



*The We Grow family, Gus, Dene, Eric and Rebecca*

## YEAR END REFLECTION

This is your final share of the 2019 season. Thank you again for choosing We Grow to provide you with produce over the past five months. We strive to get better ever season and big part of that is your feedback from a customer standpoint. Criticism is never easy to hear, but being honest and providing thoughtful suggestions will help shape our program to be more successful for the next group of farm members. It does us no good to carry on the way we want if it isn't working for you. Please take a two minutes to fill out the feedback form on our website at [wegrowfoods.com/survey](http://wegrowfoods.com/survey). There are only a few questions and you can remain anonymous.

While each season has its unique challenges, learning to deal with the ups and downs is a large part of being a successful grower. It is fun to reflect on what we improved and what we flopped at the past growing season.

The spring started out a few weeks behind temperature-wise and we never actually got ahead to make up for this. It was the first year we took a week off from shares and it was so well timed for us, we might write it into the plan for the coming seasons. Aside from that first, we didn't really have many "vegetable firsts" per say. It was the earliest we've ever given out zucchini and cucumbers. The most we've ever given out peppers and the largest crop of sweet potatoes to come out of our field. This was the first season we ever grew sun gold melons and enough watermelons for everyone as well. We also never had enough of our own carrots to provide them for ten of the 20 weeks. Onions were plentiful and we had lettuce for nearly every share this year.

Disappointments are headlined by our potato crop. We invested more than ever in potato seed and did not invest enough in the fertility of the soil where we planted them. The first planting of field brassicas suffered in the cold and never rebounded. The tomatoes were down from other years. The beets didn't size up. And our kale didn't have enough fertility. All easy things to address as we another go at this in four months! Take care of yourselves in the off-season and keep in touch!

With many thanks,

*eric + rebecca*

## IN THE BAG

Winter Squash (choice)

Broccoli

Green Cabbage

Mixed Onions

Rainbow Beets

Brussel Sprouts

Peppers

Lettuce

Spinach

Sage

Rutabaga (*larges*)

Garlic Bulbs (*larges*)

## OUR GRATITUDE

Thank you to every one of you who has invested in and supported our farm in any way this past season. While it is sad to think we won't be seeing you for a time, we depend on the cold weather to give ourselves and our ground a rest. Time to pour over seed orders, select varieties, choose cover crops and field rotations, analyze soil samples and tend to animals. All while preparing for spring and the mental and physical strain that it brings. Farming is the work we have grown to love. The most demanding of any job we have ever immersed ourselves in, it has also been the most fulfilling and rewarding in large part for the respite we find in the off-season, but also for the good it brings our customers and our community. We look forward taking part in the culture of local food farming with you again as life rolls along.

**Around here we don't look backwards very long. We keep moving forward, opening new doors and doing new things, because we are curious... And curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.**

- Walt Disney

## RAINBOW BEETS

It is no secret that we have been short of beets this season. Our great friends at Red Door Farm have traded us these beautiful rainbow beets in exchange for We Grow daikon radishes for their people.

If you are not a huge beet fan, focus on the yellow variety because it contains significantly less geosmin which gives beets their earthy, dirt flavor. We love them chopped up and roasted but recently discovered beet butter.



## KRAUT CABBAGE

The variety of cabbage we have remaining in the field and are sharing with you is a hardy, storage variety called kaitlin. This means it is not as tender and delicate as the previous cabbages you've received. However, it will hold up very well in and cooked dishes. It will also last a very long time in the fridge under proper storage.

This variety is ideal for fermenting! You will find they are extremely dense and heavy for their size. Don't be afraid of trying fermentation on a small level. Just core and slice the cabbage as thin as possible or use a mandolin slicer, but watch those finger tips! Then mix the cabbage with salt and punch the mixture with a big spoon or the back of your hand until it starts to release its moisture and foam. Then pack it in jars with either a fermenting valve or a homemade variation of a breathable top. We usually put a few larger pieces of cabbage leaves as a cap on top that we can toss out before eating.

## SPINACH

You probably don't need any advice on how to use spinach, but we wanted to mention that this was planted inside the tunnel after we pulled the cucumbers. You are receiving the entire plant because there isn't very much available. The stems are edible. One of our goals in 2020 is to budget and purchase another high tunnel to better meet the demands of the produce we get from these highly productive, season extension spaces. In the spring it seems like everything in your entire share for the first three weeks came from the tunnels.

## BRUSSEL SPROUTS

Sprouts are a treat when they are fresh from the field. Remember, the sooner you eat these, the better they'll taste.

Years past, we had members tell us they didn't know how fresh brussel sprouts were supposed to taste having only had them from the frozen food section.



For the most part, your getting your sprouts on their stem. It takes a great deal of time to cut them all off when they are so small. We are leaving some of the work to you. Just snap them off the stem or carefully use a sharp knife to pop them off. It also might be of interest what they look like when they are growing.

A quick search online and brussel sprouts recipes abound: pan roasted brussels sprouts with bacon, fried brussels sprout salad, balsamic-roasted brussels sprouts and kale, roasted sprouts with butternut squash and the list goes on. If you're in a hurry, consider a high heat roasting approach. Cut the bigger sprouts in half, toss in some diced uncooked bacon (no need to add oil if you have delicious bacon fat), salt and pepper and roast at 450° on a baking sheet or cast iron tossing every ten minutes until done. Finish with some toasty pine nuts or almonds. Also worth noting, sprouts can be blanched for a 2-3 minutes and frozen for enjoying in the off-season.

## SAGE

Called for in many meat, sausage and stuffing recipes, sage also has a long list of historic medicinal uses ranging from fertility and hotflashes to bleeding.

If you can't use your sage this week, hang it to dry for use later. Dried herbs will last several months stored in an airtight container.



A quick search online will give you a place to start figuring out how best to use your sage. We found several worth trying: Celery and sage stuffing, Tuscan vegetable soup, sage roasted vegetables, fresh lemon and sage pasta, sage and white bean hummus, sage and lemon roasted chicken, sage butter, and the list goes on.

### HAVE A VEGGIE QUESTION?

Odds are if you've got a question, someone else probably has to same one. Don't hesitate to ask for help identifying or using new veggies.

HOME 715-427-1002 CELL/TEXT 715-905-0431

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