



one POTATO TWO

News from the fields of Driftless Organics • Vol 8 - Issue 24 • Dec. 4-6, 2014

Here we are again! We just can't stop washing and packing wonderful produce for you all. We're busy as ever with our work and when we aren't washing and packing, we're working in the office, pouring over our 2014 records to see what went right and what didn't. We're analyzing data and crunching numbers and making plans for next year. The seed

catalogs have arrived and pretty soon we'll start scouring them for the crops we want to grow next season. It's an exciting time of year where we let our imaginations run wild and get lost in the endless possibilities of a new season. We approach the beginning of each new year as an opportunity to learn, to improve and to find ways to become the best farm that we can be. We can't wait!

-- Mike

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that we still have a full time crew working 4-5 days a week? Yep - even though the snow's a-flying and the temperatures are plummeting, the Driftless Organic's crew is still going strong. You see, over the years we have put a lot of time and money into learning about and building the infrastructure necessary to grow and store a variety of storage crops. These crops include veggies like potatoes, carrots, turnips, parsnips and other roots. It also includes things like cabbage, onions, garlic and sweet potatoes. We decided to grow this route as a farm because it seemed like a great way to extend our CSA season to awesome members like you, and in turn keep our employees working and receiving paychecks. It's really hard for folks to work a seasonal job and earn a living solely off of it. We know this because we've been there. The more we grow and store crops, the more we have to wash through the winter. In the past few years we've gone from having just 2 or 3 people working to this year having 10 hard working folks!

So how do we store all these crops and make sure they stay fresh for you? Most of our goodies are stored in our giant walk in cooler. This behemoth is 30' by 40' by 18' and stores about 3-400,000lbs of produce! We also own and rent semi trailers that have refrigeration units on them to store our excess produce. In addition, we have some smaller coolers that we keep for crops like onions, garlic and sweet potatoes (which like to be stored at somewhere closer to 50 degrees). Each cooler or storage unit we run has a very specific temperature and humidity that we monitor very closely. Veggies require all sorts of different conditions to maintain optimal freshness (carrots like it cold and wet, sweet potatoes like it warm & dry, etc) and the closer we can get to maintaining these specific ideal conditions, the longer our veggies will keep, and the longer we can continue working!

THIS WEEK'S BOX

Acorn Winter Squash
Beauty Heart Radish
Carrots
Gold Beets
Green Kale Tops
Leeks
Red Onions
Red Potatoes
Sweet Potatoes

WHAT THE HECK DO I DO WITH.....GOLD BEETS?

We like to refer to gold beets as the "gateway" beet to help you on your path to becoming completely addicted to the more pungent and earthy red beet. They are much sweeter and not as "dirt flavored" as most red beets, and are super beautiful as well. So what do you do with them? Try this:

- 1. Roast 'em.** Try the recipe on the next page, or simply roast them up with other root vegetables.
- 2. Grate them.** Gold beets are sweet and tender enough to eat raw on salads. Just peel them and grate them up on top of your prepared salad.
- 3. Make Soup.** We have a great recipe for carrot-ginger-gold beet soup on our recipe. It's amazing!
- 4. Steam them.** Try steaming your beets, peeling them, chopping up and then drizzling balsamic vinegar and oil over them. Then add crumbled feta cheese and walnuts and your have an amazingly golden delicious salad.

Acorn Winter 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. It's definitely easy to get acorn squash into your belly! Store them in a warm and dry place.

Beauty Heart Radish - This winter storage radish is rather mild, but will get milder the longer it's stored (best in plastic in the fridge). No need to peel it, but you can if you prefer (the peel is usually has the most bite, so if you like a spicy radish leave it on!). Its beautiful crispy magenta flesh is nice sliced raw with dip, grated raw in salads or slaws, or cooked in stir-fries or simmered in Asian-style soups.

Carrots - These carrots are still so sweet and delicious and super versatile. Try the recipe below, or make some soup, or juice, or just eat them raw. Store in plastic for up to a month.

