

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for September 13th

1# Nelson carrots
1 bunch assorted beets
½# tomatillos
¾# tomatoes
1 or 2 small onions
bok choy
1 jalapeno
1 bunch mustard greens
1 bunch curly kale
cucumbers

Large box additions

Oakleaf lettuce
¾# green beans

Next week's produce (we think): chard – potatoes – carrots – tomato – something salad-y – green beans (maybe) – broccoli (also maybe)

Local Roots Farm News

Happy late summer to you! It's delightful on the farm this afternoon, although this morning when we started our work-day, it was 40 degrees outside! This is a time of big change on the farm, both for our crops in the field and for the nature of our daily work. We are in a little bit of a lull between the end of planting (just about done for the year) and the beginning of the big fall harvest push. We are spending a lot of time getting caught up on weeding, trying to pull as many weeds as we can before they mature and spread seeds that will cause even more weedy fields for us in years to come.

This year has been one of the weediest years ever on our farm. What makes weeds extra bad is a little bit of a mystery – we know that every cubic foot of soil contains thousands of weed seeds, but what makes those seeds germinate is a combination of how we prepare soil and moisture/temperature conditions. This year we had a very warm spring, followed by a wet June and early July, which seemed to be the perfect mix of conditions to produce a bumper crop of pigweed for farms in our area. The biggest casualty of weedy conditions is our direct-seeded root crops. Carrots, beets, and parsnips all get seeded straight in the soil, rather than transplanted, and this means it's a race to see what will grow faster, the carrots or the weeds. For some reason, we have always had good success with carrots and other direct-sown root crops, and carrots have been a staple item in our CSA boxes week after week most years. This year, not so much. We do have a lot of carrots still out in the field, but most are growing slowly (thanks to major weed competition) and will be harvested later than usual.

As is always the case, however, when one crop struggles, other crops seem to thrive, and this year the winner is potatoes. Last year, dry conditions resulted in a paltry potato yield, but this year's rainy June (and its attendant weeds) was perfect for potatoes. We'll be doling out our carrots stores more conservatively than usual this year, but potatoes of all sorts will be gracing your CSA boxes regularly. Hurray for crop diversity, which keeps us well fed!
~Siri, Jason, and the Local Roots Farm crew

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Beets - I will not go on at length about beets, but will include the "Basic Beet" info in the email today. Today's box has either red, golden, or Chioggia (pink and white striped) beets. To store your beets, cut the greens off right at the point where they meet the root. Use the greens as a side dish on their own, or blanch and mix with eggs to make a fritatta or omelette. The beet roots can be stored in a sealed container or plastic bag for, literally, months. Beets are one of the absolute best storage vegetables and their eating quality does not decline with age.

Tomatillos – This is probably the last of this crop for the year, so make a little batch of tangy green salsa that you can pull out of your freezer in the winter and spice up some black beans!

Carrots – I'm including a link to a pickle recipe that uses carrots, hot peppers, and onions. I think the amounts in your CSA today would make one pint jar of pickles if you use about half your carrots, so adjust the recipe accordingly (and remember, if you are doing refrigerator pickles and not canning, it's ok to make adjustments to the recipe... if canning, stick with the exact amounts for safety's sake!)

Mustard Greens – This is the time of year when salad-y items start to be in short supply. The cold and rainy weather a couple weeks ago has slowed down the growth of our lettuces (although we hope for one more appearance in your box before October) and so it's time to get more creative with your leafy greens. These curly mustard greens are pretty spicy, but they work well as a (spicy!) substitute for lettuce in a sandwich or as a bed of greens to put warm beans or grilled things on. Or, chop up mustards and bok choy together to make a custom blend salad mix that's a mix of mild and spicy leaves.

Beet greens and kale – Beet greens are the exact same species of plant as chard, and can be cooked the same way. Chop the stems up and give them a little head start in the cooking process, and by the time you add the leafy parts, the stems will be nice and tender.

Order of Eating

Eat ASAP: nothing pressing

Will store for 3-4 days: bok choy, kale, mustard greens, tomatoes, beet greens

Will store for a week: cucumber, beets, carrots, tomatillo, onion, jalapeno