

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for September 15th

1 amazing and sweet pointy cabbage
½# salad greens
½# tomato
1# green beans
tomatillos
sweet onions
zucchini
Hakurei turnips
1 bunch carrots
2 sweet peppers

Large box additions

1 head cauliflower
extra green beans

Next week's produce (we think): carrots – potatoes – bunched green... -
lettuce – sweet peppers – tomatoes – green beans

Local Roots Farm News

This week's box has an unusual number of small, dense, round vegetables! We are in the phase of the year where aphids suddenly explode on all our cabbage and mustard family crops (like kale, radishes, Brussels sprouts) and so we are giving you turnips with no greens. The aphids are totally harmless, and it's not uncommon to find them even on grocery store kale, but they are unpleasant to see and no one wants to eat bugs... so we have to get a little creative about how to deal with these critters. Luckily, there are lots of natural predators for aphids. Ladybugs are the most well known: their larvae look like little orange and black dinosaurs, and will crawl around seeking aphids to eat before they decide to glue their heads to a leaf and pupate until they emerge as an adult ladybug.

Another, less notorious, beneficial insect is the syrphid wasp. You may have seen one of these bee-like animals hovering in mid-air around a blooming mint or lavender plant. They feed on flower nectar as adults, and then will look for a place to lay their eggs where they know their offspring will find lots of aphids to eat. Their larvae look like flat, translucent, elongated triangles, and love to eat aphids. We encourage the syrphids to lay eggs on our most vulnerable brassica crops by inter-planting with flowering plants that attract the adult wasps. We sow alyssum and flowering herbs amongst the kale and Brussels sprouts. It is fun to observe a patch of flowering dill and alyssum. At first you may notice the large honey and bumble bees, but after a few moments your eye will also catch the darting syrphids and the even smaller parasitic wasps, which look like a tiny paper wasp, only all black.

We have a long way to go before we have perfected the art of interplanting for beneficial insects. Timing the bloom of the attractant plant to coincide with the first outbreak of aphids is tricky, and it seems like some flowers (like phacelia) are so attractive to honey bees that the predatory wasps we are hoping to attract are displaced by the aggressive honey bees. Aphids are a big problem on our farm in late summer, though, and so we will keep experimenting. Flowers! They have an important job to do. Enjoy this season of transition. Siri & the LRF crew

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Sweet Peppers – Peppers are a crop we've always grown just a little bit of to add variety to the CSA, figuring that farms on the East-side of the Cascades have a better climate for growing them. We grow them in an unheated greenhouse, where space is precious. East of the mountains, where spring comes earlier and it's hotter and drier during the summer, they grow them outdoors. This year and last, however, we have successfully experimented with growing peppers outside, and will do so on a larger scale next year. This week you are getting one red bell pepper and one yellow Italian frying pepper. Both are very sweet and crunchy and wonderful raw or cooked.

The contents of this week's box are perfect for a staple at our house, a dish we call "creative burritos". Creative burritos are little more than beans and rice that we marry with whatever vegetables we have lying around that we happen to think will pair well with Mexican flavors.

Recipe – Creative Burrito Fixings

- Cabbage Slaw: Shred part of that huge cabbage & mix with shredded carrots, salt, and apple cider vinegar to make a crunchy slaw. If you prefer a creamy slaw, add yogurt or sour cream.
- Fajita-like Onions & Peppers: Cut onions and peppers into strips ½" wide and sautee in a hot pan until the onions are brown and the peppers limp.
- Salsa Verde: Blend tomatillos, onions, etc to make salsa verde (see recipe from week 12)
- Zucchini & Onion mush: Dice zucchini and onions and sautee until browned and soft
- Make burritos with your favorite kind of beans, rice, cheese, cilantro, sour cream, etc and top with the pepper/onion mixture, salsa verde, zucchini/onion mixture.
- Other favorite items we like to add to our burritos, but not found in this week's box include:
 - Sauteed kale or kale chips
 - Roasted cubes of potato or sweet potato (A nod to Casa Que Pasa, a restaurant up in Bellingham that may or may not still exist)
 - Shredded pork or grilled steak
 - A squeeze of lime

Order of eating:

Eat ASAP: green beans (for peak flavor), tomato (depending on ripeness)

Will store for 3-4 days: salad greens

Will store for a week: everything else