

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for September 20th & 21st

1 bunch carrots
1 bunch White Russian kale
1 normal size broccoli
1 head Romaine lettuce
¼# arugula
1# assorted tomatoes
1 bunch basil
1 head fennel
1 sweet pepper
1 head garlic
1-2 yellow onions

Large box additions

Extra tomatoes
Extra garlic
Extra sweet pepper

Local Roots Farm News

Here it is, the last week of summer. The hot weather we had last week was a bit of a mixed blessing, giving an important extra boost to our winter squash and leeks, but causing some of our broccoli to flower earlier than we had hoped. In fact, all of our fall brassicas (cabbage family crops) are ahead of schedule this year, which means that we are picking broccoli right now that is normally not ready to harvest until mid October. Weird weather this year. Other veggies on the horizon include romanesco cauliflower, more beautiful cabbage, and parsnips (waiting for cooler weather to make them more tasty), as well as the old standbys of carrots, kale, potatoes, beets, and (we hope) a couple more weeks of tomatoes.

Another great thing about last week was the long awaited rain. When we saw that rain was forecast for last Saturday, we sprang into action to get cover crops sown. The soil on the farm was very dry, and we were afraid that cover crop seeds would just lie on the surface and never sprout. We got about 7 acres disked and planted on Saturday, finishing up just in time for the rain to start falling. When we checked on Monday morning, some of the pea and clover seeds had already begun to sprout! We're very excited about using cover crops to build organic matter, protect our soil from flood erosion, and add nutrients for next year's vegetables. We're also looking forward to the beauty of big fields full of lush green grains and bright red clover blossoms.

For us, trying to do a good job with our cover crops has introduced us to a whole new area of farming knowledge. For our vegetable crops, we use transplanted seedlings or our fine-tuned three-row seeder to plant all of our crops. Cover crops are more like growing grains – thick stands of uniform plants, which are sown over the whole bed surface. Planting whole field surface requires different kinds of equipment (or improvising with tools that we already have), and it also means that once the crop is up and growing, there's no mechanical way to control weeds. We're hoping for a strong, fast growing stands of oats, triticale, clover, and rye, which will shade out weeds during the winter and leave us with a clean field to plant into next spring. Stay tuned for updates on the progress of our fall cover crops.

One more plug for the Sno-Valley Tilt Pig Roast and Country Auction this Saturday. Tickets are \$20, and include dinner (vegetarian fare too), fun games (greased pole climb!), and square dancing with a live band! I'll link to the info site in today's email. Enjoy your veggies! Siri and crew

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Basil - As I mentioned, this week has a little bit of summer, and a little bit of fall. The basil is still quite nice, and should provide enough for a small batch of pesto.

Conveniently, you are also receiving garlic this week. Please, don't store your basil in the fridge! Keep it in a jar of water on the counter, like a beautiful and aromatic bouquet of flowers

Recipe - Basil Pesto

(I honestly believe that the proportions of ingredients in a pesto recipe can vary tremendously and still be delicious. You can also omit the cheese and nuts, place dollops of the simple pesto on a cookie sheet and freeze for future use. A nugget of pureed basil, oil, and garlic makes any wintertime soup or pasta sauce superb.)

1 cup (packed) basil leaves
2 cloves garlic
1/2 cup toasted pine nuts or walnuts
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
¼ cup olive oil

Blend basil, pine nuts and Parmesan cheese in food processor until almost smooth. With machine running, gradually add olive oil; process until well blended. Season pesto to taste with salt and pepper.

Makes about 2 cups, or 4-6 pasta servings

Fennel – One of my favorite vegetables, and in fact, one of the reasons we started growing vegetables in the first place. I love to eat fennel raw, sliced thin and dressed with good olive oil and a little salt.

Recipe – Carrots and fennel in brown butter

Cut enough carrots to fill the bottom of a shallow pan (cast iron works best) into irregularly-shaped 1-inch pieces (the more sides, the more opportunities for browning). Slice fennel cross-wise (across the visible parallel veins) into thin slices. Put 3 tablespoons of butter in the pan over medium heat until the butter turns brown and begins bubbling. Add the carrots and fennel, toss to coat with the butter, and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the cut edges of the carrots turn brown and caramelized. If you have some mint in your garden, chop up a few leaves and add them at the end. Yum!