

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents, October 20th

Winter Luxury pie pumpkin
~1# Red Cored Chantenay carrots
1 bunch red beets
1 head romanesco
1 kohlrabi
1 fennel
Bok choi
1 celeriac with tops
mixed sweet and green peppers

Large box additions

Curly kale
Acorn squash

Next week's produce (we think): butternut squash – kale – sage – cabbage
– garlic – celery – radicchio – chard – onions

Local Roots Farm News

Warm weather just keeps hanging on this year! We are in the same situation we were at this time last year, eyeing the many many beds of parsnips and Brussels sprouts in the field and weighing the pros and cons of waiting for cold weather to bring out the best of these crops vs risking losing them to freezing, when and if it actually does happen. We ate our first Brussels sprouts a couple days ago for quality control purposes and decided they are just fine, if not yet truly excellent. You'll be seeing them in the first of our double-size boxes on November 3rd, frost or no. Parsnips are a different story.... Without cold weather, they are genuinely bland. The good news is that they are so cold-tolerant that they are almost guaranteed to survive the winter, but the "bad" news is that they just keep growing bigger all winter long... so we definitely prefer to start picking them now.

We have almost all our frost susceptible crops out of the field by now. A few heads of lettuce and escarole are all that are likely to be damaged by frost at this point. All winter squash is safely in, and although we still have tomatoes ripening in the greenhouse, we are wishing for a light freeze to kill the plants and make it easier to detangle them from their trellising. This is a strange repeat of last year's mild October, when we hemmed and hawed about Brussels sprout concerns all month, only to have a deep freeze kill all the un-harvested plants in early November. Ah, autumnal roulette. We don't have space to store everything that we would lose in a flood or hard freeze, so we hedge. We bring in enough to fill our November CSA boxes, but leave a lot in the field. After the first big box goes out, we suddenly will have room for an additional 4,000 pounds in our fridge, and we'll make one more big push to bring in the last cabbages and whatever else lingers in the field. After that, the crops that we leave to soldier through the winter (or not, as the case sometimes be) are the kale, hardy radicchio, parsley, and chard. In a mild year, like winter 2012-13, we were able to harvest those crops all the way until spring! Farming. As I always say, its ALL about the weather.

Enjoy this mild weather! ~Siri, and the stalwart LRF crew

Ideas and info for this week's produce

The seasonal transition is definitely apparent this week. No leafy salad greens, and even the carrots are a variety that is best cooked (never fear, juicy, sweet, fresh-eating carrots will return). For those of you who love salad, it's time to start getting more creative. The hidden salad ingredients in today's box are beets, kohlrabi, celeriac, and fennel. Cooked beets are great as a cold salad, and the other three items I mentioned are all sweet, crunchy, and delicious in a loosely-defined "slaw."

Red Cored Chantenay carrots – This is not your typical carrot! This variety has been around for a long time, and is still grown on a large scale for use by processed soup makers. It's great virtues are its size (easy to mechanically dice) and the fact that it is orange all the way through. In the old days, a lot of carrots had light yellow cores, and the soup folks liked to have all their carrot cubes be orange... the "red" core in the name of this carrot actually refers to this carrot's non-yellow core. This carrot is so delicious when cooked! Raw, it's nothing special, so plan accordingly. I like to cut them into long sticks and roast/bake, then eat dipped in a yogurt sauce. They also would be great in soup, either pureed or chopped up with your celeriac tops and maybe some fennel. More carrot recipes in email.

Celeriac – Last year this poor little root lost the popularity contest in our year-end survey, despite the fact that we only put it in the box twice. Its intimidating appearance is, I think, the main cause for concern. It does require some assertive peeling, but the inside is so mild and delicious, with a nutty flavor and texture sort of like water chestnuts. We are giving you this one with its greens attached – celeriac is, in fact, the same species as celery, but bred for large roots instead of juicy stalks. The greens/stalks are quite edible, but are hollow and best regarded as a flavoring or herb, not as a vegetable. Cut them off to make your storage task easier, and save a few of the inner leaves for flavoring soups and such. The root itself will keep for several months.

Romanesco – This is really, truly it for the cauliflower/romanesco this year. It's been a great crop for us this season, and we feel very happy for that!

Fennel – For all of you who wrote to declare your love of fennel, here it is once more ☺.

Order of eating:

Eat ASAP: nothing is pressing

Will store for 3-4 days: bok choi, beet greens, romanesco

Will store for a week (or more): everything else