



News FROM THE FIELDS of
Driftless Organics!
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ONE POTATO TWO

Hello Veggie Lovers! We're into Box #2 of the winter season and it's another beautiful box. The other day I was saying to a Veggie Lover CSA member that packing this share is somewhat different than planning and packing the regular season shares. Figuring out what to put in each box presents its own set of challenges that are somewhat different. During the regular season, it is a matter of putting in what is "ready" to be harvested. With crops growing and maturing all season, what we have available at any

given week is constantly changing. With these boxes, we have most of the crops already harvested and in storage. It isn't so much a matter of what to put in the box, but what to leave out. We've approached these boxes with the idea of putting in the staples every week: carrots, potatoes, squash and sweet potatoes. Then we add to that a smattering of miscellaneous root crops that changes with each box. This category includes: parsnips, beets, rutabaga, turnips and radishes.

If you have any input or suggestions on this planning system, we'd love to hear it. Now's the time to let us know if you'd like to see more or less of something or another. Who knows, we may even be able to accommodate!

In other news: life on the farm continues to be busy as ever. We're washing and packing veggies, cleaning things up on the farm and

THIS WEEK'S BOX

- Acorn Squash
- Carrots
- Green Cabbage
- Green Kale Tops
- Leeks
- Rutabaga
- Parsnips
- Spinach
- Sweet Potatoes
- Yellow Potatoes

even getting to projects like putting new plastic on the greenhouse. With 8 hard working folks showing up every day, we are getting a tremendous amount of work done. Life's good at Driftless, and we hope the same goes for all of you!

--Mike



Paul and Noah, unrolling the new plastic for the greenhouse.

DID YOU KNOW?

Most of the contents in this week's veggie lover box are what we call "storage" vegetables, because they can typically be stored in your fridge for a couple weeks or more. Did you know that people have been preserving and storing food since the beginning of mankind? This seems pretty obvious I know, but it is kind of mind boggling to think that people preserved food WITHOUT refrigeration for thousands of years! Once we all pick up our CSA boxes, we'll most likely stick the majority of our box into the fridge (NOT the sweet potatoes, duh...) but check out all the other methods people have used to keep their food fresh throughout the ages:

Drying - Middle Eastern and Asian cultures actively dried foods as early as 12,000 B.C. in the hot sun.

Fermenting - Grains fermented into beer, fruits fermented into wine, cabbage into kim chi or sauerkraut, and so on. Some anthropologists believe that mankind settled down from nomadic wanderers into farmers to grow barley to make beer in roughly 10,000 BC.

Pickling - is preserving foods in vinegar (or other acid). There was a spectacular increase in pickling in the sixteenth century owing to the arrival in Europe of new foods from Asia. Spices were added to pickling sauces to make clever things like chutneys, relishes, piccalillis, mustards, and ketchups. "Quick Pickles" can be made from things like Beauty Heart radishes, turnips and even kale. We have recipes on our website!

Curing - Food curing dates back to ancient times, both in the form of smoked meat and as salt-cured meat. The Plains Indians hung their meat at the top of their teepees to increase the amount of smoke coming into contact with the food. Although curing is primarily for meat, we do cure a few veggies before we send them to you, including sweet potatoes and winter squash (this type of curing is basically storing them at a certain temperature and humidity for a given length of time).

Root Cellars - Records indicate that over 40,000 years ago Native Australians were growing large amounts of yams and developing techniques of burying their produce in order to preserve it for future use. The actual use of walk-in root cellars as a means to prolong the freshness of fruit and vegetable crops was probably an invention that occurred in 17th century England.

Acorn Squash - a nice squash for cutting in half, roasting, & mashing with butter & brown sugar or maple syrup. If you pierce the sides with a knife, you could even bake it whole! Or cream it with roasted garlic & Parmesan.

Green Cabbage - use raw in slaws or on tacos, or steam, sauté, stir-fry, braise, roast, or even grill it! It's also surprisingly nice in mixed fruit/vegetable juices. Will keep best out of plastic in the crisper drawer of your fridge. If the outer leaves get wilted, simply peel them off. If you don't use the whole cabbage at once, store the rest in plastic in the fridge.

Green Kale Tops - It's so nice to still have kale! Sauté, stir-fry, or simmer it in soups or sauces. Lightly steam whole and serve with olive oil (or our very own Driftless Sunflower Oil!) with a bit of lemon juice and/or shaved aged cheese. Or toss it in oil & bake for kale chips. Keep in plastic in the fridge & use in a week.

