box at least three or four more times this season. We grow lots of different types, each of which has different culinary uses, but they all prefer the same storage conditions. You'll receive squash that have already "cured" and developed a relatively tough exterior. This allows them to keep for a couple months (or more), as long as you keep them in a warm and dry location. If you leave them outdoors, they will look nice and autumnal, but won't keep as long. Leave them on a table or mantelpiece until you're ready to use them. Finally, if you don't want to eat an entire squash all at once, you have a couple options. One, cut your squash in half. The unused portion will store in the fridge (in a sealed container) for about a week. Two, bake the whole squash in the oven until tender, then peel off the skin, excavate a hole and extract the seeds and stringy parts, and scoop out the flesh. Any unused portion can be frozen for future meals.

This week's variety is **Red Kuri**, a dry-fleshed "kabocha" type from Japan. Its bright orange skin is relatively soft (compared to an acorn squash or pumpkin) and edible. Cube and use in a curry dish, or bake one whole (poke some holes in the skin with a fork) and scoop out the flesh for risotto, soup, or baked dessert.

Red-Cored Chantenay carrots - Last Tuesday Jason and I attended a variety trials field day hosted by one of our seed suppliers in the Skagit Valley. Part of the day was a blind taste test of carrot varieties. The group (about 30 people) tried nine types, and the clear winner was this carrot, one of our personal favorite varieties not just of carrot, but of all the many crops we grow on the farm. It's a French heirloom variety, called "red-cored" to distinguish it from the yellow-cored varieties of carrots that used to be more prevalent in the marketplace. We think this carrot is pretty good when eaten fresh, but exceptionally delicious cooked, with flavor and texture almost like a sweet potato. Cut them into ovals or quarter them the long way, coat with oil, and roast at about 375 or 400. The exterior will caramelize and the interior will be dry, tender, and sweet. Yes, some of them are very large. They're good that way.