

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for August 16th

1# tomatoes
~3/4# broccoli
1 cucumber
1 bunch carrots
1 head Italian Red garlic
2# Red Gold potatoes
2 baby red romaine lettuce
1 bunch green chard 'Bietole'
1 big bunch basil

Large box additions

Golden beets
Red bell pepper
3/4# green beans

Next week's produce (we think): tomato – onions – tomatillos – cilantro – radishes – zucchini – red cabbage – lettuce – escarole

Local Roots Farm News

Farming in the Snoqualmie Valley – We farm in a very special place. The lower Snoqualmie river valley is a broad, flat valley that stretches from Snoqualmie Falls to Monroe, where it joins with the Skykomish to become the Snohomish (get it? Sno + omish = Snohomish, and eventually flows out to Puget Sound at Everett. Our river originates in the peaks around Snoqualmie pass, and every time we go skiing we say, “This snow will someday flow right past our farm!” The river shapes everything about our farm and how we manage the land. We experience inundating floods most winters, and rely on the river for irrigation water in the summer. It's a pretty amazing thing to be able to drive just an hour in one direction to reach the headwaters of our river and an hour in the other direction to see where it meets the saltwater.

It is only in the small part of the watershed, between Snoqualmie Falls and Monroe, that has the wide, deep, and fertile soils that we farm. That area is about 10,000 acres, and has been farmed for about 140 years. The land we live and farm on was first cleared and homesteaded in the 1880s, and we know a little bit about the other families who farmed here over the years. The first family was the Pickerings, whose descendants still own the farm across the road from us and are some of our best friends in the valley. The Peterson family owned the farm from sometime in the 1930s until about 1960, operating a small dairy. After that the Decker family dairy-ed here, and they build many of the barns we use today for our packing shed and refrigeration space. The traces of these prior farm families are all around us. We live in a house that was built in 1914, and have met the son of one of the Peterson girls, who grew up here in the 40s and 50s. The concrete floors of our barns have the names of some of the Decker family scratched into them, along with the year they were built. When we poured a new foundation for our house, which was elevated last summer to keep it from flooding, we put our own names and '2015' in the apron of the new entrance to our basement. I'm sure the families who kept dairy cows on this farm never would have imagined it as a diverse vegetable farm, and it is so interesting to think about what the farm will be in another 50 years. The flooding here means that it will always be an undeveloped landscape, and the incredible soils created by the flooding will remain an irreplaceable resource... but what will the farms of the future look like?

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Basil – **Please be sure not to store your basil in the fridge! It will keep best in a jar of water on your counter and may even grow some little roots!**

While waiting for our plants to get big enough to make generous bunches, they started to get a little flower-y. Basil flowers are pretty but don't use them for pesto as they are a bit bitter. You are receiving enough basil this week to make a batch of pesto. Here is a basic pesto recipe:

Recipe – Basil Pesto

4 cups fresh basil leaves ½ cup olive oil
1/3 cup pine nuts or walnuts 2 garlic cloves
¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1 teaspoon coarse kosher salt

Combine basil, nuts, olive oil, and garlic in a food processor or blender until well chopped. Add cheese and salt and blend until combined. Serve over pasta, salmon, or whatever else you want.

To freeze pesto, omit cheese, and add when ready to serve. Pesto can be frozen in ice cube trays for single-serving amounts.

Garlic – We've been holding off on giving garlic, waiting for the basil to come on so we can give you these important pesto ingredients together. Next week we are planning to put tomatillos and (I hope) cilantro in the CSA so you will have the chance to make some simple salsa verde if you save part of your garlic for next week.

Red Gold potatoes – These potatoes were the first we tried digging with our mechanical digger, and some of the skins got a little beat up during the process. Nothing to be concerned about, and the tender skin is actually an indication that these are still somewhat in the “new” potato category, so they will be quite sweet and tasty. Great for steaming/potato salad-ing.

Lettuce – I think summer is when we want to eat lettuce the most, so we take extra special care to keep our lettuce happy in the hot weather. This baby red romaine type is great for tomato sandwiches!

Order of eating:

Eat ASAP: broccoli, for most delicious flavor
Will store for 3-4 days: lettuce, tomatoes, chard
Will store for a week: cukes, potatoes, cucumber, garlic