

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for September 16th

1 bunch green chard 'Beitole'
1 green or 2 yellow cucumbers
½# tomatoes
1 beautiful head of cauliflower
1 bunch cilantro
2 sweet red or yellow peppers
1 head Treviso radicchio
1 head celery
1.5# Yellow Finn potatoes

Large box additions

1 bunch kale
1 bunch sprouting broccoli
wrinkly green sweet peppers

Next week's produce (we think): carrots – beets – potatoes – kale – red cabbage – peppers – parsley – maybe squash (!) – maybe broccoli

Local Roots Farm News

Seasonal transitions – The weirdness of late summer continues this week. We have some lovely fall things to share with you, as well as the last odds and ends of summer produce. A lot of today's produce is also quite compact, making the boxes heavy, but not full in appearance... fear not! There's a lot of food to eat in there!

We had a couple very light frost events in a few isolated spots here and there on the farm last week. Elsewhere in our valley a farmer had his whole squash field hit by frost! Thankfully ours are still mostly unscathed, so our winter squash can continue to grow and ripen for a couple more weeks. Some of our slower-growing varieties really need these sunny September days to reach peak deliciousness.

Our zucchini and cucumber plants have really hit the late summer doldrums. With such a hot and sunny summer, the plants pumped out a huge amount of fruit in July and August, and now they are just tuckered out. We have a small offering of cucumbers today, but it is likely the last time you will see them this year. We have a real struggle with how much zucchini and cucumbers to grow! In order to have enough freshly-picked, reasonably-sized zucchini to include in the CSA each week, it seems we have to grow many more plants than we have an outlet for the remainder of the week. One modification we are planning for next year is to set one of our walk-in refrigerator to 50°, which is the optimal storage temperature for zukes, cukes, and tomatoes. This should allow us to pick zucchini throughout the week and hold it in good condition for the CSA... Zucchini overload can definitely be a real thing, but this year we wished we had just a bit more for you.

Peppers! - We gave one of our 30'x90' greenhouses a break from tomatoes this year, and planted peppers instead... 800 plants' worth! Turns out, our timing was great: this exceptionally warm summer has brought forth a bountiful crop of lovely sweet peppers. We should have enough to supply at least a few weeks of the CSA, and in the future we will explore more pepper possibilities.

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Cauliflower – Oh cauliflower, we love you so. Every year we are getting a little better at growing this finicky crop. We've found the best results from plantings that mature in September or October, and no longer engage in the frustrating pursuit of the summer cauliflower. This year, we've adopted the practice of folding the outside leaves over to protect the developing heads from exposure to the sun. It was a pretty easy step to add to the growing process, and helps keep the heads bright white and tender. We are very happy with this crop of cauliflower, and there's at least one more round of very happy looking plants yet to come.

Cauliflower is a super versatile vegetable, great steamed, roasted, blanched, pan-fried, or raw. It will pair well with cilantro, peppers, or your beautiful Treviso radicchio... recipes in email!

Cilantro – A little cilantro goes a long way, so if you don't think you'll use up this whole bunch, I highly recommend this simple cilantro sauce that you can freeze in ice cube trays and save in a zip-lock bag for use in the winter. It's great with bean dishes or steak!

Recipe – Cilantro Garlic Sauce

- 1 medium garlic clove
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne

Mince garlic and mash to a paste with salt. Transfer to a blender and add remaining sauce ingredients, then blend until smooth.

Treviso radicchio – This svelte red head is our farm's signature vegetable. We absolutely love it and sell a whole lot of it to restaurants, but it appears very rarely in your CSA boxes. It's a member of the chicory family, like escarole, which means it is unquestionably bitter... but don't be afraid! Bitter greens are high in vitamins and are great for your digestion. I would add that a love of bitter greens is an acquired taste, like coffee, that indicates a certain level of sophistication. Worth cultivating!

Bitters-lovers can enjoy raw radicchio as a salad, but if you are looking to ease into the chicory culinary experience, try mixing with other greens in a braise or grilling. I'll include several great recipes that will help you cook with your radicchio in today's email. If nothing else, you must admit it is beautiful!