Leeks - a mild member of the onion family. Most folks toss the green part, but I love to wash them well & use them in soup stocks. Make sure to wash your leeks well, as dirt likes to hid in the inner leaves. Store in plastic in the fridge.

Parsnips - look for the white carrot-looking roots in your box. Roast or braise them on their own or with other root veggies. I also like to boil them with potatoes & mash them all together. Delicious in pot-roasts or braised with dark beer or apple cider. Only peel them if their skin has started to brown. Stored in plastic in the fridge, they should keep for a few weeks.

Rutabaga - Look for the big whitish roots with purple on them. These root vegetables are a bit sweeter than their close relative the turnip. Like parsnips, I like to add them to potatoes for mashing, but also love them in pot roasts or mixed root vegetable roasts or hash. You can also eat them raw in coleslaw. They'll keep in plastic in the fridge for months. Their skin is rather thick, so I usually peel it.

Spinach - This is probably the last of the spinach for the year, so please enjoy! It makes a wonderful salad combined with blue cheese dressing or a sunflower oil vinaigrette.

Yellow Potatoes - starchier than red potatoes but not as starchy as a Russet, our yellow potatoes are very all-purpose. Use them in gratins, mashes, soups, stews, roasts, or whole as a baked potato.

Spicy Roasted Carrot & Pear Soup

Spicy Roasted Carrot & Pear Soup

6 cups diced carrots

Oil, salt, & pepper

1 medium yellow onion, diced

3 cloves garlic, minced

1-3 fresh hot red chiles (stemmed, seeded, & chopped), OR 1-3 tsp. dried chile flakes, or 1/4-1 tsp. cayenne pepper, to taste

2 large pears, diced

1 quart veggie, chicken (or turkey!) stock or water

Salt & pepper to taste

Cream, half & half, condensed milk, or crème fraiche (optional)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Toss carrots with about 1 Tbsp. of oil, spread in a single layer on a baking sheet, & sprinkle with salt & pepper. Roast, turning them once or twice, until starting to brown, about 20-30 minutes. About 10 minutes before carrots are done, heat another Tbsp. of oil in a heavy bottomed soup pot. Add onions & sauté until golden. Add garlic & chiles & sauté another minute or so so. Add pears, stock/water & carrots as soon as they've started to brown in the oven. Simmer until pears & carrots are very soft, about 15 minutes. Puree well with an immersion blender or in batches in a food processor/blender & return to pot. Add cream if using, return to a simmer, adjust seasoning as desired, & serve. Serves 4-6.

Sweet Potatoes with Caramelized Onions & Maple Pecans

2 lb. sweet potatoes, whole

1 Tbsp. butter

3 Tbsp. heavy cream

1 Tbsp. oil

3 medium red onions, sliced

Water, wine, or balsamic vinegar for deglazing onions

½ c. pecan pieces

1 Tbsp. maple syrup

Salt & pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Prick sweet potatoes in a couple places with a fork or knife & roast whole on a baking sheet until soft, about 30-40 minutes (while they're roasting, get going on the caramelized onions & candied pecans). Remove from oven & let cool enough to handle, then scoop out flesh into an oiled casserole dish & mash with butter, cream, salt, & pepper. Set aside.

Heat oil over medium-high heat in a large, heavy bottomed skillet (preferably not non-stick) & add onions. Spread them out evenly over the pan & let cook, stirring occasionally & reducing the heat to medium or medium low to prevent the onions from burning or drying out. Sprinkle some salt over the onions & let cook for 30-45 minutes, stirring frequently. Add a little water or wine to the pan whenever they really start to stick (you want them to brown as that's how their sugars caramelize, but not burn). As the onions cook down, you may have to scrape the pan more frequently. Continue to cook & scrape until the onions are a rich, browned color. At the end of the cooking process add a little wine or balsamic vinegar to deglaze the pan. Spread over the prepared sweet potatoes in the casserole dish. At this point you can reheat it or refrigerate & save for later (will store for a few days in the fridge). Cover with tinfoil & reheat at 350 degrees to serve (about 10 minutes if it's still warm, or 30 minutes if you've refrigerated it).

While you're roasting the sweet potatoes, toss pecans, maple syrup, & some salt in a bowl & spread out in a single layer on a greased, rimmed baking sheet. Roast in the 400 degree oven (with the sweet potatoes is fine) for 8-12 minutes, stirring once or twice, until toasty brown. Let cool on a rack. Sprinkle over hot casserole right before serving. Serves 6-8.

Did you know that we've got all of Dani's Recipes up on our website? Check it out: www.driftlessorganics.com/recipes