



ONE POTATO TWO

NEWS FROM THE FIELDS OF DRIFTLESS ORGANICS

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Week 17! It is really looking like autumn around the farm. The leaves are changing, the corn is drying down and the fall crops are coming out! We do love this time of year - where we can bring in the final big harvests like potatoes, parsnips and...

SWEET POTATOES!

Once again, it's sweet potato season. We love this time of year for a number of reasons, one of which is sweet potatoes!

Sweet potatoes are a tough crop to grow successfully and for this very reason, there aren't too many farmers in the region who are crazy enough to try and grow them. They really are meant to be raised in the more southern regions of the country, where hot and humid weather is the norm for most of the growing season. A lot of farmers who do grow sweets in the Midwest will plant them into a black (or green) plastic mulch. This mulch helps to heat up the soil, creating a much warmer environment for the plants to thrive.

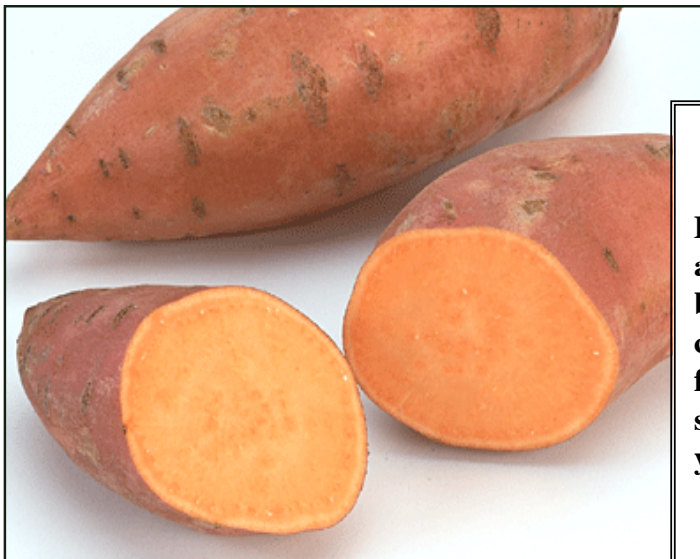
We used to grow them this way up until this year. We'd had just about enough of the plastic mulch for a number of reasons: it is expensive, a pain to plant into, an EXTREME pain to harvest the potatoes out of and it is simply heart breaking to have to throw away all of that plastic after harvest. We were filling an entire huge dumpster with our sweet potato waste! So until the biodegradable plastic mulch is accepted as

certified organic, we will be planting our sweet potatoes into the bare dirt.

We plant the sweet potato seedlings, otherwise called "slips", as soon as the danger of frost is more or less gone. We plant the slips into the sandiest of our soils, as this gives them the room they need to grow, plus makes it much easier for us to dig them up in the fall. We've tried growing sweet potatoes in a heavier soil and have ended up with some mighty ugly sweet potatoes, plus they were a nightmare to harvest. I'd like to say that we've learned from past mistakes and now, harvest is a breeze!

We harvest our sweet potatoes using a tractor and machine that undercuts them, which loosens the soil and makes it very easy to pull them out of the ground (much the same as how we harvest garlic). We simply grab the tops of the plants, pull out those tasty tubers and gently place them into black plastic trays.

The sweet potatoes then need to be cured in a warm and humid environment. We do this by stacking the plastic trays in an enclosed area that we heat to a balmy 85 degrees F with 80-95% humidity. We leave them in there for about 7-10 days.



THIS WEEK'S BOX

- Acorn Squash
- Baby Salad Turnips
- Cippolini Onions
- Garlic
- Green Top Carrots
- Green Top Red Beets
- Lettuce Mix
- Pea Tendrils
- Radishes
- Red Onion
- Sage
- Spinach
- Sweet Peppers
- Sweet Potatoes
- Tomatoes

This environment allows the skin to thicken and helps to heal any scuffs they sustained during harvest. Also the curing process helps to convert some of the starches into sugars making them more delicious than green sweet potatoes.

Often commercially called yams, sweet potatoes are a member of the morning glory family (the similarity can be seen in their leaves) and are not really potatoes but rather rooted tubers. Yams originated in West Africa and are a starchy tuber, while sweet potatoes are native to the Americas, dating back to 8,000 B.C., and generally have a moist, very sweet and orange/yellow flesh.

They are indeed a lot of work but alas, we just can't help ourselves, we love them that much and we think you will agree, they are worth the trouble.

STORAGE BOXES

Don't forget to order your November and December storage boxes! Each box is about twice the size of your current CSA box and are chock full of veggies like carrots, winter squash, onions, potatoes, beets, and yes, sweet potatoes! Follow the CSA links on our website to order. Hurry, they are selling out quick!

HELP! We need your empty wax boxes back! We are running low and don't think we'll have enough for the rest of the season. Please remember to return your used CSA boxes to your pick up site. THANKS!!!

