



NEWS FROM THE FIELDS OF
 DRIFTLESS ORGANICS
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Week #16! Ack?! The dreaded five-letter word: FROST. They are calling for it this weekend - and we are scrambling to take the necessary precautions. We're just not ready to say goodbye to tomatoes, peppers and those other summer crops that just aren't around for long enough.

When the forecast is for frost, farmers fret. Frost dates (the approximate dates of the last killing frost in the spring and the first killing frost in the autumn) are May 15 and September 29. Quickly do the math and you'll see that doesn't leave much time in between to grow the crops we want to grow. But, as I will explain, there are things we can do to protect our vegetables and prevent the cold temperatures from setting us back too much.

In the spring, a late frost can spell doom for orchardists and berry growers because below-freezing temps can kill the flower blossoms that will soon become the fruit that they are trying to sell. For veggie farms like us, a spring frost isn't as detrimental unless it is really late and hits the small tomato and other frost sensitive seedlings that we've just planted. What we have to worry about the most is our strawberries (which start blossoming at the beginning of May or earlier).

Early fall frosts are what we dread the most. When temps dip below 32 degrees, leaves turn black, fruit shrivels and plants that do survive just kind of stop growing.

As I say, there are measures we take to prevent or mitigate frost damage. We can cover crops with remay - a lightweight, opaque, cloth-like material made of plastic polymers. Depending on what thickness you use, this remay can help keep a crop a few degrees warmer than it would be without it. Remay works great on smaller scales, but when you are dealing with acres and acres - it just isn't the most practical or economical solution.

One thing that is easier to initiate on a larger scale is irrigating to prevent freezing. It sounds weird, but if you were to have your sprinklers going on the coldest part of the night/morning, the spraying water will prevent plants from being damaged by frost. This is the same concept as how a fast moving river will

not freeze.

Another obvious and often-employed solution is to harvest all that you can. We do this with tomatoes (harvest a little greener than normal), winter squash (harvested to protect the squash from being damaged) and peppers (we will harvest green peppers that we were hoping would turn red). This is the time when we see our coolers fill up to the brim with all the goodies we are trying to save. The challenging part about these extra harvests is finding the time! Working late into the evening on the eve of your first frost is a given.

The vegetables that are hit the hardest by frost are: tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, basil, beans, and cucumbers. When it freezes, even if just for a couple of hours, these crops are goners and the fruit on them is as well.

There are certain vegetables whose plants will perish, but the crop itself can survive because it is underground and generally safe from those first nights of frost. These include potatoes and sweet potatoes. We have to watch it though - too cold of a freeze will damage them just the same.

And then there are those vegetables whose taste improves with the cold temps. We have experienced that veggies like kale, broccoli and even carrots will actually get sweeter once they've been subject to a frost. Science says this is because certain vegetables have the ability to produce

a natural sugar-based antifreeze that not only protects them but makes them sweeter. How cool is that?!

There's no denying it: we hate the frost. I mean, I know it is the natural order of things but every year it seems to come way too

this week's box!

- Baby Bok Choi
- Broccoli or Orange Cauliflower or Romanesco
- Dill
- Edamame
- Green Beans
- Green Top Carrots
- Mixed Bag 'o Tomatoes
- Mixed Potatoes
- Pickling or Regular Cucumber
- Red Radishes
- Sungold Cherry Tomatoes
- Sweet Red & Yellow Italian
- Frying Peppers
- BONUS: Hot Peppers: Jalapeno, Habenero and Cayenne

early. We've put so much work into these crops and to see them die is downright painful. We just don't want the fun to end!

So it goes, I suppose. Like a Tibetan sand mandala, a growing season here in Wisconsin should teach us the transitory nature of material life and the importance of appreciating the moment. Soon enough, the temperatures will dip below 32 degrees, signalling once again the beginning of the end of another wonderful season.

--Mike



Rachel & Dani, putting remay on the crops

Baby Bok Choi - one of my favorite veggies! These baby ones are perfect for steaming, stir-frying, or braising to preserve their pretty form. Big enough to warrant cooking the stems separate from the leaves (but should be used as they are equally tasty).

Broccoli or Orange Cauliflower or Romanesco - the brassicas are finally coming in! Romanesco is the bright green spirally looking veggie. Treat it like cauliflower - it is very similar, only nuttier and slightly creamier.

