

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for July 5th

1 bunch carrots
1 bunch green onions
1 bunch green chard (bietole)
1 bunch collard greens
4 baby bok choy
3 baby romaine lettuce
1 fennel

Large box additions

Lacinato kale
1/5# new potatoes
bunched arugula

Next week's produce (we think): cabbage – broccoli – potatoes – cilantro – carrots – radishes – escarole – salad ingredients of some sort

Local Roots Farm News

Greetings! Wow, it's pretty discombobulating to have the Fourth of July fall on a Monday. It wasn't until yesterday evening that I realized how much I was supposed to get done on my "day off" yesterday but here it is Tuesday morning and it seems like everything is going relatively smoothly... We've had it as a goal to give ourselves more time off for many years, and this year it's finally happening. This is due in no small part to our superb farm crew. We have six people working here this year who have spent at least one full season here, so they really know what's going on both at the big picture and detailed level. That's making it possible for me and Jason to spend a lot more time thinking ahead and making sure we aren't constantly playing catch-up (although that does still happen!)

This week, the importance of anticipating upcoming work will be acutely clear. We have thousands of transplants ready to go into the ground, including all our fall kale and collards, our first round of cauliflower and romanesco, and our usual successions of radicchio, lettuce, and chard. Before the planting can happen, we need to prepare the beds in the field. That means starting about two weeks ahead to mow and incorporate a healthy stand of flowering buckwheat that we planted to suppress weeds in our fall brassica field, then allowing a few days for the cover crop residue to decompose, then spreading soil amendments, then doing some deep tillage with our three-shank ripper to un-compact the soil after we had driven over it repeatedly to mow and apply amendments, then, finally, tilling up the beds to produce a fine soil texture suitable for planting into.

After all that work has happened, then we hook up our big water-wheel transplanter, extract the little seedlings from the trays we use to grow them in the greenhouse, and drive up and down bed after bed, tucking each plant into the soil with a nice glug of water to get them off to a good start. We are SO thankful for the moderate weather this week, because cool and moist conditions give us a grace period before we need to get irrigation going. Such a contrast to last year! We will still be moving quickly to get drip irrigation set up on all the crops that go in this week. Even with clouds and cool temperatures, seedlings planted in early July grow like gangbusters thanks to warm soil and long days, and they need water to grow. Then comes the weeding, more irrigation and finally, harvest time. It feels like summer just arrived, but in farming world we see fall just around the corner!

Ideas and info for this week's produce

When I looked at the list of "next week's produce" that I wrote last week, I realized that this is just a tough time of year to make predictions about what's coming next! So, no garlic, escarole, or kohlrabi this week, but we did find some beautiful baby bok choy hiding under some row cover, and we decided to wait on garlic cleaning until after we are through with this big planting push. So, lots of greens this week, because that's what's nicest and most bountiful on the farm at the moment. Heavy veggies of summer are coming soon!

Fennel and carrots – I think these two vegetables go very well together, either raw or cooked. To cut fennel into snack-size pieces, slice across the grain, e.g. perpendicular to the visible veins that run from the base of the leaf/stalk. This will reduce the chance of having a stringy experience. If you are not partial to the anise-y flavor of fennel, try this recipe. Cooked, fennel loses some of its intensity.

Recipe – Carrots and Fennel in Brown Butter

- Slice carrots diagonally into thin oval-y shapes. Slice fennel cross-wise to form thin C-shapes.
- Heat a couple tablespoons of butter in a pan until lightly browned, then add the carrots and fennel.
- Once the butter has browned, you can add a little oil or additional butter so there's enough to coat the veggies.
- Cook carrots and fennel, stirring frequently, until carrots are thoroughly cooked and the thin edges begin to brown. I think this dish smells like waffle cones.... If you have fresh mint, it would be nice to add it at the last minute.

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.

Order of eating:

Eat ASAP: nothing

Will store for 3-4 days: lettuces, chard, collards, bok choy

Will store for a week: fennel, carrots, green onions