

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for July 1st

1 bunch 'Nelson' carrots
1 head red romaine lettuce
1 head red butter lettuce
1 bunch arugula
1 head fresh garlic
½# Sugarsnap peas
1 bunch sweet 'Hakurei' turnips
1 head green cabbage
1 bunch Red Russian kale

Large box additions

Extra head garlic
Fennel
Mint

Next week's produce (we think): Rainbow chard – kohlrabi – more carrots – green onions – fennel – parsley – salad greens

Local Roots Farm News

Yowza! It's midday on Tuesday and the temperature outside is rising fast. The forecast calls for low 90s today, and mid 80s tomorrow, but luckily it's supposed to cool off by the end of the week. Plants like it to be warm and sunny, but anything over 80 is really unnecessary... no thanks! Tuesday is always a bit of a crazy day on the farm. We finish packing up the CSA boxes on Monday afternoon so they have all night to chill out in the fridge before making their trip into the city, but on Tuesday around noon we still have to pack two vans, carefully counting the boxes as we load. This takes place in the middle of our most complex harvest day of the week, when we pick and pack orders for about 20 restaurants. Restaurant orders come in on Monday, including a lot from chefs who send in their order after dinner service on Monday night. That means that we don't really know what our Tuesday work load will look like until Jason checks his email early Tuesday morning to make our daily pick sheet.

It's a pretty crazy time of year on the farm. We are in peak harvest mode, but still have a lot of planting to do for the next few weeks. Last week we seeded over 200 flats of fall radicchio, cabbage, fennel, lettuce, and broccoli: about 25,000 plants-worth. That means that about three weeks from now we'll have to plant all those seedlings in the ground... yikes! Every year we manage to get it all done somehow, but when you put all the numbers down in writing it looks pretty impressive.

There's other work to do as well: lots of time is spent these days moving hoses and drip tape around to water in newly planted seedlings and keep other crops growing well. At the bottom of the list, unfortunately, is weeding. Crops will still grow if they are surrounded by weeds, although they may not be as big, so weeding tends to get deferred when we are in crunch time for planting and watering. Still, we've done a better job than ever before on weed control this year. Jason has mastered the skill of tractor cultivation, mounting a variety of different weed-killing tools to the bar of our special cultivating tractor. When this is set up properly one person can weed an acre in about an hour... a task that would take days to do with a hoe. So, we juggle all these tasks at this time of year, watching the weather and the progress of our crops and recalibrating our to-do list every day. Plant, water, weed, harvest...repeat. All you have to do is cook and eat!

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Fresh Garlic – This is fully formed, but uncured, garlic. The plants will be ready to dig for drying and curing in another couple weeks, but we like to give you a chance to experience the delights of fresh, uncured garlic. It's just like regular garlic, but with much higher moisture content. Use it as you would normal garlic, but consider using it in a sautéed or roasted state – the sugary juicy garlic will caramelize and add a nice highlight to other vegetables.

You should store your garlic on the countertop. Although it hasn't been cured for long storage, it will be just fine for several weeks.

Arugula – We grow a lot of arugula, and we have quite the following for it at the farmers market. We say it's "the best" because it is flavorful and a bit spicy... unlike the bland California stuff you get at the grocery store. If it's a little too spicy for you, try using it with hot pasta or grain dishes as a last minute addition – lightly wilting arugula will take off some of the bite.

To prepare: cut the bunch just above the blue twist-tie and discard the stems. Arugula is very tender, and the part at and below the twist-ties may be a bit crushed. On the other hand, if you plan to cook or pesto-ize your arugula just untie the twist and use the whole thing.

Carrots - We go to great lengths to have carrots for you early on in the CSA season. As soon as there's a little break in the weather in late winter/early spring we seed in a big planting of carrots. It's a bit of a gamble – usually the soil is pretty wet and cold, and some percentage of the seeds never come up. We keep the beds covered with floating row cover to warm things up and encourage growth... which means weeds grow under there too. Carrot seedlings are little tiny things that are easily out-competed by weeds, so we uncover the beds from time to time and attempt to keep the weeds under control. The first carrot harvest of the year always feels like a turning point – some sweet and brightly colored roots to mark the beginning of the summer extravaganza. Usually potatoes, zucchini, and tomatoes will not be far behind. Hooray for carrots, the harbinger of good things!

Sugarsnap peas – A special treat. Eat the whole thing!