Cippolini Onions - an italian heirloom variety of onion - these flat onions have thick walls that make the perfect for caramelizing for pizzas or sandwiches.

Cucumber - We apologize for the dismal offering of cucumbers lately. This third and final crop of them were hit hard by pests.

Dill - time to make some dilly beans! Check out the refrigerator pickle recipe, below.

Edamame - such a treat. Boil them in

their pods in salted water for a few minutes, drain, sprinkle with a bit more salt & eat warm or at room temperature as a delicious, healthy snack. Just pop the beans from the soft salty pod into your mouth. Save some to shell & use in any recipe calling for edamame, like the one below. Store in plastic in the fridge.

Green Beans - the last installment of green beans for the year, and I highly recommend trying out the dilly bean recipe below.

Green Top Carrots - beautiful & extra tasty carrots have we been blessed with this year! They store best without the greens, so break/cut them off before storing in plastic in the fridge.

Mixed Potatoes - you will be getting a 2.5lb mixture of Desiree (the light red skinned variety) and Yellow Finn (the yellow skinned variety). Both are great for mashing (see recipe below).

Mixed Tomatoes - try cutting the romas & smaller slicers in half lengthwise, place them cut side up on a cookie sheet, drizzle with oil/salt/pepper & roast at 350 degrees for about 45 minutes, or until they're shriv-

eled & starting to caramelize on the edges. Use these in salads, pasta, pizza, or cool & pack into ziplock bags for use later this winter.

Radishes - the cool weather has made it possible to grow radishes again. Makes a delicious relish for either Middle Eastern or Latin American dishes – slice as thinly as you can & mix with equally thinly sliced onion, lime or lemon juice, & bit of salt & pepper. Some chopped parsley or cilantro & some minced hot pepper are nice additions, if you have them. The spicy radish greens are nice in salads or stir fries if you use them within a day or two (they don't keep long). The radishes are best stored in plastic & used within a week.

Sweet Red & Yellow Italian Frying Peppers - the best for roasting – blacken them whole on an open flame, under a broiler, or on a grill & put in a bowl with plastic wrap to steam for about 10 minutes. Remove skin, stem, & seeds & there you have roasted peppers! Like the roasted tomatoes, use in salads, pasta, pizza, or freeze.

Sweet Pimiento Peppers - delicious & super sweet peppers. Eat them raw or in stir fries, pasta, eggs, pizza, soups... Or chop them up raw & freeze them in zip locks – no need to blanch first.

Refrigerator Dilly Beans

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- 3/4 c. apple cider vinegar
- 3/4 c. water
- 1 Tbsp. honey
- 1 tsp. kosher or non-iodized sea salt
- 1 large clove garlic, sliced
- 1/2 - 1 jalapeno, sliced, or 1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes
- 1/2 tsp. each whole black peppercorns & fennel seeds
- 2 cups worth of green beans, trimmed to fit into jar
- leaving 1" headspace on top
- A few thin slices of onion
- A few sprigs of dill
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- Sterilize a quart jar & lid. Blanch trimmed green beans
- for 30 seconds, drain, & cool in ice water. Drain. Bring
- vinegar, water, honey, salt, garlic, chile, peppercorns, &
- fennel to a boil, stirring to dissolve salt & honey. Let
- cool to room temperature. Pack green beans, onion, &
- dill prettily in jar. Pour cooled brine over beans. At-
- tach lid & let cure in the fridge for at least 3 days before
- eating. Store in the fridge for up to 6 months. Makes 1
- quart. Double or triple recipe to make more jars.
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Miso Mashed Potatoes with Garlicky Edamame

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- 2 lb. potatoes of similar size, scrubbed
- Cold water to cover
- 3 Tbsp. sour cream
- 2 Tbsp. + 1 Tbsp. butter
- 1 Tbsp. red miso OR 1 1/2 Tbsp. white miso
- 1/4 c. cooked, shelled edamame
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced
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- Combine potatoes & cold water in a pan, bring
- to a boil, & simmer over medium heat until
- tender, about 20 minutes. Drain water, add
- sour cream, 2 Tbsp. butter, & miso & mash.
- In a small sauté pan, heat remaining 1 Tbsp.
- butter & add garlic & edamame. Saute until
- garlic turns golden, about 1 minute. Pour over
- mashed potatoes & serve immediately. Serves
- 4-5.
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