

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for August 26th

1 bunch red beets
1 bunch purple carrots
1 bunch collards
½# tomatoes
½# green beans
1 head red leaf lettuce
1.5# blue potatoes
3 cucumbers
1 head garlic
1 head fennel
basil

Large box additions

1 bunch arugula
1# broccoli

Next week's produce (we think): carrots — savoy cabbage — potatoes — kale — salad greens — zucchini — green beans

Local Roots Farm News

Summer ups and downs: We have hit a lull in our onslaught of tomato production. Warm weather in May and June brought on a very heavy early fruit set, the results of which you got to enjoy last week. Then, the super hot weather in July caused the next “set” of blossoms to drop off the plants, so we have a production gap. We are hopeful that the plants will continue to be healthy and ripen a last flush of September tomatoes, but it seems the days of epic tomato are behind us...at least for this year. You are getting a mix of tomatoes this week, including (for some boxes) a nice purple cherry tomato that we accidentally planted more of than we meant to!

Another good/bad situation on the farm is our basil crop. Last year, basil crops on farms all over the valley were hit hard with downy mildew, a fungus that coats the bottoms of basil leaves with a fine coating of black fuzz. We debated whether to plant basil at all this year. Apparently, once the mildew is present in an area it's there for good ☹️ We went ahead and planted a smaller crop than normal this spring, and it was looking pretty good as of last week... but when we went to pick it this morning to add to the CSA boxes we found the mold to be more prevalent than we thought. Still, our valiant crew managed to get all 235 bunches that we needed... just barely. If you see a hint of it on any of your basil, it's nothing to be concerned about. It looks bad and we don't like it, but it won't hurt you.

One ALL GOOD situation this year is our garlic crop. After a different fungal disease damaged our 2013 garlic crop, we were worried about this year's plants, but we've managed to harvest our best looking garlic ever! We are giving one medium size head this week to pair with your basil for pesto making, and you should expect more of this lovely garlic throughout the rest of the season.

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Purple Carrots – The theme for this week is anthocyanins. These are the compounds that make red, purple, and blue vegetables, and you are getting a whole bunch of them in today's box. The jury is still out as to whether there really are health benefits to eating these colorful compounds, but if nothing else they are interesting to cook and eat! Purple carrots are a fun one. This variety is called Purple Haze, and it's the best tasting purple carrot of many different ones that we have grown over the years. It's a bit less sweet than our old orange standby, Nelson, but is still pretty good for eating fresh. Try it with your fennel for this farm favorite recipe:

Recipe – Carrots and Fennel in Brown Butter

- Slice carrots diagonally into thin oval-y shapes. Slice fennel cross-wise to form thin C-shapes.
- Heat a couple tablespoons of butter in a pan until lightly browned, then add the carrots and fennel.
- Once the butter has browned, you can add a little oil or additional butter so there's enough to coat the veggies.
- Cook carrots and fennel, stirring frequently, until carrots and thoroughly cooked and the thin edges begin to brown. I think this dish smells like waffle cones being made.... If you have fresh mint, it would be nice to add it at the last minute.

Basil – As I mentioned, this is the last hurrah for basil on our farm this year. I'll have to go out there this evening and scrounge up some last leaves to make a batch of pesto for the freezer. A simple way to freeze basil for winter use is to make a pesto base: chop basil, garlic, salt, and a little oil in a food processor. Spoon dollops onto a cookie sheet (or ice cube tray) and freeze. When you are ready to cook with it, you can add more oil, nuts, and cheese for a traditional pesto sauce, use the frozen puree as a topping for bean soup, or throw into a batch of tomato sauce.

Collards – Collards, for some reason, have a reputation for needing a lot of cooking. This is just not so. You can cook collards just like kale, for as little or long a time as you like. We are wide-eyed at the size of some of the leaves on our collar plants right now... they are huge! To prepare, just strip the leaf from the stem, stack the leaves flat together, roll up, and slice into ribbons or bits. Saute with some of today's lovely juicy garlic!

Fennel – A polarizing vegetable. Many people love fennel, but some of you really don't like it. Nonetheless, here it is. We are among the fennel-lovers of the world, and our favorite way to eat it is thinly sliced (across the grain, like celery) and drizzled with nothing but olive oil and salt. It's also a lovely accompaniment to cold cooked beets in a simple salad.