

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for July 31st & August 1st

1 bunch golden beets
1 bunch Pink Beauty radishes
2# new red potatoes
1 bunch baby bok choy
1 bunch dill
1 head red butter lettuce
1 bunch arugula
1 zucchini
1 bunch Rainbow chard

Large box additions

1 bunch curly kale
1 bunch parsley
1# shelling peas

Next week's produce (we think): carrots – broccoli (maybe) – kale – leeks – more potatoes - parsley – lettuce – turnips

Local Roots Farm News

Potatoes!

I never fail to get excited about the first potatoes of the year. It seems like a near miracle that we plant a small chunk of a potato in the cold April soil, and by July it has turned into a huge plant, hiding two or three pounds of beautiful new potatoes in its roots. I have fond childhood memories of digging potatoes with my grandparents... it's probably one of the reasons I ended up as a farmer. All potatoes are delicious, but the first "new" potatoes, those that we dig before the plants' foliage has died back, are the best of all. Their skin is extremely delicate, not having "cured" for storage, and the flesh of the potato is tender and truly sweet. Because we don't want to damage their skin, we don't wash these new potatoes, so they're a little dusty.

Seed saving

We're just beginning to dabble in the complex art of seed saving and plant selection. Brady, who has been working on the farm with us since 2010, has spearheaded our seed saving projects, and has a few small plots of his own on the farm this year, where he's growing out lettuce, quinoa, phacelia, and other exotics. Partly these projects are for fun and learning, but there are some very good reasons for saving our own seed. Our favorite variety of fennel 'Perfection', which we can only get from one source, has been germinating very poorly this year. The grower told us that they have had a seed crop failure for three years in a row, so they seed they are selling is many years old, and old seed doesn't germinate well. So this year we are attempting to save our own seed. It's a tricky proposition, because even the earliest fennel planting we can achieve won't produce seed until sometime in September, when we usually have periodic rain. For seed to ripen and dry properly it needs dry weather, so we'll just see whether we get lucky with the weather. We'll let you know how it turns out!

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Potatoes – Oh my, these are delicious. Steam or boil until tender, dab with butter, and sprinkle some minced dill over.

We've also been enjoying potato salad. Many of today's veggies would go well in a potato-based salad: ribbons of arugula, slices of radish, or chunks of grilled zucchini.

Dill – It's good food season in the Pacific Northwest. Have a dill-y feast, with fresh salmon and some dill-topped new potatoes. Grill some zucchini too.

Rainbow chard – Beets and chard are in fact the same exact species: *Beta vulgaris*. Beets have been selected by seed producers, over the centuries, to produce a smooth textured sweet root, while chard has been selected for large tender leaves. Underground, a chard plant also grows a large roundish root, but although sweet, it is extremely fibrous and inedible. If you are cooking for a crowd any evening this week, you can combine chard and beet greens together to make a dish that will serve 4-6 people.

Recipe – Melty Beta Greens

- Separate chard and/or beet stems from the leafy green parts.
- Cut stems into very small pieces and place in a sauté pan with a lid.
- Add plenty of olive oil and a little water. Cook on medium low heat for 10-15 minutes. Add more water if the pan starts to dry out.
- When stems have softened, add the greens – roughly or finely chopped.
- Continue cooking for as long as possible. Add more oil and/or water if needed to achieve a consistency that is silky and not too watery.
- Salt and pepper to taste, and a little splash of vinegar if you like.

Golden beets - We call this variety "the gentle beet". For those who find regular red beets too earthy, or who don't like the side effects of the dark red color on their kitchen (or the next day), golden beets avoid all those problems. Beet greens are always good eating, but these are especially nice.

How to cook it – Basic boiled beets

- Trim greens from roots, leaving a little stump on.
- Scrub any visible dirt.
- Place whole beets in pot of cold water.
- Boil until you can poke them easily with a fork (15-20 minutes, depending on size of beet).
- When tender, drain, and run beets under cold water. Skin will easily slip off with a little rubbing.
- Now you have cooked beets, ready to eat. You can save them in a covered dish in the fridge for up to a week.

Recipe – Beet and arugula salad with goat cheese

Honestly, this is not a recipe. Just combine arugula, cooked beet (cubed) and any kind of soft cheese. You can't go wrong. Candied walnuts are nice too.