HONEY-BALSAMIC GLAZED ROASTED BEETS AND CARROTS

3 med-large gold beets
4 large carrots, cut into 1-inch chunks
Driftless Sunflower Oil
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons honey or maple syrup

Wrap the beets in foil and roast them in the oven at 350°F for 1 1/2 hours. Set them aside until cool enough to handle. Meanwhile, peel and chop the carrots and toss with a drizzle of oil in a 15x10-inch baking pan. Roast for about 30 minutes, turning once or twice, until soft and carrots start to turn golden. Combine the balsamic vinegar and honey in a large skillet, add the carrots to the skillet along with any oil that has accumulated in the bottom of the pan.

When the beets are cool enough to handle, peel them with your fingers. Slice beets into wedges and place in skillet with carrots.

Heat vegetables over medium-high heat and cook until the glaze bubbles and thickens, coating the carrots and beets with a sticky glaze. Serve immediately, or cool and serve over a salad.

Garlic - Some beautiful porcelain garlic! Store on your counter or pantry.

Gold Beets - Look for the yellowish-orange roots in your box. They are kind of ugly on the outside, but once peeled, they reveal their vibrant golden beauty. Store them in a plastic bag in your fridge and use within a couple weeks.

Green Kale Tops - This stuff is so tasty and sweet! What a treat (it is December, after all). **To use:** remove leaves from the stem and discard the stem. Then strip the bigger leaves from their stems. You don't need to remove the stems from their smaller leaves as they are tender enough to eat. Then - chop up and use in stir fries, soups or scrambles. Any way that you use them - it's best to add at the last minute and only cook for a little bit (until tender). My new favorite is to simply steam the kale and make a simple dressing of oil,

lemon juice and olive juice. Add a few olives at the end and serve. Store in plastic in your fridge.

Red Onions - These are some of the nicest red onions we've grown this year! They are very versatile and will work in just about any dish that calls for onions. Store in a cool dry place.

Red Potatoes - Great for mashing, baking, roasting, frying and more! These are very versatile potatoes that will last for a couple weeks or more in their paper bag.

Sweet Potatoes - As you may have noticed, the skins of our sweet potatoes are turning black. No worries though - this doesn't affect their flavor or how well they store. You just want to make sure that you peel them before using. If you are truly ambitious, sweet potato pie is amazing! There is a great recipe on our website or oodles more on other sites on the internet.

GREEN KALE & SWEET POTATO SOUP WITH CUMIN AND LEMON

serves 6

2 med-large leeks, white and light green only
1 large red onion
2 Tbs. Driftless Sunflower Oil
1 1/2 tsp. salt, more to taste
1 lb sweet potatoes
1 small red potato
2 green kale tops
2/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro
2- 2 1/2 cups vegetable broth
fresh ground black pepper
1 Tbs. cumin seed
1-2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
a pinch of hot pepper
optional garnish: crumbled feta cheese

Thoroughly wash and coarsely chop the leeks, using only the white and light green part, and chop the onion. Heat the oil in a non-stick pan and start sauteing the onions, with a sprinkle of salt. When they are translucent and soft, add the leeks and keep cooking, stirring often, until all the vegetables are golden, about 20 minutes. Meanwhile, peel the sweet potatoes, scrub the small red potato, and cut them all into 1/2 inch chunks. Remove the leaves from the main stem of the kale top and then cut out the thicker stems of the individual leaves. Cut the greens into one-inch strips, or chop them very coarsely. Combine the sweet potatoes and kale in a soup pot with 5 cups (1 1/4 liter) cold water and a teaspoon of salt, bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer for about fifteen minutes. Add the sautéed leeks and onions to the pot, along with the cilantro, and a lot of fresh ground black pepper. Add as much of the vegetable broth as you need to give the soup a nice consistency - this is a hearty soup, but not a stew, and it should pour easily from a ladle. Simmer the soup gently, covered, for about ten more minutes. Lightly toast the cumin seed in a dry pan, just until it is fragrant, and grind it in a mortar or spice grinder. Stir the cumin seed and a spoonful of lemon juice into the soup, and taste. Add more salt, pepper or lemon juice as needed, and finish with a pinch of cayenne or any red pepper. Ladle into bowls and garnish with a heaping spoonful of crumbled feta cheese.