

Two Onion Farm

Chris & Juli McGuire • 19638 Cottage Inn Road, Belmont, WI 53510
farmer@twoonionfarm.com • (608) 762-5335

Week of August 8, 2010

We're expecting a large harvest of beans this week. The beans we're harvesting now are pole beans, which means that the bean plants are tall vines growing on trellises. (The alternative beans are bush beans, which are short bushy plants standing upright without support). Most modern bean varieties are bush beans: breeders have put much of their work into developing new bush varieties because they are well suited to being grown on large bean farms. Since bush beans do not require expensive trellises, they can be economically grown on a large scale. In addition, pole beans cannot be harvested with mechanical harvesters (such as the legendary Pixall harvester) which cut the entire bean plant and separate beans from leaves and stems. We rely entirely on human harvesters (such as the legendary Yvonne, Page, Laura, Tasha, and Juli). Human harvesters prefer pole beans: the plants are tall and can be harvested with less uncomfortable squatting and kneeling; the trellised plants display their beans more visibly and so the beans can be found with less searching; and the beans are larger, so you need to pick fewer beans to yield a pound (believe us, it makes a difference). And in our experience pole beans have better flavor than bush beans. For all these reasons we have largely shifted to growing pole beans over the last several years. The one exception is that we grow bush beans in our first planting of the year, because the bush beans mature earlier and we can begin picking earlier in the summer. The one major disadvantage of the pole beans is the time required to construct their trellis at the beginning of summer, and then deconstruct it at the end of summer, but we have found that this drawback is much outweighed by the advantages of faster and more comfortable picking.

In this week's box:

Vegetable	Refrigerate?	Store In Plastic Bag To Retain Moisture?	Approx. Storage Life	Comments
Beans, green or Romano	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Romano beans have wide, flat pods
Broccoli	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Not in all boxes
Cucumber	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Eggplant	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Garlic	No	No	4+ wks	Cured; store at room temperature
Lettuce	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Romaine or summercrisp
Onions	No	No	2+ wks	Cured; store at room temperature or in fridge
Pepper	Yes	Yes	1 wk	White bell pepper
Radish	Yes	Yes	2 wks	Long, pinkish-red skin with white interior
Summer squash	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Tomatoes	No	No	1 wk	Cherry and slicing tomatoes

Beans. You may receive one or more of several bean varieties this week. One is a long, very flavorful green bean. You can use it anywhere you would use shorter round green beans, although you may want to cut each beans into several pieces.

Others will receive flat podded Romano beans, either green or pale yellow. These can be prepared similarly to round green beans. Cooking time may be slightly longer than with round green beans. Romano beans have a very nice flavor, slightly more buttery than round beans.

Onion of the week is 'Ailsa Craig'. This is an heirloom (old) variety originally from Scotland. The bulbs are relatively large and juicy but do not store well for long periods. They are well suited for fresh eating in sandwiches and salads as well as for light cooking.

Broccoli. This is the last week for broccoli until the very end of August or early September when our fall broccoli plantings begin to mature.

Paste Tomatoes. Those who are interested in canning or freezing tomatoes for winter use can consider ordering extra paste tomatoes for delivery in August or early September – read how at www.twoonionfarm.com/PasteTomatoOffer.pdf.

Ratatouille

1 1/2 Tbsp olive oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 cup chopped onion
1 bay leaf
1 small or medium eggplant, cubed
3/4 tsp salt
3/4 tsp basil
1/2 tsp marjoram or oregano
1/4 tsp rosemary
1/4 tsp thyme
1 small or medium summer squash, cubed
1 bell pepper, cut into strips
black pepper
3 tomatoes, coarsely chopped

Sauté garlic, onion, and bay leaf in olive oil. Add eggplant, salt, and herbs, and cook covered until eggplant is soft, about 5-7 minutes. Add summer squash, bell pepper, black pepper, and tomatoes. Cover and cook until tomatoes and peppers are soft, about ten minutes. Serve warm, at room temperature, or chilled.