

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for October 4th & 5th

1 bunch red beets	
1 bunch collard greens	
1 head beautiful red cabbage	
¼# arugula	
1 bulb fennel	
½# assorted tomatoes	
1 or 2 zucchini	
1 or 2 eggplant	
2 sweet peppers (red, green, or yellow)	
2-3 little cipollini onions	
1 little head garlic	
1 basil plant	

Large box additions

1 or 2 cucumbers
1 head summer crisp lettuce
extra zucchini

Local Roots Farm News

Last taste of summer?

The thing about some of these “summer” vegetables is that they sometimes are at their best in the heart of the fall. Our pepper plants are loaded with lovely fruits right now, slowly maturing from green to bright red. Every week we wonder “Should we wait another week and see if more of them ripen?” Well, this week you are receiving a mix of red, red-ish, and green peppers. They’re all good for eating or cooking, no matter what color. We’re also harvesting the last of our tomatoes. Once the damp and cool weather sets in, the plants quickly get diseased. We are in major sauce making mode right now, trying to make the most of the semi-usable tomatoes that have started to crack and grow black spots.

Now it’s time to pull the sprawling tomato vines out of the greenhouses and get the houses ready for winter. We built our tomato greenhouses in February and March of this year on a site that was thick with grass sod. We rented a mechanical sod cutter to remove the top couple inches of grass and grass roots, but once we had the ground tilled and the tomatoes plants planted we still ended up with a lot of grass coming up in the greenhouses. Now we’ll do a thorough weeding and get the soil in good shape for next year’s tomato crop.

Yes, it’s cleanup time on the farm. We’re finishing off whole beds of cabbage, broccoli, carrots, beets and lettuce and quickly turning them under and sowing cover crops. We’ve gathered all the irrigation equipment and stowed it away. Most of our insect pests are gone for the year, so we’re pulling off the row cover that protects our mustard greens and turnips and trying to store it in a mouse-proof way. The farm becomes really beautiful at this time of year, as weedy, overgrown beds are mowed and planted with cover crops. All the remaining fall crops are lush, and show varied shades of green against a dark brown earth background. Every day the fields of recently seeded cover crops gradually become more visible; soft swaths of tender grass, clover, and pea shoots.

Now, just a few big jobs remain for this season: plant next year’s garlic; build a farm pad to house our equipment during floods, clean up the greenhouses. Besides that, all we have to do now is harvest the rest of our fall bounty and send it to you!

Ideas and info for this week’s produce

Basil plant – We were looking at the basil this week, trying to decide whether it had enough good shoots left to make bunches for the CSA, and instead we decided to just pull up individual plants and send them home for you to take care of. If you leave your basil in a jar of water in a window that gets a little “sun” (or at least some daylight), you should be able to get a couple weeks of fresh leaves. If your plant begins to form flowers, just pinch them off. That will encourage more new leaves to form.

Eggplant, Peppers, Zucchini, Onion, Tomato –

Herein you have all the essential ingredients for ratatouille. There are lots of variations on how to prepare this Provencal summer stew, but the simplest one I know of is my favorite.

Sort-of Recipe - Easy Ratatouille

Cut all the above-mentioned veggies into equal size chunks and place in a pot with a lid. Add basil, bay leaf, rosemary if you have it, crushed garlic, plenty of olive oil, salt, pepper, and about a cup of red wine. You might want to add a can of crushed or diced tomatoes. Stir to make sure all the veggies are thoroughly coated with the olive oil and wine, then cover and cook on medium-low heat until the vegetables are tender but not squishy. Don’t stir the pot while the vegetables are cooking, as this will make them mushy. As long as there is a decent amount of moisture in the stew, all the veggies will cook evenly.

I like to eat this with polenta and grated cheese.

Red Cabbage - In Amanda Hesser’s lovely memoir/cookbook “The Cook and the Gardener” she includes a recipe for red cabbage braised in red wine. I wasn’t able to track down this exact recipe, but I linked to a couple similar looking recipes in today’s email. One of them also includes beets.

Arugula & Fennel – The season for green salad is winding down. We have one more crop of lettuce growing very slowly in our field, which we may get the chance to harvest before the end of the CSA – or it might all die in the first frost. We’ll see. However, there are lots of lovely lettuce alternatives for fresh fall salads, including cabbage, but also fennel and arugula. I love both these with a very simple dressing of good olive oil and a pinch of salt. Thinly sliced fennel and arugula would be great together.