

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for July 26th & 27th

1 bunch Rainbow chard
1 bunch carrots
1 bunch parsley
2 big Walla Walla onions
1 head lettuce (red butter or red oakleaf)
½# salad greens
½# shelling peas
1 or 2 zucchini
1½# purple potatoes

Large box additions

¼ # arugula
1 tomato
½# broccoli

Local Roots Farm News

Potatoes – I think potatoes are one of the most fun crops to grow. In late March, we hand planted 1560 row feet of seed potatoes in furrows that we created with our little red tractor. Despite the very cold April, they eventually did sprout, and soon we were practicing using our new cultivating tools to keep the potato beds sort-of weed free. Eventually the vines grew tall enough that we needed to start hilling them up. Potatoes grow a number of tall branches that originate with the piece of “seed” potato planted in the soil. As the branches grow, they form underground runners that produce the potato tubers along their length. The more you can “hill up” the plants, the more potatoes will form. Hilling is also important to keep the young potatoes protected from sunlight, which turns their skin green.

This year, our potatoes have grown like gangbusters. I think it’s the high level of organic material in our soil, which has retained plenty of moisture and provided lots of nutrients for the plants. In mid June, the plants begin to flower, each variety featuring a blossom that matches the color of the potatoes below: white, lavender, and pale rose this year. When the flowers begin to fade and the vines die back, it’s time to start digging! Many of the tubers we’ve dug up so far this year have been pretty large, also probably due to the high moisture levels in the soil. We’ve just begun to harvest our purple potatoes, a new variety called “Purple Majesty”, and they are super purple! Because we are harvesting them before the vines have completely dried out, these are considered “new” potatoes. This simply means that the tubers have not formed a tough protective skin, and are high in sugar. However, they don’t have as long a storage life as potatoes that are allowed to spend some extra time underground before harvest in late summer. Store your potatoes in a paper bag (not plastic!!) in a dark and cool spot. Use within a couple weeks.

Peas – Like so many things, peas were late this year. We planted them at the normal time, in late March, but the April cold meant that the plants grew slowly and didn’t start producing peas until July. Now, seemingly overnight, they’ve started making peas faster than we can keep up. The pods size up and then rapidly get tough and starchy. I think late July, cool or not, is just not ideal for delicious peas. We’re harvesting shelling peas one more time for you all today, but they are not the delicate morsels that I wish they were. Taste test them as you shell the pods, and discard any that are huge and woody. Then, blanch in boiling water until bright green, then add to pasta, risotto, or potato salad. We hope to get one more harvest from our Sugarsnap peas, but no promises... it’s supposed to be warm this week!

Ideas and info for this week’s produce

Carrots – We don’t think most of you will mind getting carrots several weeks in a row. This week’s variety is Scarlet Nantes, an heirloom, open-pollinated variety that is sweet and carrot-y without being super sugary.

Potatoes, chard, and onions - These veggies can be combined in a two-pot dish that is perfect for this dreary weather.

Recipe – Local Roots Pizzoccheri

- Roughly chop an onion or two, and begin to sauté on medium heat in a generous amount of olive oil.
- Cut potatoes into small to medium dice, and add to sauté pan.
- Separate stems and leaves of chard, chop stems into ½” sections and add to pan once potatoes have begun to soften. At any point, you can add water to keep the veggies from sticking to the pan. The ultimate consistency should include recognizable chunks of potato in a thick sauce of potato and chard mush.
- Once veggies are soft, bring a pot of water to boil, and cook penne or other short pasta (for this dish, I like whole wheat pasta).
- Once everything is cooked, mix pasta and vegetables together, along with a cup or two of grated cheese. We like pepper jack, but cheddar or other semi-soft cheese would be great too.

Shelling peas – As I mentioned over on the left, these peas may be a bit tough and will be best cooked rather than eaten raw. Cook in boiling water until bright green and tender, drain, and then you can use as you would frozen peas.

Try a puree of cooked peas, sautéed sweet onion, mint, and a little ricotta as a topping for toast or pasta. You could also sauté peas together with diced carrots and zucchini for a quick side dish.

Parsley – I’m including a link to an epicurious recipe for a quick caper and parsley sauce that would be delicious on roasted potatoes or any grilled meat or vegetable. Chopped parsley makes any dish more tasty and fancy. Just ask Julia Child.