

Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for August 2nd

2# Yellow Finn potatoes
~3/4# broccoli
1 assorted head lettuce
1 bunch 'bietole' green chard
1 slicing cucumber
2 zucchini
1 or 2 fresh "Tropea" onions
1 small bunch dill
1 head 'joi choi' bok choy
1 head frisee

Next week's produce (we think): more potatoes – savoy cabbage – probably broccoli – green onions – tomato – purslane – parsley – sage

Large box additions

~3/4# tomatoes
1 bunch basil
1 bunch turnips

Local Roots Farm News

Welcome to August! What a lovely summer this is turning out to be, with well-timed variations between sunny heat and cool drizzle. Some new crops are coming along nicely, and we will have green beans, basil, purslane, and tomatoes appearing your boxes in the next few weeks. Carrots remain our biggest problem crop this year, due to a combination of poor germination and an extremely weedy field where our main season crop is planted. We are making a dedicated effort to salvage this field, but for the time being we are giving carrots less often in the CSA boxes than usual.

Flowers – After growing vegetables for almost 15 years, first as a home gardener, and then as a farmer, I feel very confident in my ability to plant, grow, and diagnose any problems with a wide array of vegetable crops. I still have a lot to learn as a farmer, but not in the same "everything is new and amazing" way that I did when I first started growing veggies. This year, I took over the management of our ~3/4 acre u-pick flower field, which had been the provenance of our farm manager, Sam, for the last two years. I inherited a big box of flower seed from Sam, and started out by looking up all sorts of info about proper seeding dates and spacing. After the first couple weeks, I turned the variety selection responsibilities over to our seeding manager, Lane, who seeded a wondrous assortment of this and that, which I watered daily in the greenhouse and observed as they grew. Once it was apparent that the first few trays were ready to transplant, I again tried to figure out what should get planted where, and at what spacing. Some things, like stock, I knew would have a fairly short harvest window, but others, like snapdragons, I didn't really know much about. Once the plants are in the field and growing, some of them should be pinched at their central stem to encourage them to produce more branched flowering stalks. I did a haphazard job with this, so some of our snapdragons made a dozen beautiful individual stems, while others much made one massive central stem and a few piddly side branches. Our rudbeckia crop got planted into an area where calendula had grown the previous year, and I left the volunteer calendula, which produced a nice early crop...but threatened to out-compete the rudbeckia. Eventually we combat-weeded out the biggest clumps of volunteers to let the rudbeckia see the sunlight, and wow, they are amazing! It has been an absolute delight to be in the role of a beginner grower again, and I love watching the progress of our flower field and thinking about what I can do better next year. I sure do love plants ☺
~ Happy growing and learning! Siri & Jason

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Yellow Finn Potatoes – Aren't potatoes great? Yellow Finn is my personal favorite, with a sweet flavor and a slightly grainy texture. I like them steamed and topped with butter, cooked into a creamy soup, or baked/roasted with other veggies as a hearty side dish. If you still have last week's gnome cabbage and some carrots, you have the basics for the Ethiopian stewed veggie dish I included in the email last week. Yellow Finns are great for this recipe, because they break down slightly and create their own thick gravy-like sauce

We are still hand-digging potatoes, although later this week we plan to start harvesting them for storage using our mechanical digger. Today's potatoes are unwashed, because their skins were still a little tender and could be damaged going through our root washer. If you are generating a small potato stockpile, just keep them in their paper bag in a cool and dry spot (like a lower kitchen cabinet) and they will store for several months.

Lettuce and Frisee – We are in a bit of a gap for lettuce production, so the next few weeks you may see less lettuce than normal. It's challenging to grow lettuce in the summer, but thankfully there are lots of other great things that can be salad-ed at this time of year (cucumbers, tomatoes, potatoes, cabbage!). The frisee will go well with whatever lettuce variety appears in your box to make a mixed green salad. Add some grilled zucchini or leftover steamed potatoes for a lovely lunch or light dinner.

Tropea onions – Onions have been a rough go for us for several years now. We plant onions early in the spring, and a hungry ground dwelling pest called wireworm has been devastating our small onions plants. This variety, Long Red of Tropea, is one of the standouts this year! The wireworms definitely seem to have preferences, and they prefer our Walla Walla, unfortunately. Those were mostly wiped out this spring, but these Tropeas can be used in a similar way. They are juicy and mild and great for grilling or as a fresh addition to salads.

Dill – This dill was especially reserved for your boxes this week so you can put it in a cucumber salad or atop some delicious steamed potatoes.

Order of eating:

Eat ASAP: broccoli, for most delicious taste
Will store for 3-4 days: lettuces, zucchini (for best texture)
Will store for a week: everything else! Potatoes for months.