

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for July 29th

1 bunch 'Nelson' carrots
1 bunch arugula
1 bunch red radishes
1 bunch red Russian kale
2 zucchini
1 bunch green onions
1.5# Yellow Finn potatoes
Dill flowers
1 head celery
1 head red oakleaf lettuce

Next week's produce (we think): beets – potatoes – green beans – tomatoes – cucumbers – salad greens – carrots – radicchio – broccoli

Large box additions

Broccoli
Red beets
Tomato!

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Celery – I love celery, and find it to have a flavor that is both essential and that has no substitute. "Real" celery farms use a huge amount of water to get the big, juicy (read: watery) heads of celery that you can buy at the grocery store. Our celery is a little different... it's got a stronger flavor and a denser texture, but is neither bitter nor stringy. You can use a little less of it in a recipe and still get plenty of good celery flavor. Last winter we found a celery salad recipe with lemon and anchovies that we ate at least once a week. These days, we are making potato salad all the time, and with today's potatoes, celery, dill, and green onions you have all the most important ingredients to do the same.

Yellow Finn potatoes - Of all the potatoes we grow, this is my personal favorite. It reminds me of summer days spent with my family at a piece of farm property we had in rural Kitsap County. Digging fresh potatoes and picking string beans for dinner may be at the root of my inexorable path to vegetable farming. I still find that fresh-dug potatoes and green beans are my favorite things to eat in midsummer. Yellow Finns are genuinely sweet, especially when they are fresh. Although their texture is more mealy than some others, (similar to a russet) they will still hold up well as a salad potato... just be careful not to overcook them.

Red Russian Kale – America's sweetheart these days is kale, and this particular variety is tender and quick cooking, and has sweet and juicy stems. Here's the most basic recipe, which is a stalwart of our family's dinner table:

Recipe - Can't Fail Kale

- Strip kale leaves from stems. If you want to include them, chop stems into small bits
- Heat olive oil on medium heat in a large frying pan, and add some chopped garlic and kale stems if you are using them. If using stems, add a little water and cook for about 10 minutes. If not, proceed to next step
- Add chopped leaves. Stir, and cook for another 10 minutes. Taste the leaves, and continue to cook until they reach your desired tenderness. If the pan seems dry, add more water.
- Add a pinch of salt and pepper or red chili flakes.

Dill Flowers – Soon these flowers will become green dill seeds, and will appear in your box along with some cucumbers, perfect for refrigerator pickles. Today, the undeveloped seeds and beautiful yellow flower pollen are a good substitute for dill leaves. Leave them in a jar of water on the counter and add a little to potatoes, salad, or sautéed veggies. Yum!

Local Roots Farm News

Rain! When I see rain on the long-term forecast in July, I always assume that it's a mistake. Such was the case last week, when the probability of precipitation for Wednesday started out at 30% when I looked at the forecast on Saturday, slowly increased, and finally reached the magic 100% on Tuesday mid-day. Even so, we kept our irrigation running overnight on Tuesday, because at this time of year, water can't hurt.

By the end of two-day rain event, we had received over an inch of rain. Coming at this time of year, and followed by this week's abundant sunshine, the rain is an enormous blessing. We have the water supply to deliver about 6,000 gallons a day to our field, and we have to be very careful and selective about where we use that water, focusing primarily on each day's seedling transplants and direct-sown seeds. The inch of rain that fell on our 16 acres of vegetable fields adds up to over 400,000 gallons. Suffice it to say that we are very pleased.

We are now in what is typically the driest period of the year here, and although we often get a nice soaking rain near the end of August, we will continue to assume that no precipitation will be coming our way for the next month or more. Within a couple weeks almost all our transplanted crops will be in the ground, and our water supply will be freed up to give supplemental water to things like kale and chard, which need it to keep up a steady production of leaves, and lettuce, which can easily get stressed by the August heat. Water... it's very important!

Welcome, new members! We have quite a few new people joining the CSA this week, although we still have the van space and produce supply to take more. I thought this would be a good time to mention that our website has an archive of previous years' CSA newsletters. If you are looking for more recipe ideas, or want to relive the weather-related dramas of years past, go check it out! This year's newsletters will be added soon.