

# Two Onion Farm

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**Tomato** harvest continues this week; but our tomato plants are rapidly dying from disease, which spreads quickly in cool wet weather. Some of you may have read about the spread of late blight in southern Wisconsin. This disease, the same which caused the Irish potato famine, rapidly kills potato and tomato plants. It is typically not a major problem in Wisconsin but there has been an outbreak this summer because of the unusually cool wet weather. We have, fortunately, not seen any late blight on our plants. However our plants are suffering from early blight and several other diseases. The early blight is not quite as deadly, but still pretty bad.

**Peppers.** We are finally beginning to harvest red peppers this week. We are harvesting several types of peppers: the long red pepper with a gradually tapering triangular shape and thin walls is an Italian frying pepper – particularly well suited for sautees, stir-fries or other cooking; the short red triangular pepper with thick juicy walls is a roasting or pimento pepper; and the large blocky green or red peppers are bell peppers. All of the peppers can be eaten either cooked or raw although their flavors and characteristics differ slightly. All of our peppers are sweet, not hot.

Red and green peppers are the same – each individual pepper fruit changes color as it develops. On most pepper varieties, the fruits are first green and later turn red as they sweeten and ripen. (The white peppers which we distributed earlier in the year are an exception – they begin white and later turn orange-red as they ripen).

**Fennel.** This is the flat white vegetable with overlapping layers. It has a licorice like flavor. Fennel can be eaten raw in salads, where it contributes a pronounced flavor. If you're eating it raw, we recommend that you slice it very thinly so the fennel's stringiness won't be objectionable. When cooked, fennel's flavor

moderates to a gentle sweetness. It is very nice in stir-fries, sautees, and pasta sauces. To cut up a fennel bulb, wash it, then slice in half lengthwise. Slice each half in half again lengthwise. With a small sharp knife, remove the triangular core from the base of each quarter-bulb piece. Then lay the quarters down flat and slice into thin strips.

**Raspberries.** We do not raise berries at Two Onion Farm. For this week, however, we have purchased berries raised at May Family Farm near Cuba City, Wisconsin. In future years, we may purchase berries regularly to include with our vegetables in the boxes. We would appreciate your comments about the berries.

May farm is located seven miles northeast of Dubuque. They sell berries U-pick, pre-picked, and wholesale. They are open 7 days a week from August 1 through mid October; please call ahead to schedule a picking time. Call 608-748-5106 or 563-213-0440 (Cell) for more information.

We have visited the May farm and discussed their growing practices with them. They have told us that they raise their berries without any insecticides, fungicides or synthetic fertilizers.

Organic? We cannot legally describe their berries as organic. Federal law requires that organic farms must comply with a detailed set of production standards, keep extensive records of how they raise their crops, and must pay to be inspected and certified as organic by an independent third-party certification agency. Like many small farms, the Mays have not gone through this process. The recordkeeping involved in certification requires considerable time. There is also a cost of certification, although much of the monetary cost can be reimbursed under government cost-share programs.

We at Two Onion Farm first became certified organic in April 2009. Prior to that we

attempted to follow all of the organic farming practices required in the federal organic standard, and to our knowledge we could have been certified as an organic farm before this year. However we did not apply for certification and undergo the review and inspection by a third-party certification agency. We did not feel that the time and expense were justified. This year we decided to apply for certification, for two reasons: organic certification is important to some of

our farm members and perspective farm members; and the Madison Area CSA Coalition, a non-profit organization which promotes our farm and other farms in the Madison area, began to require organic certification from the farms it promoted. The CSA coalition's promotion is very important for our farm from a business perspective. We were pleased to find that becoming certified did not require us to change any of the practices we use to grow our vegetables.

## In this week's box:

Vegetable	Refrigerate?	Store In Plastic Bag To Retain Moisture?	Approx. Storage Life	Comments
Cabbage	Yes	Yes	1-2 wks	Not in all boxes
Carrot	Yes	Yes	2+ wks	
Cauliflower	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Not in all boxes
Cucumber	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Fennel	Yes	Yes	1 wk	White flattened bulb with overlapping layers
Garlic	Yes or No	No	2-3 wks	Cured garlic. Store dry, in or out of fridge
Onion, Yellow	Yes or No	No	2-3 wks	Cured onion with dryish papery outer layer - store dry, in or out of fridge
Lettuce	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Summercrisp
Parsley	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Pepper, red or green	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Raspberries	Yes	No	1 day	
Summer squash	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Not in all boxes
Tomato, Cherry and Slicing	No	No	1 wk	Tomatoes may keep slightly longer in the fridge but fridge temperatures damage the flavor a bit.

## Carrot Cabbage Fennel Salad

1 lb Carrots, shredded  
 4 Cups shredded cabbage  
 1 Fennel bulb, quartered lengthwise and triangular core removed, then shredded

### Dressing:

1/2 cup olive oil  
 1-1/2 Tblsp red wine vinegar  
 1 Tblsp lemon juice  
 1/2 tsp salt  
 Black pepper to taste.

Mix salad ingredients. Whisk together dressing. Pour as much of dressing on salad as desired; extra dressing can be used later for lettuce or other salads.