

Two Onion Farm

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Another week of glorious weather has passed – the weather we were missing for most of July and August. Our pepper harvest is at its peak, several weeks later than usual because of the cool July and August. We're harvesting our first leeks and beauty heart radishes this week, two of our favorite autumn vegetables. Our winter squash vines are gracefully aging; the warm weather has been a godsend to the squash, helping the fruits to ripen before frost. In the past week we planted winter rye cover crop on much of the land where we raised vegetables earlier in the summer. The rye will grow this fall, protect the soil from erosion over winter, resume growth in spring, and then contribute valuable organic matter to the soil in late spring when we chop and till it into the ground.

We've scheduled a bulldozer to come to the farm later this week to complete a long planned and anticipated soil moving project. We have over an acre of fertile soil at the edge of our field where we have never raised crops

because runoff water streams over it after heavy rainfalls. If we tilled the soil here, the flow of water would cut gullies and wash much of the soil away. We'll be reshaping the slope in this area, and at one edge of it we will construct a shallow, 18 foot wide channel which will be permanently grassed and will safely convey runoff water during heavy rainfalls. This will divert the runoff water from the remainder of the fallow area and allow us to cultivate it. We'll also be filling a pit in this area, now empty, which was used to store cow manure when previous owners raised livestock on the farm.

We've been meeting with a soil conservation expert this summer to plan the project. We're excited about the potential to raise vegetables in this now fallow area, which has some of the most fertile soil on our farm. The additional land will allow us to accept some more farm members in future years and also to more frequently rotate our vegetable land into soil-improving cover crops.

In this week's box:

Vegetable	Refrigerate?	Store In Plastic Bag To Retain Moisture?	Approx. Storage Life	Comments
Broccoli	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Carrot	Yes	Yes	2+ wks	
Garlic	Yes or No	No	2+ wks	Cured garlic. Store dry, in or out of fridge
Onion, Yellow	Yes or No	No	2+ wks	Cured onion with dryish papery outer layer – store dry, in or out of fridge
Leek	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Lettuce	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Oakleaf or Boston
Pepper, red	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Sweet, not hot
Radish, Beauty Heart	Yes	Yes	2+ wks	Root, pale green skin and rose red interior
Squash, Acorn	No	No	2 wks	Do not store in fridge

Leek. The flavor of leeks is similar to, but subtler than, that of onions. You can substitute leeks for onions in many recipes and appreciate the change in taste. Leeks can be eaten raw, but are usually cooked. Like onions, leeks will sweeten when cooked.

Generally the white portion of the leeks and the lower portion of the green leaves are eaten. Cleaning leeks can be tricky, because soil particles are often trapped within the bases of the leaves. Here's what we recommend: start by chopping off the green tops, if any, to within 2 inches of the white portion. Then peel off the outer layer if it has turned slimy or brown, which happens naturally as the leeks mature. Now slice the leeks and place them in a colander. Rinse the leeks under running water to wash the dirt away.

Beauty Heart Radish. One of our favorite vegetables! This is a delicacy, not at all to be confused with regular red radishes. Peel the pale green skin from these beauties (the skin is bitter) and then enjoy the deliciously flavored and beautifully colored inner flesh sliced in salads and sandwiches. The taste is slightly sweet, slightly hot, and utterly alluring.

Acorn Squash. The simplest way to prepare Acorn, or any other squash is baking (or roasting). Baking condenses and conserves flavor and yields a tastier squash than boiling or steaming. To bake: wash the squash and cut it in half from top to bottom. Then scoop out the seeds and stringy pulp from the center of the squash. Try to scrape out all traces of the stringy pulp because in some squash it has an unpleasant flavor. Place the squash halves face down on a dish or tray and cook in a microwave or 350 degree oven until the flesh is very tender but not dried or charred. If baking in an oven, you can pour a little water in the bottom of the dish to keep the squash from drying out. Baked squash can be eaten straight from the shell with a fork.

Squash are often used in soups, casseroles, breads, muffins, and pies. Acorn Squash, however, has a fairly mild flavor which is easily overwhelmed and we don't think it does well when mixed into these dishes. We'll have

other squash, with stronger flavor, which do well mixed into soups, pies, and so forth.

Squash should be stored in a dry place outside the refrigerator. The ideal temperature for squash storage is 50-55 degrees. However, room temperature is okay. Acorn squash only stores well for short periods. We suggest you eat it in the next week or two.

Leek and Carrots

Quick and delicious side dish.

1 large leek, sliced
2-4 carrots, sliced
Butter, salt and black pepper
1/4 cup sliced or slivered almonds

Cook leek and carrots in a skillet with small amount of butter, salt, and pepper, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are soft. Stir in almonds and serve.

Stuffed Acorn Squash

1 Acorn squash
1 Tbsp butter
1/2 cup minced onion
1/4 lb mushrooms, minced
1 clove garlic, minced
1/4 cup minced celeriac (optional)
1/4 tsp salt
black pepper to taste
1/4 tsp each sage and thyme
1 Tbsp lemon juice
2 Tbsp chopped pecans or walnuts
2 Tbsp sunflower seeds
2 Tbsp each raisins and slivered dry apricots
1 cup bread crumbs - you can make excellent bread crumbs by cubing cinnamon raisin bread or any good bread
1/2 cup packed grated cheddar cheese

Cut squash in half, scoop out seeds, place cut side down on a tray and microwave or roast in a 350 degree oven until the squash flesh is tender when forked. Sauté onions in butter until translucent. Add mushrooms, garlic, celeriac and seasonings and sauté until all are tender. Stir in remaining ingredients. Fill the roasted squash with the stuffing. Lay the stuffed squash, cut side up, in a covered dish. Bake in a 350 degree oven until heated through (about 20-30 minutes).