

# Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

## Box Contents for June 17<sup>th</sup>

1 bunch white salad turnips  
1 bunch Rainbow chard  
1 bunch Red Russian kale  
1 head 'Pirat' red butter lettuce  
1 head 'Samantha' oakleaf lettuce  
1 bunch baby bok choy  
1 bunch garlic scapes  
1 bunch purple kohlrabi

Next week's produce (we think): green onions – more chard – salad greens – lettuce – napa cabbage – radishes – mustard greens

## Large box additions

½# Sugarsnap peas  
1 bunch collard greens

## Local Roots Farm News

When I sit down to write this newsletter each week, I like to go back and read what I wrote about at the same time in past years. This week we are reliving the weather of 2013. In both last year and this we had several weeks of dry weather, which was beginning to cause both plants and farmers to get a little stressed, followed by an ample dose of rain right around mid-month. Once again, we could not be happier about this free irrigation. We operate the farm with a pretty scanty amount of supplemental irrigation, relying heavily on rainfall and stored soil moisture. In most cases, this works out well. We give each plant a modest amount of water when we put it in the ground, and then we usually do not water again. This forces our crops to put down deep root systems that seek out the naturally available water lower down in the soil. Anecdotally, we think this results in denser, more flavorful vegetables. Visitors to our farm always comment on the vibrant colors of our Rainbow chard. Last summer we had a visit from a group of seed company representatives, and they concurred with our theory that our minimal water use was probably responsible for the bright colors in the chard field.

Of course, there is a limit to the benefits of this approach. We grow some crops that need a lot of water to thrive, some of which naturally have fine, shallow root systems. Lettuce readily shows stress from lack of water, and onions just stop growing when the soil gets dry. Kale is another interesting example: in response to dryness, most plants grow more slowly. Often we find this results in compact, dense, and flavorful vegetables, but when insect pests strike it makes it harder for the plants to "out-grow" the damage to their leaves. Such is the case with our kale crop this year. Later this year I'll write more about the cat-and-mouse game that we have been playing with an assortment of crop pests (they're the cat, we are the mouse), but suffice it to say that faster growing, heavily irrigated plants fare better against pests.

The short version of all this is that we are delighted by this June gloom. The soil is full of water and our plants are happy heading into another bout of sunny weather later this week. This combo should give a big boost to our squash, potato, carrot, and pea crops, and we are looking forward to adding some new things to the CSA lineup by the start of July.

Happy eating! Siri, and the Local Roots Farm Crew

## Ideas and info for this week's produce

**Lettuce** – For some of you, the sweet and tender lettuce of June is one of the highlights of the CSA season. For others, lettuce is a chore – so much washing and drying, just for some boring leaves. I am in the first camp. Lettuce might be the vegetable that I love the most. I crave it in the winter, and almost never get my fill in the spring and summer. Jason and I (with our boundless lettuce supply) will regularly eat three heads a night in our dinner salad. We usually just use one variety and toss it with our homemade salad dressing: olive oil, balsamic vinegar, salt, pepper, and one or more of the following: Dijon mustard, minced shallot, bruised garlic clove (take it out before serving the salad), and dried basil. I put all these ingredients in a glass jar and shake until emulsified. It's easy to overdo the vinegar – a 3:1 oil to vinegar ratio is about right.

This weekend I made a quick batch of tabouli with the first smidgen of parsley (coming soon to a CSA box near you). After a well-timed visit to Pacific Food Importers for bulk olives and feta cheese, we combined it with lettuce for two tasty snacks: spoonfuls of tabouli inside butter lettuce leaves, topped with a sliver of feta, and a salad of chopped lettuce mixed together with tabouli and olives. This would work very well with any cold grain salad: quinoa, cous cous, or even leftover lentils.

**Kohlrabi** – I think kohlrabi is the reason for the cliché that CSA boxes are full of weird stuff that you've never heard of before and, implied, that you won't like. So sad. It's true that kohlrabi is pretty strange looking, and maybe you have not eaten it before, but I'm willing to bet that you *will* like it. Kohlrabi is a member of the cabbage family, and we like to describe it as a cross between a cabbage and an apple. It's sweet and juicy, with a mild cabbage flavor. Like cabbage, kohlrabi can be eaten raw or cooked. I'll include a couple kohlrabi recipes in today's email. **The purple kohlrabi skin is lovely, but you should peel before eating.**

**Garlic Scapes** – As I described last week, these flowering stalks of garlic have garlic flavor without the pungency of real garlic. We've just been leaving a little heap of these on our counter and adding it to almost everything we cook: sautéed with kale, roasted with broccoli, mixed with carrot and celery to form a base for bean soup. They don't need to be refrigerated, and just one or two make a nice addition.

**Baby Bok Choi** – We got some good reviews of the stir fry recipe I gave last week. If you haven't tried it (or even if you have), this week's turnips, bok choy, kohlrabi, and scapes would make a great combo. I'll paste last week's recipe into the body of today's email.