Lots of Greens & Sweet Potato Soup

1 large onion, chopped
2 Tbsp. butter or oil
3 Tbsp. fresh ginger, minced
3-4 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp. ground coriander
Dash of salt & pepper
2 cups vegetable or chicken stock
2 cups chopped tomatoes
2 small or 1 large sweet potato, peeled, quartered lengthwise, & thinly sliced
4 cups lightly packed greens, washed & coarsely chopped (spinach, turnip/radish greens, pea vine, chard, kale, etc.)
Splash of fresh lemon juice or rice vinegar
2 Tbsp. miso, dissolved in some broth (optional)
½ tsp. smoked paprika (optional)

In a large, heavy bottomed soup pan, sauté onion in butter or oil until translucent. Add ginger, garlic, coriander, salt & pepper & sauté for another few minutes. Add stock & sweet potatoes, bring to a boil, reduce heat & simmer until sweet potatoes are soft (about 15 minutes). Add greens & simmer for another 5 minutes or so. Add remaining ingredients, turn off heat, & serve. Serves 6-8.

Spinach, Beet & Fennel Salad

2 medium beets, grated
2 medium carrots, grated
1 fennel bulb, cored & very thinly sliced
½ cup red onion, very thinly sliced
¼ c. raisins (dried cranberries)
Juice & zest of 1 large orange
1 clove garlic, minced
¼ tsp. chipotle powder or chili powder
Salt & pepper to taste
3 Tbsp. Driftless Organics sunflower oil (or olive oil)
2 cups spinach, washed & spun dry
Fennel greens for garnish

Combine orange juice, zest, garlic, chipotle/chili powder, salt, & pepper in a medium bowl. Whisk in oil until emulsified. Stir in beets, carrots, fennel, onion, & raisins. Serve on a bed of spinach & garnish with fennel greens if you wish. Serves 4-6.

THIS WEEK'S BOX

Acorn Squash - a very moist, yellow-fleshed winter squash that is often roasted & served with maple syrup. I prefer it savory, with garlic, fresh sage, & Parmesan cheese melted on top. Store on the counter for a couple weeks.

Baby Salad Turnips - these guys are pretty small and are definitely best simply diced up and thrown into a salad. Cook the greens like you would any other cooking green (make sure to wash them well, though, as their hairy leaves tend to hide grit). Store in plastic in the fridge (the greens are best used within a couple days, the turnips will keep a week or two).

Cippolini Onions - a fancy Italian heirloom of an onion. Deep, rich onion-y flavor & nice thick walls. Awesome for frying, roasting, or caramelizing.

Fennel - it's back! Eat raw in salads, slaws, or with dip or cook it in stir-fries, sauces, soups, etc. The whole dang thing is edible. Store in plastic in the fridge - the greens need to be used up within a couple days.

Green Top Carrots - You can eat the greens if you wish, but I have to admit I usually compost them or feed them

to the chickens... The carrots, though - yum! Grate them up with the beets for a lovely slaw.

Green Top Red Beets - Roasted beets anyone? I usually like to roast them with rosemary & garlic, but sage is nice, too! Saute up the greens with the turnip greens & pea vine with lots of garlic, white wine, & cream...

Lettuce Mix - very delicate - get it in the fridge right away & use up within a couple days.

Mixed Tomatoes - I know, I know, more tomatoes? Well - they are just about done for the season, and we hate to stop giving them to ya - as the plants just keep producing! Let's keep having a good attitude about it all and enjoy them while they are here because before we know it, there'll be snow on the ground and not a Midwestern tomato in sight...

Pea Tendrils - chop up in salads or cook as you would other cooking greens. Keep in plastic in the fridge for several days.

Radishes - the greens are lovely cooked if you use them within a couple days. The radishes themselves will keep in plastic in the fridge for at least a week.

Red Onions - we are seeing some wierd roddy issues with some of our onions. The trouble is, you can't tell from the outside if they are ok or not. If you do cut one open and it has some rotten part, we apologize. Trust us, the rest of the onion if totally wonderful.

Spinach - Store in its plastic bag for up to a week. Spinach this size is best used in cooked dishes - but also will make a fine salad. Try chopping it up, mixing it with the salad mix, diced radishes and a tomato for a GREAT salad.

Sweet Peppers - I can't believe I'm saying this, but I'm almost sick of sweet peppers. What a bumper crop of a year for them! Good thing for the freezer. Try cutting them in thick, long strips & dehydrating them, too!

Sweet Potatoes - first ones of the year! Add them to soups or roast them whole, cubed, or as oven fries. There's a lot of small ones this year - and we found the best way of using these is to dice them into rounds (unpeeled) and roast them for about half an hour at 400. Next time you have a fire, try wrapping them in a double layer of tinfoil & burying them in the coals until soft (depends on how big the sweet potato & hot the coals... check 'em after a half hour) & then dipped in tamari, toasted sesame oil, & rice vinegar.