Local Roots Community Supported Agriculture

Box Contents for August 14th & 15th

1 bunch Nelson carrots
1 head broccoli
1 bunch Lacinato kale
1 bunch arugula
1 zucchini
2/3# tomatoes
2 ears sweet corn
1 little cucumber
1 little bunch basil
1 head escarole – NOT LETTUCE!!

Large box additions

1 eggplant
1 extra head broccoli
½# green beans

Next week's produce (we think): more broccoli – more tomatoes – more corn – beets – chard – blue potatoes – purslane – parsley

Local Roots Farm News

Farm Wedding!

I'm going to take a little break from introducing our farm crew, because I just have to tell you about the amazing weekend we had on the farm. My sister, Peri, and her sweetie, Jesse, got married on one of the most beautiful days of the entire summer. It was a magical day from start to finish, with a wonderful dinner and an evening of dancing with music provided by a twelve-piece band. We had so much fun, the farm looked spectacular, and our farm crew stepped in and took care of the weekend harvest and market in fine form. When I get a free moment, I'll post some photos of the wedding on our blog. Now that we have one of these events under our belts, we are considering doing more. If you are interested in a rustic wedding or other party, let's talk.

After spending several late nights in a row visiting with friends and family, Jason and I are attempting to get caught up on our farm work (and sleep). We have just a few more weeks of sowing and transplanting our late-fall crops, including some fun new experiments (fall spinach, daikon radishes). Hot and dry weather makes for extra complication, because the soil is too dry to stimulate our seeds to germinate. So we're doing extra watering, constantly moving drip tape from one bed to another, and also trying to give extra water to our established crops. We would love a little rain, such as we often get in the second half of August, but instead it looks like we're going to get more record setting heat. At least the tomatoes and corn like it!

Speaking of tomatoes and corn, do we ever have a great assortment of produce for you this week. Our tomato plants have been loaded with green fruit for several weeks now, and suddenly they are all ripe! This begins the short but sweet Pacific Northwest tomato season. We hope to have a good supply for the CSA boxes for five or six weeks. Likewise, our first planting of corn has finally ripened! We have enough corn planted that we should be able to give two ears per box for the next month at least. The wildcard with corn is the wildlife… we don't have the bears and raccoons here that we had on our old property, which could destroy a quarter-acre of corn overnight, but starlings do a fair amount of damage to corn here. Once they realize it's ready to eat, we pick it as fast as we can!

That's it for today… enjoy your summertime bounty!

Ideas and info for this week's produce

Escarole – Every season we have at least one inquiry about "that bitter lettuce" that someone received in their CSA box. Folks, this is escarole…a wonderful and versatile green from the chicory family. It is also a good reminder to read your CSA newsletter, so you can prepare it appropriately and not be taken by surprise when you think you're about to eat a salad of lettuce.

Bitter greens, such as escarole and radicchio, are one of our farm's signature crops. We first got interested in growing vegetables while traveling and working on a farm in Italy about 10 years ago. Italians grow and eat lots of different types of bitter greens, which are prized for their flavor as well as their health benefits. For most people, they are an acquired taste, but then so are coffee and beer.

To prepare escarole: the inner and lower part of the head is blanched white and almost sweet. I recommend cutting the head in half, separating the upper, darker parts of the leaves from the lower part. The green parts are great for cooking, and the inner lighter parts can be used as salad. If you are not sure you want to eat escarole raw just yet, you can just cook the whole thing. I will include a number of escarole recipes in today's email.

Zucchini – At this time of year, we should be picking zucchini at least once a day. Cute little baby zucchini can turn into monsters literally overnight. We usually pick on Saturday for our Sunday market, and then again on Monday for the CSA, but this week we skipped the Saturday harvest due to marriage festivities, and thus we have some extra large zucchini today. The good news is that the varieties we grow remain tender and non-stringy even at a large size. These would be ideal for cutting into rounds and grilling, or if you can brave the heat, baking into zucchini bread.

Tomato and tomato storage – Do not refrigerate! Store your tomatoes, stem side down, on the counter until you are ready to eat them. Most of today's tomatoes are ready to eat now, but not super duper ripe, so they will keep for several days. If your tomato is very soft, you should eat it ASAP.

Basil – Also, do not store basil in the fridge. It will keep for a week or more in a jar of water on the counter. FYI, within the next couple weeks we expect to have large quantities of basil for the CSA. Today's is just a token sprig to accompany your tomatoes.