

# Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

## Box Contents for July 15<sup>th</sup>

1 bunch 'Nelson' carrots  
1.5# new red potatoes  
½# green beans  
1 zucchini  
1 bunch Lacinato kale  
2 kohlrabi  
3 Duvall-a Walla onions  
1 bunch joi choi  
1 head escarole (NOT LETTUCE!)

Next week's produce (we think): carrots – swiss chard – zucchini – parsley – lettuce – salad greens – maybe beets and onions – turnips

## Large box additions

½# shelling peas  
extra zucchini  
parsley

## Local Roots Farm News

We farm in a very special place. The lower Snoqualmie river valley is a small but highly fertile floodplain, just a half hour away from the big city of Seattle. It has been farmed continuously since the early 1900s, transitioning from homesteads to family-run dairies to the amazing diversity of crops that are grown here today: mixed vegetables, intensive flower fields, beef, laying hens, berries, and hay for dairy cows. It is also home to a wonderful community of farmers and friends of farmers. One of the mainstays of our farming community is Sno-Valley Tilth. We meet every month for a potluck and meeting, sometimes to share information with each other and sometimes to hear a guest speaker. Last night's potluck took place here on our farm, and featured UW professor and author David Montgomery.

Dr. Montgomery is a geomorphologist, and he has written a great book, "Dirt, the Erosion of Civilizations," about how agricultural soils are formed by nature and (usually) destroyed by man's farming practices. I read his book many years ago, when we first started farming here, and was delighted to get to hear him speak in person. "Dirt" describes how floodplains, like ours, are the only places where civilizations have been able to sustain agriculture over the long run. The seasonal flooding we experience is, in fact, regenerative. The river brings silt and sand down from the mountains, and the floods stir it up from the river bottom and deposit it on our fields. Everywhere else on earth has soils that, when disturbed, erode and flow downstream. Soils, in naturally vegetated state, will grow at a rate of 1/100<sup>th</sup> of a millimeter a year. Once plowed, it can erode at a millimeter a year or more.

Soil is an underappreciated and precious resource and we are in the lucky possession of 80 acres of the best soil in the world. We take the stewardship of this resource very seriously! All of our farming practices revolve around a consideration of the long-term impacts of the soil, trying to carefully balance this with the short-term need for economic viability. I highly recommend "Dirt," as a primer on the fascinating interrelationship between geologic forces and human civilization.

## Ideas and info for this week's produce

This week's produce was chosen with the hot weather in mind. Most of the items in your box will shrug off the warmth, while others might appear a bit wilted but will not decline in eating quality (kale, escarole, joi choi)

**Escarole** – This one is always a little tricky. Escarole masquerades as lettuce, but it is not necessarily the best for salad. It is in the lettuce family, but is in fact a chicory, which means it has a hardier leaf and is a bit bitter – some of you will enjoy it raw, others will find it unpalatable – this is a matter of personal taste!

I like to use it thusly: chop the head in half to separate the darker green top part from the lighter green base. The light green bottom/inner leaves are a lovely salad if you are partial to slightly bitter flavors. We often make a salad with escarole, candied walnuts, and bacon. The top parts of the leaves make a lovely cooking green. Just sauté or simmer in a bit of water. They are also a wonderful last-minute addition to chicken (or vegetable) soup.

**Duvall-a Walla Onions** – Credit due to Wayne Parker for coining the name! Our onions had a bit of a rough spring. After getting off to a very cold start in February, when we lost a lot of seedlings in our unheated greenhouse, they looked great when we planted them in the ground. Then we had a bout with a terrible soil-dwelling pest called wireworm, which devastated our leek and onion patch in April and May. We lost a large percentage of our seedlings, and those that survived are a little stunted. Still, here they are, the delicious sweet onions of early summer. These really are special onions – you can grill them whole with just a splash of oil and eat 'em up. Also great as raw or lightly cooked addition to stir-fry or salad dishes. They are a natural accompaniment to today's zucchini, green bean, and potatoes. In fact, you could combine all these items for a warm or cool dish – I'll put some recipe ideas in today's email. The greens are edible and delicious!

**Lacinato Kale** – This is our favorite kale, and it also has had a tough go of it this spring/summer due to warmer than normal weather and the attendant insect pests. We are glad to finally have enough to put in the boxes this week! Amazingly, our "fall" crop of kale is already in the ground and growing like gangbusters, so we will have a fresh patch to pick from fairly soon.

## Notes on storage

Fridge: kale, joi choi, escarole, carrots, onions, kohlrabi  
Countertop: zucchini, beans (use both within 2 days for best eating quality)

Potatoes: leave them in the bag, light will cause greening.  
Store in a cool dark place, like a lower kitchen cabinet.