

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for October 25th

Winter Luxury pie pumpkin

1.5# purple potatoes

1 bunch curly kale

1 bunch tat soi

1 Brussels sprout tree

4 sweet peppers

1 head romanesco

sage sprigs

Large box additions

Rainbow chard

Delicata squash

Next week's produce: kale – winter squash – potatoes – carrots – radicchio – garlic – turnips – fennel – celery – collards – peppers – cabbage

Local Roots Farm News

Hello out there! Here we are at the last week of October already. For the first many years of our farm, this would have been the last week of the CSA season. Before we had sufficient storage capacity to keep lots of roots, squash, and other things in good condition post-harvest, we had to end our CSA before the beginning of “flood season,” which is November 1st. Until last year, however, we had never actually seen a flood that early. In 2015, our first flood came in the late hours of Halloween, and boy were we glad we had all those crops stowed away in the fridge so we could fill the next week's CSA boxes! Flooding is a regular part of our farming existence, and is the reason we even still have farmland out here in the Snoqualmie. Flood regulations have prohibited new building out here for many decades, so instead of being lost to development like the Kent valley, we have 12,000 acres of farmable (though flood-prone) land. So, we embrace the flooding, and plan our farming activities and business plan around the expectation that we will be flooded at any point between November 1st and April 1st.

After last year's spooky Halloween flood, we realized that we really needed to build yet more cold storage. We had grown more produce than our small fleet of coolers could accommodate, and ended up storing about 20,000 pounds of cabbage and roots at another farm's warehouse for several weeks. We bought a used cooler from that very same farm, and have been anxiously awaiting its completion for many weeks now. It's finally complete and running, and we are very happy that we'll be able to store everything we grow this year here on our own site. Hooray! This is really a big investment and a big step for us, and we are especially pleased that more storage capacity will allow us to keep more of our staff employed over the winter.

Giant new cooler aside, the weather is looking fairly benign for the next seven days, so next week's box should have plenty of leaves in it, along with a good assortment of storage crops. But if the forecast changes...we have lots of roots waiting in the wings! Onward into deep fall! ~ Farmer Siri

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Winter Luxury pie pumpkin – These beauties are truly outstanding. In *The Compleat Squash*, a definitive tome on the large and diverse squash family, author Amy Goldman says, "Winter Luxury Pie makes the smoothest and most velvety pumpkin pie I've ever had." She is right. It is also so sweet that you can easily reduce the amount of sweetener in your chosen pie filling recipe. Taste the squash puree before you add any other ingredients – it will tell you how much extra sugar you need.

Here is how we do pie in our house: Take a whole Winter Luxury pumpkin, poke it all over with a paring knife, and put it in a 325° oven. After about an hour it will have softened and slumped a bit – poke it with a knife to make sure it is thoroughly softened, and then take it out to cool. Once cooled, you can peel off the skin. Create a small hole and excavate the seeds. Scoop the soft flesh into 1.5-cup units (a cottage cheese container works perfectly), and freeze whatever you aren't using immediately. Other ideas for using this lovely squash will be in the newsletter.

Brussels Sprouts trees - How fun is this?! We always struggle to include Brussels sprouts in the CSA, because it takes so much time to pick the individual sprouts. Instead of the half-pound of loose sprouts that we used to give at this time of year, these trees should each have over a pound. You just have to do a little bit of work to detach the sprouts. They come off pretty easily with just a firm twist, or you can employ a paring knife. The big tree is a little bit of a storage challenge, but the sprouts will stay fresh on the stalk in the fridge (or on your back porch if need be), until you are ready to eat them, or you can take 5 minutes to detach them all at once and store them in a plastic bag in the fridge.

Romanesco – This crazy green thing is a relative of cauliflower, and you can substitute it for cauliflower in most instances. It is denser and less juicy (watery) than cauliflower so it holds up very well to both roasting and sautéing. Pro tip: don't discard the core! The florets, with their amazing fractals, are definitely the highlight, but the core is tender and sweet, and can be cooked right along with the florets.

Order of eating:

Eat ASAP: nothing urgent

Will store for 3-4 days: kale, tat soi

Will store for a week: romanesco, peppers, pumpkin, potatoes, sage, Brussels sprouts