

THIS WEEK'S BOX:

- Banana Peppers
- Broccoli
- 'Honey'-nut Squash
- Garlic
- Green Top Carrots
- Heart of Gold Squash
- Lacinato Kale
- Parsnips
- Poblano Peppers
- Red Onions
- Red Potatoes
- Sage
- Salad Mix
- Sweet Potatoes



News from the Fields of Driftless Organics



Keefe and Liz harvesting your lacinato kale in the morning light.

Week #18! The frost has come! What a sight to see - with the frost glistening off our entire world and the morning sun slowly warming things up and melting away the shimmer. It was a beautiful, albeit a bit sad, way to start the week. We thus say a bittersweet goodbye to the likes of peppers, basil, eggplant and tomatoes. The race is on now as we know that there is a very short window between now and when the snow starts flying to get all that's left out of the fields. We do not want to repeat the year of 2005, when Noah and Josh spent most of Thanksgiving day in the freezing rain, harvesting potatoes.

So, as long as it stays relatively dry and we stay focused, we shouldn't have too much trouble wrapping the season up. Here's what we have left...

Update From the Fields

Every year, about this time, I get asked the all too familiar question: "Now that it's frosted, you guys are all done, right?"...

The reality is that the real work now begins, and the days keep getting shorter, the lists get longer and the crops start

screaming: "get us out of this cold dirt!" First and foremost are those odds and ends that we've been putting off for far too long. I'm talking about such things as turnips, radishes, rutabagas and beets. All of these crops are our "secondary" crops that we don't grow a ton of, but like to have to fill out the CSA boxes and wintertime market stand. There is this little game we play - waiting for that right moment between the veggies being big enough and too big.... We've waited long enough and its time to get them into the coolers.

The first big-time harvest that looms on the horizon for this week is the parsnip harvest. We have about an acre of some pretty nice looking parsnips left to get out of the ground. Seeded in the early spring, these guys have been around longer than any other crop we have left. We'll dig some, but not all of them and wait until the spring of next year to dig the rest. These 'overwintered' parsnips are super sweet and are a nice addition to the spring market stand. We're still learning how to grow parsnips - and each year we get a little better at it, and we grow a bit more.

Next will come the carrots. These dudes have got me very, very excited, as they are the nicest looking carrots that I dare say we have ever grown. Ever! These are undoubtedly the highlight crop of 2010. They are nice sized, plentiful and best of all, really sweet! We'll get to harvesting the carrots next week we hope, and if all goes well we'll able to use the new (to us) carrot harvester, which cuts the harvest time by about half or more. Then, after 2 more weeks in the CSA boxes, we hope to have enough carrots left to sell all winter long at the farmers market and such.

And then comes the fall potatoes! They are located in a field that was ravaged by a flood in June and we aren't as excited about the quantity out there. The yellows look nice and are somewhat plentiful, but there are barely any reds, blues or worst of all, German Butterballs to speak of. We'll get what we've got out of there and hope to sell them to the Twin Cities and local co-ops for a while this early winter. Look for our 5 pound blue and brown paper bags at your local co-op!

When all of this is said and done, the farm cleanup and winter preparation begins. This is the buttoning down of the hatches stage on the farm that usually happens in early to mid-November. We service the tractors and put away machinery. We stow our harvest totes and clean up the fields. No, the work doesn't stop by any means as there are all those crops left to wash, pack and deliver; it just takes on a different, much more relaxed pace.

Then, as December rolls around, the planning begins for 2011! It is all one grand cycle and I love this aspect about farming. Each year we learn a little bit more, get a little better, lose a bit more hair and, hopefully win the hearts of a few more CSA members. Now, back to the fields I go!

--Mike

Banana Peppers – these range from mild to medium heat and are great in Thai or Chinese food. Store in the fridge.

Broccoli – is easy to freeze if you can't eat it in the next few days: simply blanch cut up florets in boiling water for a minute or two, drain, dunk it in ice water, drain & pat dry & stuff it in freezer bags.

