

# Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

## Box Contents for July 21<sup>st</sup>

1 bunch carrots  
2 'Miniature White' cucumbers  
1 bunch basil  
1 bunch purslane  
1 head escarole (this is NOT LETTUCE)  
1 bunch Red Russian kale  
Baby Duvall-a Walla onions  
1 zucchini  
1 head red butter romaine lettuce

## Large box additions

1.5# Blue potatoes  
¾# green beans

Next week's produce (we think): carrots – lettuce – potatoes – cucumbers – zucchini – chard – turnips – green beans (we hope!) – herbs of some sort

## Local Roots Farm News

Rather than spend yet another week's news section discussing the ever-present sun and never-present rain, I'm "reprinting" a little history of our farm and family that I wrote a couple years ago, with a few minor updates. There are quite a few new folks in the CSA this year, and I thought this might be a nice change of pace:

Jason and I have been farming in this valley since 2007. Before that, we were city kids: raised in Seattle, graduated from Garfield High School and the UW, and then we briefly pursued "professional" careers in law and public administration, respectively. We stumbled into farming after a trip to Italy, where we stayed for a few weeks on an olive oil farm, working in the garden and eating lots of wonderful produce. When we got back to Seattle, we started growing vegetables in our backyard and frequenting the farmers markets. A chance conversation with a farmer at the Ballard farmers market led me to a summer apprenticeship on his farm. That summer I was very lucky to meet a nearby landowner who was eager to run an organic vegetable farm on his property, but needed partners to take care of the business and marketing aspects of farming.

That became our first farm home in the Snoqualmie. For four years, Jason and I farmed in partnership with Farmer Dan, learning by trial and error, and working very, very long hours while also commuting to the farm from our Capitol Hill apartment. In the fall of 2010, a few big changes happened: we had a baby, Felix, and our partnership with Dan ended. For a little while, it looked like we might not be able to continue farming, but in November we heard about a 40-acre property for sale just a few miles down the river from our old place. We took the plunge, bought the farm (with help from the USDA's beginning farmer loan program), and by February of 2011 we were plowing fields, fixing up the old farmhouse, and planting seeds in our newly built greenhouses. We are now in year five on our own farmland, and in early 2013 we were able to buy the 40 acres next door as well! (Ed. That second 40 acres is proving to be an invaluable asset for us this year, as it includes the best "sub-irrigated" ground on the whole place, as well as our new water storage pond.)

Since I wrote those words two years ago, we've added a second little person to our household. Baby Beatrice is now 15 months and a very determined toddler, and Felix is now almost 5 and very helpful around the farm. The farm continues to grow and evolve, and as we begin to think about 2016 (our tenth year farming!) we are more committed than ever to the Community Supported Agriculture model. With our grown-up responsibilities like kids and a mortgage, the financial predictability of the CSA is what makes the whole thing work. We are excited to see what the next nine years brings!

## Ideas and info for this week's produce

**Escarole** – This is the big beautiful green head in your box that might look to you like lettuce. It is not lettuce! Escarole masquerades as lettuce, but it is not necessarily the best for salad. It is in the lettuce family, but is, in fact, a chicory, which means it has a hardier leaf and is a bit bitter – some of you will enjoy it raw, others will find it unpalatable – this is a matter of personal taste! I like to use it thusly: cut the head in half to separate the darker green top part from the lighter green base. The light green bottom/inner leaves are a lovely salad if you are partial to slightly bitter flavors. We often make a salad with escarole, candied walnuts, and bacon. The top parts of the leaves make a lovely cooking green. Just sauté or simmer in a bit of water.

**Purslane** - This is another vegetable that evokes lots of commentary from our CSA members. It's truly one of the most healthful plants you can eat, and healthful things often have strong flavors. Purslane has an earthy, lemony flavor, and soft, succulent leaves. The stems and leaves are all edible, although the leaves are milder. Purslane mixes very well with other raw vegetables, either leafy greens like lettuce and escarole, or crunchy things like cucumbers, carrots, and sweet onions. Simple vinaigrette is great, as is a creamy yogurt-based dressing. I'll include several "real" recipe links to help you get started.

**Basil** – Please, don't store your basil in the fridge! Keep it in a jar of water on the counter, like a beautiful and aromatic bouquet of flowers

### *"Recipe" - Basil Pesto*

The internet is full of pesto recipes. Instead of a real recipe, here is a pesto pep-talk: You don't need expensive pine nuts. In fact, you don't even really need fancy cheese either! A food processor is very helpful...

So, put some nuts (I like walnuts), garlic, and cheese (if you want) in a food processor, along with some olive oil and a fair bit of salt. Proportions can vary widely and still achieve pleasing results. Blend until it forms a chunky paste. Then add all your basil and continue blending... super smooth or rustic-chopped are both nice. Freeze in ice cube trays to enjoy this winter.