

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for July 26th

1 bag salad greens
1 zucchini
1 bunch carrots
1 gnome cabbage
1 head assorted variety large lettuce
1 slicing cucumber
1 head fennel
1 bunch curly kale

Large box additions

1# broccoli
1 bunch mustard greens
extra cucumber

Next week's produce (we think): chard – more zucchini – cucumbers – fresh onions – lettuce – basil (perhaps) – broccoli (probably) – potatoes

Local Roots Farm News

Late July is a pretty crazy time on the farm. Weeds threaten to take over, millions (ok, maybe only like 50,000) plants need transplanting, and our fruiting crops need to be picked constantly! It's always a challenging couple of weeks, but then, one day in early August, we look around and realize that almost all the crops are planted, weeds are (somewhat) at bay, and all we need to do is pick, pick, pick vegetables from then until winter comes. Jason and I have been working hard over the last few years to identify these extra-crazy times of the season and bring on extra resources to help us get through them, but this July one is always stealthy. There is also a great element of fun and delight now too, discovering the first ripe tomatoes, thousands of flowers blooming seemingly overnight. It's a time of rapid growth and change, as plants rush to make the most of the long warm days to fulfill their one mission in life of flowering, fruiting and producing offspring. We are almost to the mid-point of summer, which falls on about August 1st. Soon after that, the work of the week becomes less frenetic, although much heavier, as all the plants we have sown over the spring and early summer turn into food – cabbages, beets and carrots, potatoes, squash, tomatoes. You put the little seed or plant in the soil, and then a few months later you take it out again. Funny.

But. Today we are still contending with a greenhouse overflowing with our big fall radicchio planting. This is a crop that is very important to our farm business, although only rarely appearing in your CSA boxes. We sell thousands of heads of radicchio to restaurants in the fall and winter, and it has specific needs in regards to seeding dates. Sown too early, and it is prone to bolting (making a flowering stalk instead of a nice leafy head). Sown too late, and it won't size up before winter sets in. So, as demand for our radicchio has increased, we have found ourselves planting a LOT of it all on one special magic day of the year. Just about 30 days later, and there are 20,000 radicchio plants clamoring to get into the field. OK, ok, we hear you! Tomorrow, we commence the great radicchio transplant of 2016.

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Salad greens - Here we have our signature “spicy salad greens,” which really aren't all that spicy, although they do contain about 20% purple and green mustards that are pretty hot when eaten alone. Also in the mix are a few different types of lettuce and mild mustard greens, the light colored mizuna and the darker green, round tat soi. We can't give salad greens in the CSA very often, because it takes so much time to pick, rinse, and bag them up, so we hope you enjoy! We find that these greens last a long time in your fridge, especially if you are used to the bins of greens that come from the grocery store. Those greens are often packaged using “modified atmosphere packaging,” which keeps them fresh for a long time prior to opening, but then they tend to degrade rapidly once the package has been opened. The best way to keep our salad greens fresh and happy is to keep the bag closed tight and stored in the fridge.

Gnome cabbage – The real name for this variety of cabbage is ‘Caraflex,’ a European cabbage bred for fresh eating in salad or slaw. It has especially thin and sweet leaves, and boy, isn't it cute!!!? We grow and eat a lot of cabbage here, and every year I come to appreciate it more. It has a naturally long shelf life, both in the field and in the fridge. Unlike kale, which gets wilted after 4-5 days in your fridge, or broccoli, which needs to be picked in a very short window of time or it starts to flower, cabbage is a patient crop. Plus, it's so amazingly versatile! We eat a lot of shredded cabbage as a slaw, burrito filling, or fish taco topper. When I have more time and ambition (in the winter, usually) I love to make Tikel Gomen, the Ethiopian turmeric-ginger spiced potato/cabbage/carrot stew (FYI, the best potatoes for this dish will be coming your way next week), or pizzocheri, a northern Italian casserole of cabbage, potato, and buckwheat noodles (our kids love this).

Carrots – A note on carrot aesthetics. Usually we grow beautiful, long, normal-ish looking carrots. This year is a challenging carrot year for us, but we are making every effort to give tasty carrots in the CSA as often as possible. This week's carrots are little non-uniform, but they are sweet and crisp and we think you'll like them anyway. ☺

Order of eating:

Eat ASAP: nothing, necessarily

Will store for 3-4 days: lettuces, salad, kale,

Will store for a week: everything else! Cabbage will store for a couple weeks.