

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for June 16th

1 bunch red radishes
2 purple kohlrabi
1 bunch green beet-leaf chard
1 bunch garlic scapes
½# spicy salad greens
2 heads 'Tom Thumb baby butter lettuce
bag o' Sugarsnap peas
1 bunch dill

Next week's produce (we think): turnips – bok choy – green onions – collard greens – lettuce – perhaps carrots – perhaps more peas!

Large box additions

Extra scapes
Mint
Sprouting broccoli

Local Roots Farm News

This week, the endless rounds of irrigation chores continue here on the farm. After 8 years of being able to water 16 beds a day (that's about 2% of the beds we use in a year) due to limited water supply, we are now in a whole new world. Our new pond and pump enable us to water dozens of beds simultaneously, and so now we need to add to our collection of hoses, lines, and fittings. We used to just water in one area of the farm and then move all the drip tape and header lines to a new zone. Now, we can leave things in place and when we turn on our water system, everything gets watered! We sometimes joke about how we do things versus the way "real" farms do... especially in the realm of irrigation. We have relied on drip irrigation since our first year, when we grew about 4 acres of produce. At that scale, moving hoses and drip tape from place to place is no big deal. Even so, most farms we know of that are 5 acres or larger rely much more heavily on sprinklers that water huge areas all at once. Once you pass the 10-acre threshold it's almost unheard of for a farm to use primarily drip tape. The past two years, we have dipped our toes in the sprinkler pool, and there is definitely a place for them on our farm. Sprinklers are easy to move, you can tell they are working just by looking at them, and they water large areas fairly quickly. However, after watering several important crops with sprinklers earlier this month, we are now realizing how significantly evaporation affects the results of sprinkler irrigation. Drip irrigation's trump card is its ability to deliver water straight to the root zone of the crop without wetting the areas in between the rows. Our beds are four feet wide, plus a one foot wheel path/walk aisle, and when we sprinkle, we cover that whole area. The zone taken up by, for example, a three-row bed of lettuce, is about 24" wide. Drip tape places the water right at the base of the plant, and it tends to drive the water down in a cone-shaped zone, effectively storing water in the plants' root zone. This means drastically less surface evaporation compared to sprinklers.

So, now we are back to our old ways, but with some major new innovations... we are employing better ways to connect the drip tape to the water supply, and leaving more tape in place in long-standing crops like kale. It's a BIG job on the farm right now, and is definitely sucking time away from the jobs we would normally be doing at this time of year, like weeding and tomato pruning. This weather is crazy! But we are figuring out how to deal with it... drop by drop.

Enjoy your produce! ~Siri and the LRF crew

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Garlic Scapes – I didn't get the chance in last week's newsletter to tell you how great scapes are, so I hope you found something tasty to do with them. If you did not, never fear! Last week's scapes are probably still just fine, and you can combine them with today's for a scape-fest. These are the flowering stems of our hardneck garlic, and have a mild and sweet garlic flavor. Sort of like a cross between garlic and asparagus. I think they are best cooked on the grill. Toss with a little oil and salt, and dump the tangle of stems out on the grill. Turn them from time to time, and remove when they go a bit limp and start to brown.

You can also just chop up a scape or two and use them in any recipe you would use garlic. Great in scrambled eggs or sautéed greens.

Tom Thumb lettuces – Lettuce is one of our most cherished crops. We grow a LOT of lettuce, and most of these little baby-size lettuces go to our restaurant customers all over Seattle. This year, we are growing more baby lettuce than usual in an effort to put them in the CSA more often. These 'Tom Thumbs' are a true spring lettuce, and we are just catching the very last of them for you this week. I love to cut these through the stem into halves or quarters, which results in cute little wedges that catch and hold dressing very well. A few sprigs of dill on top and you've got yourself something very cute and fancy!

Kohlrabi – The quintessential weird CSA vegetable. Here's what to do: peel the lovely purple skin off (sorry, but it's just not that tender), slice into thin rounds or matchsticks, sprinkle with salt, and snack! You can also make a lovely slaw with shredded kohlrabi, shredded radishes, and minced dill.

Green Beet-leaf Chard – I think this chard is tastier and more tender than its beautiful sibling, Rainbow chard. Search the web for some great recipes using chard and dill!

Order of eating:

Eat ASAP: peas (they will store for a week, but the fresher they are the sweeter they taste)

Will store for 3-4 days: lettuces, chard, salad, dill

Will store for a week: kohlrabi, scapes, radishes (take greens off to store)