

Two Onion Farm

Chris & Juli McGuire • 19638 Cottage Inn Road, Belmont, WI 53510
farmer@twoonionfarm.com • (608) 762-5335

Week of July 6th, 2008

Who Does The Work?

If you took all the rows of vegetables we will plant this season, and laid them end to end, they would stretch about 9 miles. It takes a lot of work to tend all those vegetables.

Thankfully, we (Chris & Juli) don't have to do it all ourselves!

We have four employees from our area who work Monday-Friday during the growing season. They've done much of the fun and hard work here this year, from assembling irrigation systems during April snow squalls to harvesting peas under clouds of gnats in July. Whenever you receive vegetables from our farm, those employees have had their hands on planting, transplanting, weeding, picking, trimming, washing, packing, and delivering them. One of the great pleasures of our job is training our employees, watching them grow in confidence and skill, and enjoying their company. We love them.

We also hire in additional temporary workers from the area during the peak busy time of year (which is right now). In farming timing is everything. A planting that could be hoed in one hour now might require five hours of hand weeding if the weeds are allowed to grow for another two weeks. When work starts to pile up, it makes much more sense to hire extra help than to let important tasks go undone.

Our farm members also make an important contribution to our farm. Our member worker program allows members to work on the farm as a way to gain a closer connection to their food and to provide us with needed help. So far this season members have worked about 240 hours on the farm, and we're expecting that they will work about 150 more this season. In the spring and early summer, member workers are frequently involved with planting seeds into blocks of soil mix, potting on young

seedlings into larger blocks, and then transplanting those seedlings into the field. Members did most of the work raising our large summer plantings of tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, eggplant, and squash. During summer and fall members pitch in with weeding and harvesting storage crops such as onions and carrots.

This is the second season in which we have offered the member worker program, and we have been extremely happy with it. When farming begins to seem stressful, isolating, and tiring, it's always a pleasure to see members' smiling faces and willing hands. We consider it a real privilege to be able to meet, speak, and work with the people we feed. It enriches our lives.

With all that help what do we do? We keep pretty busy, twelve months a year. Chris is primarily responsible for supervising the fieldwork and harvesting, raising seedlings, operating and maintaining machinery, and finishing up whatever's left undone when everyone else goes home at 5:30. Juli supervises our post-harvest work (washing, trimming, and storing vegetables) and creates the recipes in these newsletters. We share the work of planning for the farm, deciding what goes in your boxes, and communicating with you.

Lost Vegetables Boxes. Please remember to return your broken down vegetable boxes to your pickup location. The boxes are quite expensive and we cannot afford to use new ones each week. It's very important to us that you return your boxes so we can reuse them. Thank you.

In this weeks box:

Vegetable	Refrigerate?	Store In Plastic Bag To Retain Moisture?	Approx. Storage Life	Comments
Lettuce	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Romaine or summercrisp
Green onions	Yes	Yes	1-2 wks	
Carrots	Yes	Yes	2 wks	
Snap peas	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Radish	Yes	Yes	1-2 wks	Long, pinkish red
Broccoli	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Not in all boxes
Cauliflower	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Not in all boxes
Beets	Yes	Yes	1-2 wks	
Swiss chard	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Green leaves with midribs of many hues
Summer squash	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Zucchini or bicolored summer squash

Swiss Chard. Chard should be cooked before eaten. Both the stems and leaves can be eaten; the stems require longer cooking. Generally you should cut the leaf away from the stem and prominent midrib before cooking.

Peas. These are snap peas, which means that you can eat both the pod and the pea seeds inside. The pod is juicy and crunchy and the seeds sweet. You will want to string the pods before cooking them or eating them raw. To do that, snap off the top of the pod toward one side and pull it downward. Strings should come off both sides of the pod.

Lemon Mint Snap Peas

2 green onions, thinly sliced
 1 Tbsp olive oil
 1 Tbsp lemon juice
 1 Tbsp chopped fresh mint (or 2 tsp dried)
 ½ tsp good mustard
 1/8 tsp salt
 ¼ tsp black pepper
 ½ lb snap peas, with ends and string removed
 5-8 oz canned chick peas or frozen baby lima beans

Whisk onion, oil, lemon juice, mint, mustard, salt and pepper together in a large bowl. Steam the snap peas and optional lima beans together in a steamer basket about 3-5 minutes, until peas are tender crisp. Toss peas and beans or chickpeas with the dressing. Serve warm or chilled.

Swiss Chard with Almonds and Raisins

¼ cup coarsely chopped almonds
 1 bu green onions, thinly sliced, or 1 cup
 Salt to taste
 1½ Tbsp olive oil, divided
 1/8 tsp paprika
 1 large bunch Swiss chard (about 1 lb), center ribs discarded and leaves coarsely chopped
 ¼ cup raisins

Cook almonds in ½ Tbsp oil in a heavy skillet over medium-low heat, stirring frequently until golden, about 3-5 minutes. Set aside.

In a large pot, cook onion with salt in 1 Tbsp oil until soft. Add paprika and cook, stirring, for one more minute. Add chard and stir until wilted. (If the chard does not fit in your pot, add it in batches – the chard will condense greatly as it wilts.) Add raisins and ¼ cup water and cook covered, stirring occasionally, until chard is tender, about 7 minutes.

Combine chard with almonds. Serve warm or chilled.