

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for July 24th & 25th

1 bunch Lacinato kale
1 bunch turnips
½# salad greens
1 bunch carrots
½# shelling peas
1 beautiful head of broccoli
1 green cabbage

Large box additions

1 bunch spinach
2 or 3 spring leeks
1 bunch sage

Next week's produce (we think): new potatoes for real! – beets – zucchini – sugar snap peas (maybe) – arugula - lettuce – parsley

Local Roots Farm News

Peas, and the picking of them

There are a few crops that we grow on our farm solely to provide diversity in our CSA boxes. These crops include peppers, eggplant, onions, green beans, and peas. We love to eat all these things, but when it comes to growing and harvesting them, they are not profitable for us. Peppers and eggplant require extra warmth, so we grow them in greenhouses, which requires a lot of hand weeding and watering. They also need supplemental light and heat to get started in the spring, so we grow them in our miniature hothouse. Our good friends over on the east side of the state can produce these crops in abundance, just growing them out in the open field, and they bring a diverse mix of beautiful peppers and eggplant to market. It would be silly of us to try to compete with them at the farmers market, especially because our crops ripen at the point of the year when the market price is usually at its lowest. So we just grow a couple hundred peppers and eggplants – enough to put in your boxes a few times in August and September.

When it comes to peas, the main cost is in time. Peas need support from trellises to grow properly, so we spend a whole lot of time in the late spring pounding in posts and installing plastic mesh trellising. Then, we laboriously hunt and pick peas for the few glorious weeks when they are at their perfect peak. Then, we go through the whole de-trellising process, carefully winding up the trellis, and pulling out dozens of embedded fence posts. For the couple hundred pounds of peas we harvest each season, we probably spend over 50 hours planting, tending, and harvesting them.

We're always examining our farming practices, trying to find the right balance between efficiency and diversity. We know we don't want to be a monocrop broccoli farm, even though we can sure grow some great broccoli! But we also know that we can't have too many money-losing crops in the mix without going out of business. We're not planning on phasing peas or eggplant out of our crop mix any time soon – or ever. But we also don't plan to expand production on these labor-intensive items. We sometimes talk about offering peas and other slow-picking items as u-pick to our CSA members... what do you think?

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Broccoli – David and Bonnie, intrepid CSA members, came out for our weeding party on Saturday and brought awesome broccoli fritters for dinner. Recipe is in the email.

Shelling Peas – These are the kind that you open up and eat the peas inside. If you plan to eat them fresh, I recommend doing so as soon as possible. Peas start to lose their sweetness as soon as they are picked. For cooking purposes, they have a somewhat longer shelf life. Store them in the fridge.

No zucchini - Zucchini plants will pump out a nice plump zucchini or two every day, as long as the sun shines and the bees pollinate the flowers. Last week's very welcome rain had the detrimental effect of briefly pausing our zucchini production... but should be back in full effect next week.

Cabbage - Cabbage is such a wonderfully versatile vegetable. This variety is great for slaw, sauerkraut, or regular old cooking.

Recipe – Melty green cabbage

- Quarter, core, and slice cabbage into thin ribbons across the grain.
- Slice a cooking onion the same way.
- Place in a wide skillet or large saucepan. Add a chunk of butter and a cup of water.
- Cook on medium heat until cabbage and onion are very soft. Don't let the water cook off – you don't want the cabbage to brown.
- Season with salt to taste. Yum.

Carrots – I doubt you need much help figuring out how to use your carrots. If you get tired of eating them fresh, try roasting them together with turnips, sautéing in browned butter, or adding to a simple cabbage soup.

Kale – Our favorite vegetable. In case you missed this super easy recipe the first week, here is our standard kale preparation.

Recipe - Can't Fail Kale

- Strip kale leaves from stems.
- Heat olive oil on medium heat in a large frying pan and some chopped garlic.
- Add chopped leaves, and a little water. Stir, and cook for another 10 minutes. Taste the leaves, and continue to cook until they reach your desired tenderness. If the pan seems dry, add more water.
- Add a pinch of salt and pepper or red chili flakes.