

Two Onion Farm

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Week of September 19, 2010

We've been hard at work this past week clearing the remains of our summer vegetable plantings: we wound up several miles worth of irrigation lines, removed mulch, took down trellises, mowed crop residue, and sowed a cover crop of winter rye to protect the field from water erosion over winter and to contribute organic matter to the soil. We'll continue this process this week after we harvest the last of our winter squash, tomatoes, and peppers. This will be the last week in which we include peppers and tomatoes in your boxes. Warm weather this year granted us an unusually long season for both of these vegetables. Pepper yields were lower than usual: our plants grew healthy, large, and green, but only produced about half of the normal amount of peppers. We can't explain the mysterious low yield, but other vegetable growers in the area have noted it as well and so we presume it was due to the weather in the region this year.

In this week's box:

Vegetable	Refrigerate?	Store In Plastic Bag To Retain Moisture?	Approx. Storage Life	Comments
Beauty heart radish	Yes	Yes	2+ wks	Round; white to pale green skin, rosy red interior
Broccoli	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Cabbage	Yes	Yes	1-2 wks	Not in all boxes
Carrots	Yes	Yes	4+ wks	
Cauliflower	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Not in all boxes
Fennel bulb	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Flattened whitish bulb with overlapping layers - not in all boxes
Garlic	No	No	4+ wks	Cured; store at room temperature
Lettuce	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Red or green oakleaf or Boston
Onions	No	No	2+ wks	Cured; store at room temperature or in fridge
Pepper	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Not in all boxes.
Potatoes	No	No	2+ wks	Store in dark, cool place. Light turns potatoes green
Squash, winter	No	No	1-2 wks	Acorn (dark green) or Sugar Dumpling (dull yellow color with dark green stripes)
Swiss Chard	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Dark green leaves with colorful midribs
Tomatoes	No	No	1 wk	

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 and slightly hot.

Winter squash. Some of you will receive Acorn squash in your boxes. Others will receive Sugar Dumpling, a newer variety which we have been evaluating in the past two years. It generally has slightly sweeter flesh than Acorn, and can be cooked and eaten similarly.

Potatoes. The potatoes in your box are organic potatoes raised at the Driftless Organics vegetable farm in Crawford County, Wisconsin. The good people at Driftless Organics raise a large amount of potatoes and they have invested in specialized equipment and facilities for growing, harvesting, and storing potatoes. It does not make financial sense for us to purchase these items at our scale of production and we have decided to purchase our potatoes instead from another local farm. Potatoes are the only vegetable which we plan to include in your boxes that we do not raise ourselves.

Fennel. The flat white vegetable with overlapping layers. Our fall fennel planting performed poorly, with many of the plants rotting during the very wet weather we experienced this summer. Therefore we do not have enough to include it in every box this week.

Fennel bulb has a licorice like flavor. It can be eaten raw if you enjoy its pronounced flavor. When cooked, fennel's flavor moderates to a gentle sweetness. It is very nice in stir-fries, sautees, and pasta sauces. To cut up a fennel bulb, wash it, then slice in half lengthwise. Slice each half in half again lengthwise. With a small sharp knife, remove the triangular core from the base of each quarter-bulb piece. Then lay the quarters down flat and slice into thin strips.

Acorn Squash Stuffed With Swiss Chard and Beans

This recipe is for 2 squash! Halve if you are making it with 1 squash.

2 Acorn or Sugar Dumpling squash
2 Tbsp olive oil, divided
1/2 cup chopped onion
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 Tbsp tomato paste
1/4 tsp salt
Black pepper
6-8 cups sliced chard leaves (in strips about 1/2" wide)
1 15 oz can white beans, drained and rinsed
1/2 cup chopped olives
3/4 cup breadcrumbs
3/4 cup parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Halve each squash, scoop out seeds and pulp. Place face down in a baking dish with a small amount of water at the bottom. Roast until fork tender, usually at least 45 minutes.

While squash is cooking, heat 1 Tbsp oil in a large pan. Add onion and sauté 2-3 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, for another minute. Stir in 2 Tbsp water, tomato paste, salt, and pepper. Stir in chard, cover pot, and cook until chard is tender. Stir in beans and olives and cook a few minutes more, until heated through. Remove from heat and set aside.

When squash is out of oven, prepare and preheat your oven for broiling. Combine breadcrumbs, cheese, and remaining 1 Tbsp oil in a bowl. Place each squash half right side up in a baking pan, fill cavity with chard bean mixture, and top with breadcrumb mixture. Broil for 1-2 minutes, until breadcrumbs are browned.