



Beautiful buckwheat cover crop, a pollinator's field day.

SEED PLANNING

This is the seventh attempt we've had to figure out how to grow a great variety of crops well distributed and varied across the entire 20-week CSA season. In the early years, we didn't do great. Practice makes perfect but planning and spreadsheets has really helped the most. We look at the days to maturity of every crop, count backwards from the week we would like that crop to be mature, take into account the weather we usually get that time of year and we have a plan for exactly when to plant each crop to get our farm members a great variety over the entire season.

Last week, you received two items that were first seen in your earliest spring shares, red radishes and beautiful broccoli heads. Did you know that this planting was our third round of broccoli? This crop only takes about 45 to 60 days to mature, so this succession was planted back in mid-July. This week, we are giving lettuce in the shares. This crop requires even more planning. These heads are coming from our seventh succession. Each lettuce variety has a little variance in the days to maturity to help spread out harvest times which helps smooth out the transition between plantings.

As the weather cools and the sun shows less, we end up indoors working on season planning and seed research. Since the pandemic started and more people are growing their own food, seeds can be in short supply. We are now making most of our seed purchases in November before the seeds are even available just to make sure that we can get our name on what we need. We are also holding more seeds over from season to season and trying to stay a full season ahead. More and more with weather extremes causing failure in some seed crops, we will find that a specific variety of something is not going to be available for the year. This happened last year with organic white salad turnip seeds. Thankfully, small seed companies are starting to pop up and produce their own products. Planting seed crops in different locations to protect against total failure is the first step in seed security. Succession planning for a CSA program is important too, but without the seed growers we would all be very hungry.

Pulling out the '22 calendar,

eric + rebecca

IN THE BAG

Butternut Squash

Green Cabbage

Arugula

Chioggia Beets

Russett Potatoes

Romaine Lettuce

Cherry Tomatoes

Broccoli Heads

Garlic Bulb

Onions

Muskmelon (larges)

MEAT SALE

On Monday, we picked up a huge order from Geiss Meats in Merrill and have your favorite cuts back in-stock including the customer favorite nitrate-free all beef hot dogs, maple breakfast links, and award-winning braunschweiger. Plus there is still a great selection of beef from our August processing to stock up for all your fall recipes. For a limited time:

Take 5% OFF \$100 or more

Take 10% OFF \$200 or more

Go to wegrowfoods.com/store

STOCK-UP

This week, we have seconds butternut squash at half price, bulk broccoli at \$2 per lb and sauce tomatoes at \$22 per half bushel box. Let us know if you need anything for your winter pantry.

VEGGIE HUMOR

What do you call beans that have been in the sun too long? Baked beans!

FOLLOW THE FARM:  

BUTTERNUT WINTER SQUASH

Butternut is one of our favorite winter squash for one reason, butternut squash soup. (Find the recipe at wegrowfoods.com.) We made some serious improvements in our growing techniques and are seeing incredible production in this variety. If it is your favorite, it will be available for "choice of squash" in your final share.

Butternut squash, like all squash, has ancestry in North America. Archaeological evidence suggests that squash may have first been cultivated on the isthmus between North America and South America - Mesoamerica - around 10,000 years ago. Squash was one of the three main crops planted by Native Americans, known as the "Three Sisters" - maize (corn), beans, and squash. Winter squash was prized by the Native Americans and early American settlers for its long shelf life.

From a culinary standpoint, butternut are generally drier than acorn and delicata. They are often used in baking, soups, roasting, and salads. They hold together well when skinned and cubed. When not making soup, in which we leave the skin on, we peel the squash with a veggie peeler, then cube and steam or roast. Squaring the ends can make this process easier. If peeling is difficult, poke holes and microwave for two minutes first. Butternut squash is delicious roasted with brussel sprouts, maple syrup, cranberries, and pecans or almonds.

All winter squash can be stored in a cool, dark non-refrigerated place for months.

CHIOGGIA BEETS

Chioggia is an Italian heirloom variety of garden beet. Sometimes called Candystripe Beet or Bull's Eye Beet, it is distinguished by concentric rings inside. The slightly flattened globe-shaped roots have a red-orange or pink to light red skin. Many people say these beets are sweeter, milder or more peppery than the typical red beets. It is noted for its relative absence of bleeding.

Up until the 16th century beet roots were primarily used for medicinal purposes. They contain beta carotene and vitamin C. Both the leaves and roots are used as food now. Although beets are technically a biennial, they are always grown as annuals.



ARUGULA PEPPERY GREENS

Arugula is a very peppery, nutty green best taken in small quantities or mixed with other greens if eating fresh. If you try it raw and dislike it, don't give up.

Arugula tastes completely different with dressing on it. While we love it on salads and sandwiches, it can also be used braised or massaged with your favorite oil to take away some of the radish-like spice and bring the flavor to life.

Pairs well with mild, white cheeses like feta or goat cheese and also toasted walnuts. Store in fridge in a bag or salad spinner.



savor the season

RUSSETS

Russets are a classic oval shaped spud with a thick, rough, skin. A high-starch potato with a flesh that's snowy white and very dry, they are the quintessential baking potato. They also make first-rate mashed potatoes - soft and light and able to absorb an impressive amount of butter and sour cream. They also make the best french fries.

Where russets don't shine is in preparations that call for boiling, as in most potato salads. And though russets make delicious pureed soups, it's not a good idea to use them in any soup where you want the potatoes to stay intact. That impressive fluffiness falls apart in soup. Keep sliced or chopped potatoes in cool water until ready to use to prevent discoloration through oxidation.

Potatoes will keep longest kept in a dry, dark, and cool (ideally 45° to 50°F) place. Never refrigerate raw potatoes. If the temperature is too cold, some of the starches will turn into sugars and taste unpleasant. (Though you can convert the sugars back to starches by storing it at room temperature for a few days.) Store them away from onions, too, as they release gases that interact and make each other spoil more quickly.



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.

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