Honey-nut Squash – this variety of butternut, called "honey-nut" is new to us this year and it looks a bit different that what we're all used to seeing in a butternut. We've found it to be extremely sweet and flavorful, albeit a bit small. Butternut is the easiest squash to peel because of its smooth skin - so you can simmer it in soups or curries when you want squash but don't want to get the oven going.

Green Top Carrots – These carrots, my friends are quite possibly the nicest we've ever grown. Ever. And they store best when their tops are cut off (might as well compost them as they aren't very good human food (supposedly bunnies love them!).

Heart of Gold Squash

– are incredibly sweet, tender little squashes that bake up fast in the oven. A relatively new squash variety that combines the best of its parents, Sweet Dumpling & Acorn. You can use this squash along with your butternut in the recipe below.

Lacinato Kale – The champion of kales and we are so pleased we can offer this again this year. You've really got to learn to love this kale if you don't already because it is so darn good for you. Try it in an egg scramble (saute onions, garlic and coarsely chopped kale first - transfer to a plate, then scramble the eggs and add the kale mixture near the end of the cooking along with some grated cheddar cheese). Don't forget to remove the stems before doing what you end up doing. Store in plastic.

Parsnips – It is time to start loving those parsnips! They are loaded with minerals, vitamin C, & rich earthy flavor. They just keep getting sweeter as the ground temperature cools, too. They're in the same family as carrots & can be substituted for them in most recipes.

Poblano Peppers – one to two of these and they are either a dark green or red color. They aren't so spicy and you should maybe try putting them in the lacinato kale egg scramble. Otherwise, they are great for fajita fixings.

Red Potatoes – try the garlic mashed potato & parsnip recipe, below. Try to use them up as soon as you can - they guys aren't keeping as well as we'd like them to.

Sage – is a perfect match for sweet earthy fall vegetables like squash, parsnips, & sweet potatoes. Also tasty rubbed into chicken, turkey, or pork.

Salad Mix – these tender greens are best eaten up within a few days.

Sweet Potatoes – yea! Sweet potato season! Try any of the myriad things you can do with sweet potatoes, from simply baking them whole to cutting them up & adding them to chili, mashed potatoes, curries, soups...Or check out the recipe below. Store on the counter for a couple weeks or in a dark, cool (but not cold) place for longer storage.

Skin-on Garlic Mashed Potatoes & Parsnips

2 lb. red potatoes
1 lb. parsnips
5-7 whole cloves garlic, peeled
4 Tbsp. butter
1 c. milk or half & half
1/4 c. sour cream
salt & pepper to taste

Scrub potatoes & cut into 2" pieces. Scrub parsnips & cut into similar sizes. Place cut potatoes, parsnips, & whole peeled garlic cloves into a medium sauce pan & cover with salted water. Bring to a boil covered, lower heat, & simmer uncovered for about 10-15 minutes, until vegetables are tender. Drain water & mash vegetables & garlic with the remaining ingredients. Serve immediately. Serves 4-6.

Roasted Butternut Squash with Fresh Herbs

from Chana and co.

1-2 honey-nut squash
Driftless Sunflower oil to coat squash
1/2 onion
salt, pepper, paprika to taste
4-5 sage leaves thinly sliced
3-4 sprigs of thyme
2 sprigs rosemary

Preheat oven to 375 F. Half squash, remove seeds and cut into slices 1/2 inch thick. In a mixing bowl, drizzle the squash with sunflower oil, sprinkle with salt, pepper, herbs (stems removed), and sliced onion. Bake on a baking sheet until tender, turning periodically with a spatula. Serve hot.

Chipotle Cinnamon Sweet Potato Oven Fries

2 large or 3 medium sweet potatoes, cut into fry shapes
2 tbsp olive oil or Driftless Sunflower Oil
1 tsp cinnamon
1/4 tsp ground chipotle pepper.
1 tsp salt

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.

Combine all of the ingredients in a bowl and mix until well coated. Spread the fries out in a single layer on a slightly oiled cookie sheet.

Place the sheet in the oven and cook for 35-40 minutes, flipping the fries every 10-15 minutes, until cooked through and lightly browned.

Serve immediately.