

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for June 23rd

1 bunch turnips
1 bunch bok choy
1 head green cabbage
1 bunch green onions
1 bunch collard greens
1 head frisee
1 red butter lettuce
2 baby romaines (red and green)
bag o' Sugarsnap peas

Next week's produce (we think): lettuce – peas – green onions – kohlrabi
– kale – fennel – maybe carrots – maybe cilantro

Large box additions

Carrots
Curly kale

Local Roots Farm News

Try as I might this summer morning, I can't think of anything to write about except water, or lack thereof... Irrigation is an all-consuming job right now, between keeping our pump fueled, cleaning the filter that keeps junk from clogging our drip tape, and, oh yeah, the ongoing task of laying thousands of feet of drip tape on everything on the farm. In fact, the job is so big that we are taking a week off from our regular market schedule in order to keep more people here on the farm helping out with the Great Irrigation Installation of 2015. The "nice" thing about this sort of challenge is that the solution is very clear. It is unlike confronting a pest or disease issue, where the cause of the problem is complex and there are multiple options for dealing with it. With drought, we know what we need to do, and all we have to do is find a way to make it happen.

Every year we go to this amazing farming conference at Breitenbush Hot Springs, down in Oregon. A few years ago, we mentioned that we usually water in our transplants once, and never water them again; our water table is so high that the plants find the underground water and survive happily for the remainder of their lives. All the other farmers there were incredulous. "Impossible!" they said. But that was how we operated, more or less, for the first eight years we were farming. This year is completely different. People who have lived in the valley longer than us say that they've never seen the river this low at any time of the year, let alone in June. The National Weather Service says we are on pace for a record dry May & June, and a record hot June. And everything we thought we knew about farming in this valley has gone right out the window. Plants we watered in just that once look stressed almost immediately. The usually high water table is nowhere to be seen. And we are scrambling to figure out how to irrigate 15-acres of vegetables when the plants need weekly watering, rather than once and never again.

On a daily basis I am so amazed and thankful that this was the year we invested so much in our irrigation infrastructure. It's dumb luck, but I am thankful every day that this is the year we invested so much in irrigation before we knew it'd be a crisis.

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Collards – Collards have a reputation for being tough and requiring long cooking. In fact, they are very similar to kale, both in how you cook them and how they taste. I think collards are sweeter and more tasty during the warm months of the year, but kale really is at its best in the late fall. Go ahead and try these collards in your favorite kale preparation.

Turnips, Bok Choi, Green onion stir fry - These three vegetables go very well together in a stir-fry or a raw salad. You can also use the sauce in the recipe below as a hot dressing to pour over chopped raw vegetables. To bulk out either of these dishes, you could also add this week's green cabbage.

Recipe – Ginger Sesame Stir-Fry

- Mix up a sauce of sesame oil, soy sauce, light oil (grapeseed or canola), splash of balsamic or plum vinegar, and a lot of grated ginger.
- Slice turnips, bok choy stems (the juicy part) and green onion and combine in a bowl.
- Chop the turnip greens and the leafy parts of the bok choy and set them aside.
- Heat a big spoonful of the oil-soy sauce mixture in a wok or large pan until sizzling. Add some of the turnip mixture (don't overcrowd the pan) and quickly stir and toss until the veggies begin to lightly brown and soften. Remove to a large bowl, and repeat in batches until all are cooked.

Repeat the process with the leafy vegetables, then mix all cooked veggies together. Pour any extra sauce over the bowl, and serve with steamed rice or noodles.

Frisee – Frisee is a member of the chicory family, which is related to lettuce but tends to be more hardy and slightly bitter. If you're into that, enjoy a classic French salad of frisee, bacon, and a poached egg. If you are not into that... just combine the frisee with your leaves of lettuce for a subtle hint of bitter that does not overwhelm.

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, collards, bok choy, turnip greens

Will store for a week: cabbage, frisee, turnips (take greens off to store), green onions